CONSTELLATION
STAGE + SCREEN

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A GUIDE TO



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OCTOBER 20 - NOVEMBER 5, 2023

AT THE WALDRON AUDITORIUM

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SETTING

The "setting" is the ***time*** and ***place*** (or ***when*** and ***where***) of the story.

Curious George and the Golden Meatball takes place in more than one setting.

- A busy street just outside of #7 N Avenue in a bustling city.
- The kitchen of Chef Pisghetti's restaurant
- The streets of Rome, Italy
- The Coliseum - a large, elliptical amphitheater in the center of the city of Rome, Italy



SYNOPSIS

A "synopsis" is ***what*** the story is about.

All–You-Can-Eat Meatball Day comes just once a year. George has been waiting all month for that day, a day almost bigger than his birthday! On Meatball Day, George helps his friend Chef Pisghetti cook some delicious meatballs and serve them to the hungry crowd.

But this year, the crowd has vanished! Something is keeping people away. Something pretty big. And that something is Phineas T. Lightspeed and his speedy Meatballs-O-Matic machine. In despair, Chef Pisghetti vows to cook no more. Determined to help his friend, George goes on a mission to enter the Chef's meatballs in the world-famous Golden Meatball Contest –– in Rome.

With every swing and flip, George takes the audience through a fun-filled adventure in which he learns more about Rome, meatballs, and the secret ingredient to cooking!

CHARACTERS

"Characters" are the ***who*** of the story.

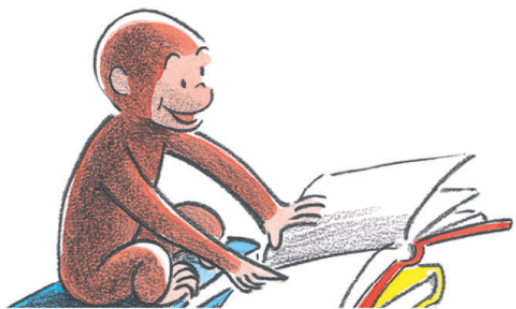
CURIOUS GEORGE—a kind and inquisitive monkey who is eager to help his friends and know more about the world around him. George can be a bit impulsive, so he sometimes accidentally gets into a bit of mischief. Curious George doesn't speak in human words. Instead, he communicates using a series of vocal "monkey chittering" sounds that the other characters seem to be able to understand.

THE MAN IN THE YELLOW HAT—George's best friend and caregiver. He encourages George and helps him to figure out how to do things. He's always very supportive of his little primate pal and tries to let him work out solutions to his own challenges.

CHEF PISGHETTI—a generous and talented local restaurateur who hosts an annual "All You Can Eat" Meatball Day at his establishment.

NETTI PISGHETTI—the twin sister of Chef Pisghetti who works alongside him at his famous Italian eatery. They sometimes get into minor sibling squabbles, but she is smart and supportive and helps Chef figure things out.

PHINEAS T. LIGHTSPEED—a fast-talking, charismatic inventor and salesperson who has created a machine called the Meatball-O-Matic 9000. It can make "Instant Meatballs" much faster than Chef, and Phineas is very proud of it.



FRANKIE SIDECAR—the suave and showbiz-y host of The Golden Meatball Contest. He is the official contest judge and decides who makes the best meatballs in the world.

GEORGE'S FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS IN NEW YORK CITY

GEORGE'S NEW FRIENDS IN ROME—Artists, Tourists, Italian Food Vendors, Sophisticated Shoppers, and more!

MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT



Book Writer/Lyricist Jeremy Desmon is an award-winning musical theater book writer whose stories have played to audiences around the world. His musical credits include: *The Girl in the Frame*, *Pump Up The Volume* (his adaptation of the 1990 film) and the high-school jukebox musical, *Cyrano de BurgerShack* as well as touring Universal's *Curious George Live!*

Jeremy is an alum of Stanford University (BA) and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts (MFA). He teaches a musical theater writing workshop at Princeton University. For more information on Jeremy, visit his website at ***www.jeremydesmon.com***

MEET THE AUTHORS: MARGRET & HANS AUGUSTO (H.A.) REY

Margret and Hans Rey were the married couple that wrote and illustrated the Curious George series. Hans Augusto Rey was born in Hamburg, Germany. He grew up near the famous Hagenbeck Zoo, and developed a love for animals and drawing. Margarete Rey was also born in Hamburg.



They met as adults in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Hans and Margret were married in Brazil in 1935. Soon after they moved to Paris. It was there that Hans published his first children's book titled *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys*. Curious George was a character in this first book. After *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys* was published, the Reys began work on a new book that featured Curious George.

In 1940, the opening months of WWII, as the German army approached Paris the Rey's decided to flee France. The Rey's were Jews and they feared what might happen if the Nazis caught them. They left Paris on bicycles with only a few possessions and, most importantly, the manuscript for the first Curious George book. They rode their bicycles 75 miles until they were able to escape by train to Spain, then Portugal and then New York City. The first Curious George book was published in New York in 1941. It was an instant hit and many other books followed.

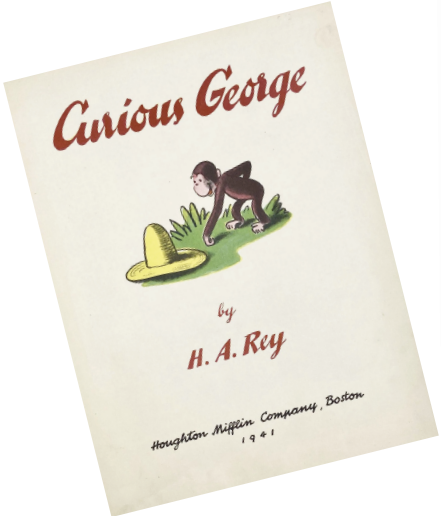
For more information on the Rey's or the creation of Curious George, please visit the official Curious George website at ***www.curiousgeorge.com***

CURIOUS GEORGE: THEN AND NOW

Curious George began as a character in a series of children's books written and illustrated by H.A. and Margaret Rey. They published seven books during H.A. Rey's lifetime which are all still in print. The first, called *Curious George*, was released in 1941. The Reys produced many other illustrated children's books, but the *Curious George* series was their most popular.

Curious George has gone on to star in several different television shows and movies. The most recent—and possibly the one with which many contemporary audiences are familiar—is the PBS Kids television series that began in 2006. A live-action movie version of *Curious George* produced by Paramount Pictures is scheduled for release in 2027.

The music created by John Kavanaugh and Jeremy Desmon was originally developed for a Universal Studios production called *Curious George LIVE!* Between them, they have created music for many different family-oriented entertainment projects, including for characters such as the Disney Channel's Sofia the First and Elmo from Sesame Street.









SEEING THE PLAY: BEING A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

Experiencing theater is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allows the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. We invite you to laugh when it is funny, cry when it is sad, gasp when it is shocking, but refrain from talking during the show, as it disturbs audience members and performers alike.

HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ENJOY THE PERFORMANCE:

- Leave cell phones, tablets, hand held games, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home or turn them completely off.
- Do not text during the performance. The light and the motion is very distracting to those around you, on stage, and the tech crew behind you.
- Gum and food must stay in the lobby. Drinks are only allowed if they have a lid.
- The lights dimming and going out signal the audience to quiet down and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.
- Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage.
- Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.
- Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp — whatever the performance draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.
- Remain in your seat during the play. Please use the restroom before or after the show, as well as during intermission.
- During the curtain call, remain in your seat and applaud because this is part of the performance too. The actors will come out on stage one more time to say thank you for your participation as an audience member.

AFTER THE SHOW

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the story about? Can you describe the beginning, middle, and end?

2. What did you notice about the actors in the play? How did they use their voices and bodies to create convincing characters?

3. When he arrives in Rome, George gets a bit lost. What would you do if you got lost?

4. Which character did you like the most and why? Which character did you like the least and why?

5. Some of the characters in the play are from different countries like Italy and Ireland. What do you know about these cultures and countries? What would you like to learn about them?

6. In the story, the Chef had one way of making meatballs and Phineas T. Lightspeed had a different way of making meatballs. Can you describe them? Which way would you like best and why?

7. Curious George makes a lot of choices in the play. Were they all good choices? Why or why not?

8. Did Curious George learn anything from his adventure? What do you think he learned?



ACTIVITIES: COLORING CURIOUS GEORGE

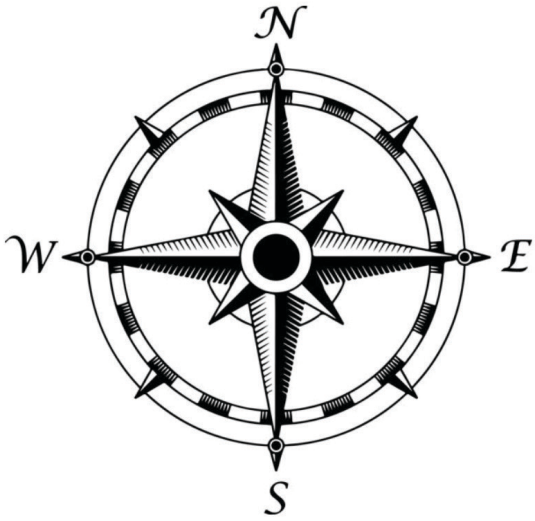


ACTIVITIES: SOCIAL STUDIES

#1. Cardinal Directions

In *Curious George: The Golden Meatball*, George travels to Rome, Italy, which is very far away from Bloomington, Indiana! As a class, look at a large map of the world. Where are we located on the map? Where is Rome, Italy?

Maps come with special symbols to help us read them. One symbol that is helpful is called a **compass rose**. A compass rose tells us **cardinal directions**. Cardinal directions are one set of directions that people around the world use! The four cardinal directions are **north, south, east and west**. These directions use the rising and setting of the sun as reference points.



Activity: Use a compass rose to determine if we would have to travel north, south, east, or west to get to Rome, Italy. Select additional destinations around the world to test your knowledge of cardinal directions.



#2. Distance on a Map

In the musical, Curious George uses the length of his arm to measure distance on the map of Italy. Have students look at a map of Italy and discuss how distance is actually determined by using a **ruler bar scale** or **written scale**.

Activity: On a world map with a scale provided, have students use a ruler to measure the distance between Bloomington, Indiana and Rome, Italy. Pick other destinations around the world and measure their distance from Bloomington. Use an online map to check your answers!

#3. Geography and Culture: Exploring Italy

Fact finding mission! First, break the class into multiple teams. Then present the following questions to each team and have them make their best educated guesses.

- What is the population of Italy?
- What is the capital of Italy? (Clue - It's mentioned in the musical)
- What languages do they speak in Italy?
- How many regions are there in Italy?
- What does the Italian flag look like?
- What is the most common pizza in Italy?
- What's the name of the currency used in Italy?
- What are 3 famous buildings in Italy?
- What type of music originated in Italy?

Next, use online resources to answer the questions as a class. Which teams' answers were the closest?

ACTIVITIES: LANGUAGE ARTS

#1. Writing and Mailing a Letter

Dear Friend,

George and the Man with the Yellow Hat are the best of friends. Sometimes, it's nice to write letters to our friends!

Write your friend a letter or draw them a special picture about your day.

What details will you include?

Once your letter is complete, it's time to mail it! What procedure do you need to follow in order to make sure your letter is successfully delivered to your friend?

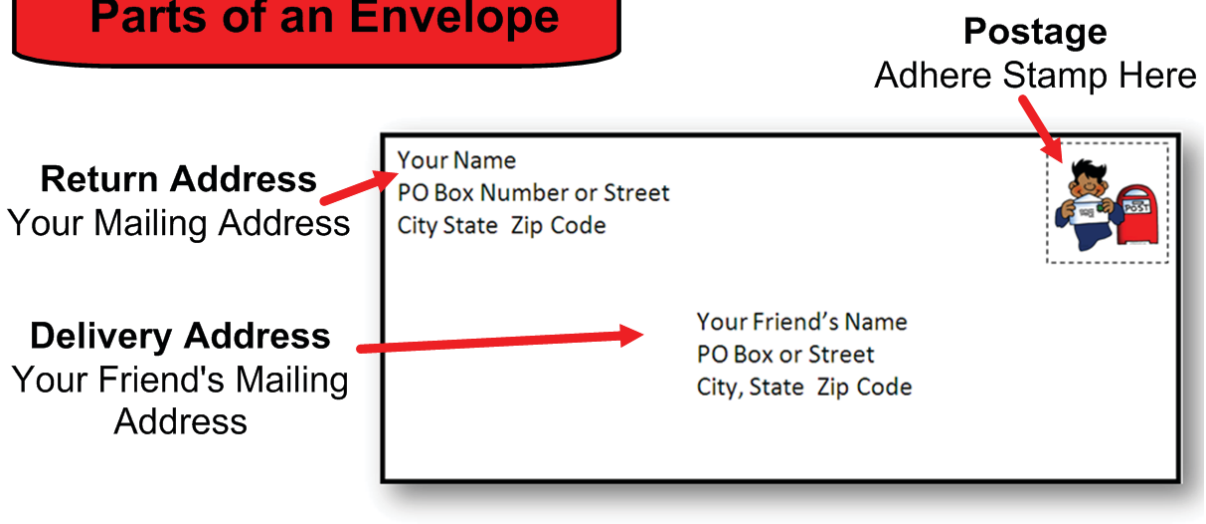
What will you need from the post office?
What will you need to put on your envelope?

Good luck!

Sincerely,
Curious George



Parts of an Envelope



#2. Parts of Speech

Noun - a noun is a person, place, thing, or idea
Examples: monkey, man, hat, meatball, bicycle, Rome, George, freedom

Adjective - an adjective describes a noun
Examples: loud, short, yellow, curious, fast, funny, smart, bored, happy, brave, round

Verb - a verb describes an action
Examples: sing, swim, see, run, walk, laugh, have, promise, invite, listen



Help George find the hidden letter in his meatballs!

Each meatball contains a word that is a noun, an adjective, or a verb.

Directions:

1. Color meatballs with nouns RED
2. Color meatballs with adjectives YELLOW
3. Color meatballs with verbs BLUE



Curious George ™ & © HMH 2015

#3. Curious George Mad Lib

Monkey Business

In the lively city of _____ (CITY NAME), the mischievous Curious George, a _____ (ADJECTIVE) monkey, heard of the legendary "Diamond Meatball" hidden deep in the _____ (ADJECTIVE) jungle. He couldn't resist the _____ (ADJECTIVE) adventure, so he swung into action with his trusty _____ (NOUN). George _____ (VERB) through the jungle, creating a _____ (ADJECTIVE) spectacle that amazed the creatures. Along the way, he discovered a shiny _____ (NOUN), which he excitedly _____ (VERB), only to find it was a _____ (NOUN) filled with goo, leaving him looking like a _____ (NOUN) covered in _____ (ADJECTIVE) mess. Undaunted, George _____ (VERB) deeper and stumbled upon _____ (NUMBER) _____ (NOUN) monkeys playing _____ (ADJECTIVE) games. He joined in, _____ (VERB) and _____ (VERB), making new _____ (ADJECTIVE) friends. " _____ (EXCLAMATION)!" George shouted. "This is _____ (ADJECTIVE) fun!" As the sun set, George realized the real treasure was the _____ (ADJECTIVE) memories and _____ (NOUN) full of _____ (NOUN) he collected. He swung back to the city, leaving the jungle but continuing his _____ (ADJECTIVE) and _____ (ADJECTIVE) adventures.

ACTIVITY: SCIENCE

LET'S MONKEY AROUND!

If you're curious about Curious George, then you may want to know more about monkeys. Have students research different species of monkeys. Ask them to pick their favorite and describe their characteristics (there are currently 264 different known monkey species).

What do they eat? Where in the world do they live? What kind of habitat do they live in? How long is there lifespan? How big or small are they? What kind of sound(s) do they make?

Then have students share information with the class on the species of monkey they selected. Here are a few other facts to share with students before they start.

- Apes are not monkeys.
- Some monkeys live on the ground, while others live in trees.
- Groups of monkeys are known as a 'tribe', 'troop' or 'mission'.
- Spider monkeys get their name from their long tail.

What kind of monkey is Curious George?!

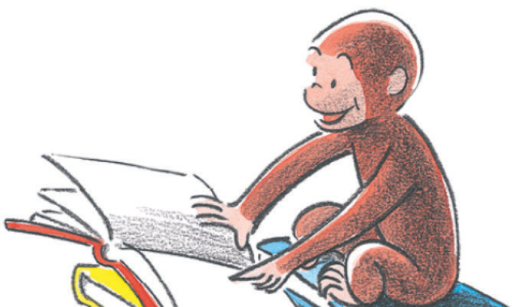


READING LIST

- ***Curious George*** **(series) by Margret & H.A. Rey:** A series about an mischievous orphaned monkey and his new adventures with the man who adopts him.

- ***What the Dinosaurs Did Last Night*** **by Refe Tuma:** Toy dinosaurs get into trouble all night long from knocking over potted plants to painting on walls.

- ***Little Bear*** **(series) by Else Holmelund Minarik:** Explores the spirited adventures of a curious, imaginative, and inventive Little Bear and his childhood friends.



- ***Five Little Monkeys* (series) by Eileen Christelow:** Based on the classic chant about five little monkeys jumping on the bed, each playful rhyming story in this pack shows these silly monkeys getting into all kinds of new mischief.

- ***Knuffle Bunny* (series) by Mo Willems:** This series follows a toy bunny and his person as they go on everyday adventures.

- ***Paddington* (series) by Michael Bond:** A lost bear and the family who finds him have some exciting moments together.

- ***Poe Won't Go* by Kelly DiPucchio:** When an elephant plants himself in the road and refuses to move, the people of Persnickety try all sorts of methods to get him to go.

- ***Little Elliot, Big City* by Mike Curato:** Elliot the little elephant has a hard time with a lot of things in the city he loves until he meets Mouse, who is even smaller.

- ***The Chicken Who Couldn't* by Jan Thomas:** Chicken has fallen out of Farmer's truck! He can't possibly get himself all the way home...can he?

- ***Corduroy by Don Freeman:*** A toy bear in a department store wants a number of things, but when a little girl finally buys him he finds what he has always wanted most of all.

- ***Madeline (series)* by Ludwig Bemelmans:** Madeline, the smallest and naughtiest of the twelve little charges of Miss Clavel gets into all sorts of trouble.

- ***Dodsworth (series)* by Tim Egan:** Dodsworth loves adventure and traveling! Something he doesn't love is being joined by a duck. A crazy duck. A duck that misbehaves.

- ***Froggy (series)* by Jonathan London:** Froggy is a young frog who lives by a pond with his parents and his little sister Pollywogilina. He is always getting into some trouble!



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