



SOCIETY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Bringing the World's Best to Houston

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Teacher's Guide for:

The Passing Zone

**Wednesday, September 24th, 10:00am and 12:00pm
and Thursday, September 26th, 10:00am**

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About Society for the Performing Arts and SPA's Education Programs

About Society for the Performing Arts

Founded in 1966, Society for the Performing Arts (SPA) is the largest independent non-profit presenting organization in the Southwest. Since its inception, SPA has sponsored more than 1,000 performances of the world's finest music, dance and theater events, in adherence to the belief that the arts are fundamental to the overall enrichment and quality of life within the community. In addition to presenting artists, SPA seeks to provide a variety of learning experiences for adults and children through master classes, lectures and special student performances, as well as build relationships between the performing arts and other interests within the greater Houston area and throughout the state of Texas.

SPA's Education and Community Engagement Programs

Public Programs

Children and adults are invited to participate in our Public Programs offered throughout the season. On performance nights, guests can arrive early to enjoy our *Performance Preludes*, which highlight local performance groups of all ages and SPA's *ArtsTalks*, pre-performance discussions that give audience members insight to the evening's performance. SPA's *Master Classes* provide young, emerging dancers and musicians an opportunity to learn from the world-class artists SPA brings to Houston. Additionally, SPA presents *Community Events* such as drum circles and open rehearsals at Jones Hall and the Wortham Center as well as community centers outside of the Theater District.

Student Programs

SPA is dedicated to enriching the lives of children throughout the greater Houston area through various student programs. The Student Series program makes \$10 tickets available for students to select evening performances throughout the season. Student Matinee Performances introduce thousands of students to live performances every year. The program includes deeply discounted tickets to daytime performances, study guides and partial reimbursements for bus transportation. The Wells Fargo Student Art Contest showcases the talent of Houston-area students in grades K through 12, giving them a chance to win a bevy of prizes. Movement Toward Literacy is a collaborative initiative with SPA and Writers in the Schools that explores the connection between words and actions to support learning and creativity in the classroom.

Educator Programs

SPA's professional development program is for all educators grades K through 12. Facilitated by professional performers, these affordable workshops focus on teaching content through the arts.





About the Passing Zone

Owen Morse and Jon Wee met in 1986 at a juggling convention and instantly knew they were destined to be a team. Two weeks after their first show in 1988 they won the silver medal at the International Juggler's Association Teams Competition. In 1989 they won the Gold. That recognition earned an invitation to appear at the renowned Comedy and Magic Club in Los Angeles, which led to an appearance on "The Tonight Show." Eventually the duo appeared in *The Addams Family Movie*, where Jon and Owen doubled for Gomez (Raul Julia) and Uncle Fester (Christopher Lloyd) in the climactic Mamushka dagger-passing scene!

Over the years, Morse and Wee have opened for comedians Bill Cosby, Bob Newhart, Bob Hope, "Weird Al" Yankovic and Rita Rudner. Television appearances have included "Comic Strip Live," "An Evening at The Improv," "MADtv," Penn & Teller's "Sin City Spectacular," "Steve Harvey's Big Time" and regular returns to NBC's "Today." Most recently they were finalists on NBC's "America's Got Talent" where they lost one million dollars to an 11-year-old.

The Passing Zone has been awarded five Guinness World Records and 18 gold medals from the International Juggler's Association. They have performed at The White House and were recently presented with that organization's Award of Excellence, for "excellence in the art of juggling through professional performance," which is the most prestigious award in juggling (essentially the Juggling Hall of Fame), given to only thirteen acts worldwide since the organization's inception.

They can often be seen doing entertainment and keynote speaking at corporate events, for which they are a natural fit. Their act is clean, so it offends no one. They appeal to all ages, and all walks of life, so whether their audience is a group of mechanical contractors, software engineers, hairdressers, or billionaire business leaders, they are always a hit. Not only do they entertain, but they customize their performances by juggling a company's product, incorporating their slogans, and inspiring groups to be better teams.

Jon and Owen reside in the greater Los Angeles area, where, when they are not throwing things, they spend as much time as possible with their families, and still manage to squeeze in hang gliding, surfing, mountain biking, and Guitar Hero, although not all at the same time.

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills—Standards

English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 3

(19) Writing. Students write about their own experiences. Students are expected to write about important personal experiences.

(20) Writing/Persuasive Texts. Students write persuasive texts to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. Students are expected to write persuasive essays for appropriate audiences that establish a position and use supporting details.

(31) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams.[...] Students are expected to participate in teacher– and student-led discussions by posing and answering questions with appropriate detail and by providing suggestions that build upon the ideas of others.

Theater, Grade 3

(3) Creative expression: production. TSW **(A)** identify technical theater elements such as props, costumes, sound , and visual elements that define character, environment, action, and theme.

(5) Critical evaluation and response. TSW **(A)** apply appropriate audience behavior consistently; **(B)** discuss and evaluate simple dramatic activities and performances.

Science, Grade 3

(2) Scientific investigation and reasoning. TSW **(A)** plan and implement descriptive investigations, including asking and answering questions, making inferences, and selecting and using equipment or technology needed, to solve a specific problem in the natural world; **(B)** collect data by observing and measuring using the metric system and recognize the differences between observed and measured data; **(D)** analyze and interpret patterns in data to construct reasonable explanations based on evidence from investigations; **(E)** analyze and interpret patterns in data to construct reasonable explanations based on evidence from investigations; **(F)** communicate valid conclusions supported by data in writing, by drawing pictures, and through verbal discussion.

(3) Scientific investigation and reasoning. TSW **(A)** in all fields of science, analyze, evaluate, and critique scientific explanations by using empirical evidence, logical reasoning, and experimental and observational testing, including examining all sides of scientific evidence of those scientific explanations, so as to encourage critical thinking by the student.

(8) Earth and space. TSW **(D)** identify the planets in Earth’s solar system and their position in relation to the Sun.

Social Studies, Grade 3

(1) History. TSW **(A)** describe how individuals, events, and ideas have changed communities, past and present.



What to expect on the performance day/theater etiquette

The Passing Zone Show Times:

Wednesday, September 24, 2014 - 10:00 AM
Thursday, September 25, 2014 - 10:00 AM & 12:00 PM

Location:

The Wortham Center, 500 Texas Ave., Houston, TX 77002

General Student Matinee Information

- The Passing Zone student matinee is approximately 60 minutes.
- The performance is scheduled to begin on time.
- Check-in table and doors to the lobby of Wortham Center open one hour before the show.
- Groups dropped off before then will have to wait outside until the Wortham Center opens.
- The buses will drop off at the right entrance of Wortham Center on Prairie St.
- Seating begins at approximately 30 minutes before the show at the discretion of the House Manager.
- If you unload at Wortham Center after seating begins, you will most likely miss the beginning of the performance. Late arrivals (especially after the performance starts) may not be seated.

Arrival

Upon arrival an adult representative from each group should go to our reservation table at the front.

- Be prepared. Count your kids on the bus before unloading and confirm the number of students and chaperones in attendance.
- Note the name of the bus company and all the bus numbers transporting your group.
- Get cell phone numbers of the bus drivers.
- The group representative will need to share these details with a staff member or SPA volunteer at the reservation/sign-in table.
- After the group representative has signed in with a staff member or SPA volunteer, an usher will escort the group to their pre-assigned seats.
- **The student matinee groups do not get tickets or programs.**

We will compare your current attendance number with your paid reservation. If you have more people than anticipated, extra tickets must be paid by check or credit card. No cash. If the student matinee is fully booked, we may not be able to seat extra students. There are no refunds for any unused reservations.

Before you enter the Theater

- **Please turn off all electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, pagers, tablets, etc.)** These devices may interrupt the theater's sound system and can become extremely disruptive to both the audience and performers.
- **Leave all food and drinks on the bus or dispose of it before entering the performance hall.** Food and drinks are not allowed inside the performance hall or lobby areas. There are no concessions available during student matinee performances.
- **Visit the restrooms before the show.** Public restrooms and water fountains are open before, during and after the performance; however, **there is no intermission during student matinee performances.**



Getting Seated

Seating arrangements and locations are determined by the SPA Director of Sales and the Wortham Center House Manager. We seat according to the group's special needs, ages, size and the time of arrival. Groups will be guided to their sections by a team of ushers. Please allow ushers to seat your group in its entirety before making adjustments. Special seating requests cannot be guaranteed. Please have chaperones dispersed among the students. The chaperones (school staff or volunteers) must be willing and able to handle talkative, rowdy and disruptive students. Chaperones should be able to lead and help others in case of an emergency.

During the Performance

So that everyone can enjoy the show, please read the following information:

- Photography and audio/video recording is permitted during the performance.
- Please do not talk or whisper during the show. It is extremely distracting to other audience members and the performers.
- Feel free to applaud, laugh and enjoy the show by having an honest reaction to what is taking place on stage.
- Do not leave early, unless it is an emergency. This is disruptive to other audience members and the performers.

Bus Parking

The City of Houston dictates where school buses park for daytime & weekday cultural events in the Theatre District. Buses will be directed to Allen Parkway. The parking for school buses is not a short walking distance. Since he or she will most likely need to stay with the bus, SPA recommends not counting bus drivers as chaperones. If you have your bus driver's cell phone number, you will be able to contact him or her if you need to leave earlier or later than expected.

Exit

After the performance, dismissal is organized by special needs and according to the sequence of the buses lined up on Prairie Street. Groups that did not come on a bus may be dismissed first. Ushers will direct them to the exit.

Lunch

If students bring a sack lunch, SPA cannot store them or provide a space for taking lunch. Student lunches must stay on the bus. Use an ice chest or storage bin and make sure everyone's food is labeled. You may also make arrangements for meals at a restaurant within walking distance of Wortham Center, at an eatery between downtown Houston and your campus, or with your school's cafeteria.



Below are useful links with guides to downtown restaurants near the theater.

Downtown:

<http://downtownhouston.org/guide/restaurants/>

Theater District:

<http://downtownhouston.org/guide/restaurants/?district=theater>

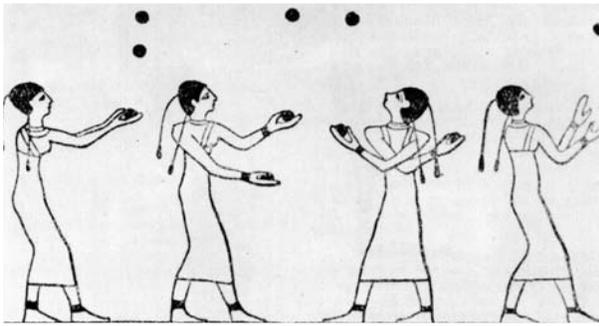
Tunnel System:

<http://downtownhouston.org/guide/restaurants/?district=downtown-tunnels&tunnel>

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Jordan Drum, Director of Education & Community Engagement, at 713.632.8102 or email Jdrum@spahouston.org.



Juggling Through the Ages



Egyptian jugglers (c. 1994-1781 BCE) as depicted on an ancient tomb wall. Notice the awesome arm-crossing technique.

You may be surprised to know that **juggling** is an ancient form of entertainment. As far back as 1994 BCE, people were throwing many objects simultaneously for others' enjoyment—specifically, for the benefit of an unknown Egyptian prince. He enjoyed it so much that he had these memories depicted on the walls of his tomb so that he could enjoy the festivities in the afterlife.

References to jugglers in writings from the Warring States Period of Chinese history (475-221 BCE) mention jugglers of such skill that they could often end a battle before it began, though no reason was given; perhaps they were mesmerized or thought their enemy was so skilled, there was no way of defeating them.

In fact, references to jugglers (which is actually a relatively new term), either in writings or art, are fairly common throughout history. It seems that juggling was popular throughout history in all sorts of cultures. The Egyptians, Chinese, and Aztecs all seemed to develop this skill independent of one another.

Juggling eventually became associated with bards and jesters (the word “juggler” is derived from the Latin “*joculari*,” meaning “to jest”). Despite falling out of favor during the Middle Ages, juggling had a resurgence when it became associated with the circus and, in the late 19th-century, vaudeville.

Due to the rise in popularity of radio, television and film, the popularity of juggling briefly declined before the International Jugglers' Association was formed in 1947, which began promoting juggling through competitions and regular chapter meetings. The organization exists to this day.



Juggling two balls, sitting down. Not nearly as impressive as the Egyptians.

How to Juggle

On average, it takes people about 30 minutes to “get the hang of it.” This doesn’t mean they’ve mastered the skill, but that they’re on their way and have had some success. Here’s how The Passing Zone teaches juggling:

1. Use a bean bag, preferably about the size of a tennis ball. (For instructions on how to make your own juggling balls, go to page 14.)
2. Start with one ball, tossing it comfortably from right hand to left, just a little bit above eye level. The ball should reach its apex in the middle of your body. Look at the ball while it’s in the air. Don’t spin, just throw it naturally.
3. Grab another ball for your left hand. Throw the first ball from right to left; as it nears the left hand, throw the left hand ball in the opposite manner (DON’T HAND IT OFF). Make sure you stop after each throw. (1-2-stop. 1-2-stop.)
4. Do the opposite! Throw the first ball from left to right; as it nears the right hand, throw the right hand ball in the opposite manner. Continue to stop after each throw.
5. Grab the last ball and put it in your right hand. You now want to make just three throws (1-2-3-stop) beginning with your right hand. Slowly add one throw until you’re juggling. (1-2-3-4-stop. 1-2-3-4-5-stop.)

Common problems: 1) Don’t throw the ball too far ahead of you. 2) Keep the height of your throws consistent, not too high, not too low, just above eye level.

Forms of Juggling

When watching a juggler or jugglers, watch for the following:

Objects Juggled: Balls, clubs and rings are the most common objects used for juggling.

Number of Jugglers: A juggler will often find a friend or two to share a juggling pattern with.

Method of Juggling: Toss juggling is the most recognized form of juggling. Numbers juggling refers to keeping as many objects aloft as possible. Passing involves two or more jugglers sharing a pattern between them. Patterns keep jugglers focused on as many patterns as possible.

Juggling Style:

Circus: Traditional circus juggling uses high level of technical skill to “fill” the circus ring.

Comedy: Varies in skill level, prop use and costuming, but the focus is comedic rather than technical and commonly seen in street performance and festivals.

Combat: Two opponents square off, trying to interrupt their opponents juggling pattern.



Lesson Plan: What Goes Up...

(adapted from the Utah Education Network's "I'm Falling For You")

Standards

Science Grade 3, (6) Force, motion, and energy. (B) (C)
(for extended lesson) Science Grade 3, (8) Earth and space. (C) (D)
Social Studies Grade 3, (1) History. (A)

Objectives

TSW understand that objects near Earth are pulled toward Earth by gravity.
TSW demonstrate that gravity is a force.
(for extended lesson) TSW identify strong or weak gravity as a characteristic of each planet.

Materials

- Balls of many different materials and sizes. To create your own, use the "Create Your Own Juggling Balls" guide on page 14 and fill the balloons with different weight fillers, like sand.
- Feathers, paper, and many other school supplies available in the classroom.

Setup/Background

When jugglers throw a ball into the air, it inevitably comes back down. Gravity is the force that pulls two objects toward each other, and in this case, the juggling balls toward the ground. In this activity, students will experiment with falling objects and gravity, supposedly as Galileo did (though this hasn't been proven).

Gravity pulls all objects with equal acceleration toward Earth; these experiments will demonstrate that gravity is the same for all objects (ignoring air resistance).

Introduction to Students

1. Teacher will ask the students these questions: "If I dropped a basketball and a marble, which one would hit the ground first? Make a prediction. Why did you choose that answer?"
2. Drop both items from a high vantage point. Allow students to observe but not to engage in a lengthy discussion.
3. Repeat the experiment three times to model good experimentation. Make a comment such as, "That was odd, don't you think? The basketball is heavier than the marble, isn't it?"
4. Ask, "Why would they fall at the same rate?" and recommend an experiment to figure it out.

Procedure

1. Divide students into groups.
2. Hand out materials to the students (including prediction sheet, last page of this guide).
3. Allow students approximately 10 minutes for the experiment.
4. Report predictions and findings from students' charts. Put on a large classroom chart. Students will discover that objects similar in shape, but with different weights hit the ground at the same time. However, they will also discover that the unfolded sheet of paper will hit the ground later than the ping pong ball. Or perhaps the feather will fall much slower than the marble. Help lead students to the knowledge that mass should not affect the rate at which objects fall, but shape definitely makes a difference.
5. Ask, "Does gravity change?" (No. Gravity remains constant. Shape changes; gravity does not.)
6. Ask, "Why is it important to know about gravity?" Help students discover that without gravity we would fly off the earth. Gravity helps us understand how things move around us in our physical world. It also helps plants to grow.
7. Have students complete a paragraph that states three important facts they have learned from their experimentation about gravity (For Science Journal). Example: Gravity is an invisible force. Earth's gravity pulls everything toward its center. Heavy and light objects that are about the same shape fall at an equal speed.

Extended Lesson

Students can research Galileo and his impact on science and the world.

It's also easy to tie this lesson to an introduction on planets and their characteristics. Remind students what they learned about gravity: it's an invisible force that, on Earth, pulls everything toward its center. (See below.)

Questions/Procedure

Explain to students that, on other planets, gravity acts differently. Ask them to imagine an astronaut in space: is he/she affected by gravity? Why or why not?

Ask students: if gravity is the tendency of two objects to move toward each other, why does Earth pull objects toward it more than the opposite? Explain that gravity is affected by mass, and that Earth has more mass than, say, a person. Planets with more mass (in our solar system, larger planets) have a stronger gravitational pull, while planets with less mass (again, at least our solar system, smaller planets).

Sort the planets from largest to smallest, explaining that there is less gravity the smaller the planet, and vice-versa.

Classroom Activity 1

Adapted from “The Marshmallow Challenge”

www.marshmallowchallenge.com

Standards

ELA Grade 3, (31) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork.
Science Grade 3, (2) Scientific investigation and reasoning (E)
Science Grade 3, (3) Scientific investigation and reasoning (A)

Setup

The Marshmallow Challenge is a great way to begin the year—it can tell you a lot about your students and the way they interact with their peers. Additionally, it’s an excellent way to promote teamwork, one of the most important aspects of the Passing Zone’s performance. How do the Marshmallow Challenge and juggling relate?

- Juggling is about cooperation, communication and trust
- Juggling is about learning by doing
- Diverse skills matter when working in groups
- Juggling is about trying and failing, then trying again
- Reflects step-by-step nature of learning to juggle

Supplies

- Measuring tape
- Timer or stopwatch

For each group:

- 20 pieces of uncooked spaghetti
- 1 yard of string, split into three pieces
- 1 yard of masking tape
- 1 standard-size marshmallow
- 1 paper lunch bag to hold the supplies

Instructions

Deliver clear instructions. Be clear about the goals and rules of the Marshmallow Challenge:

1. **Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure:** The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the table top surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling or chandelier.
2. **The Entire Marshmallow Must be on Top:** The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.
3. **Use as Much or as Little of the Kit:** The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag as part of their structure.

(Marshmallow Challenge continued)

Instructions (continued)

4. **Break up the Spaghetti, String or Tape:** Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.

5. **The Challenge Lasts 18 minutes:** Teams cannot hold on to the structure when the time runs out. Those touching or supporting the structure at the end of the exercise will be disqualified.

6. **Teamwork Will Prevail:** Teams that work together (and don't waste valuable time arguing or posturing for power) tend to do better. Encourage students to make suggestions and think creatively.

Procedure

Begin the Challenge.

Walk around the room. Remind teams of the rules. Observe teams interacting, suggesting good "team" behavior.

End the Challenge.

As the timer runs out, ask each team to sit down. Approximately half of the teams will have standing structures. Measure each team's structure, having a student record each height (remember, it can't be held up, but must be free standing).

Recap and Reflect.

Discuss two main topics as a class:

1) How did the winning team work as a team? Did they divide up responsibilities? Had anyone done the project before and have prior knowledge to apply?

2) What characteristics do the best structures share? How did the winning team come up with their idea? (Typically, teams that use multiple prototypes and trial and error before settling on a final design win.)

Classroom Activity 2

Writing Prompt: Performance Reflection

Standards

ELA Grade 3, (19) Writing. Students write about their own experiences.

ELA Grade 3, (21) Writing/Persuasive Texts.

After attending the show, students can reflect on their own show-going experience and/or write a persuasive text based on their opinion of the performance. Some suggested topics:

- Was the show valuable or enjoyable? Why or why not?
- Do you consider juggling a valuable skill? Why or why not?
- How was teamwork used during the show? Was it important for the performers to use teamwork?

Classroom Activity 3

Make Your Own Juggling Balls

You will need:

- Round Balloons (two balloons for each ball)
- Dried rice, lentils, or split peas
- Funnel
- Scissors

Instructions:

Cut one balloon off at the neck. Blow up the other balloon and let the air stretch out the balloon just slightly. Fill the stretched balloon with dried stuffing of your choice using a funnel. When it is almost overflowing, blow into the balloon. The balloon will expand and the rice will fall to the bottom end and pack in tighter. When you have reached your desired size, tie off the balloon and cut off the excess. Use the other balloon (the one cut off at the neck) as a second layer. Be sure to hide the tied off end. That's it! Now you're ready to juggle.



