

NEW MEXICO YOUNG ACTORS Present:



Disney's ALADDIN, JR.

Music by **Alan Menken**

Lyrics by **Howard Ashman** and **Tim Rice**

Book adapted by **Jim Luigs**

Music adapted by **Bryan Louiselle**

Directed by **Paul Bower**

Choreography by **Josh Megill**

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to New Mexico Young Actors' production of Disney's award-winning, **Aladdin, Jr.** We are offering this study guide as a way to help you prepare your classes for our upcoming production and your experience at the theater. Included in this guide are a historical note about the original story, Disney's adaptation of the story, a list of characters, a vocabulary list and lesson ideas, some audience protocol reminders, and a list of suggested classroom activities. We always enjoy hearing from you and your students and look forward to receiving any pictures, stories, or comments about the production. Thank you for your interest and support of New Mexico Young Actors. We look forward to seeing you at the KiMo!

HISTORICAL NOTE

The story of Aladdin is taken from a collection of Arabic-language folk tales from Asia, Arabia, India, and Persia (Iran) called *The Arabian Nights*, also known as *The Thousand and One Nights*. The collection is believed to have been transmitted mostly orally over many centuries, beginning in the 9th century. The stories were translated into French by Antoine Galland, Professor of Arabic at the Royal College of Paris in 1704, and were translated into English by several authors in the 19th century, the most famous translation being that of Sir Richard Burton in 1886. It is said that *Aladdin* was not included in the original collection of Arabic stories. Other popular tales include *Sinbad, the Sailor*, and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.

DISNEY'S ALADDIN

In 1988, Howard Ashman proposed to Disney the idea of adapting the story of Aladdin as an animated musical. Ashman collaborated with composer, Alan Menken, on the original version. After Ashman died in 1991, lyricist Tim Rice joined Menken in order to finish the film. *Aladdin* premiered in November 1992 and was a huge hit—the score and song “A Whole New World” both won Academy Awards. Disney's *Aladdin* opened as a musical on Broadway in 2014, was nominated for five Tony awards, and as of February 2018, is still running at the New Amsterdam Theatre. The musical is also currently on a national tour. *Aladdin* will continue to remain popular for the foreseeable future as Disney is currently producing a live-action version of the original animated film that is set to be released in May of 2019.

ALADDIN SYNOPSIS

The story opens inside the place of the Sultan of Arabia. Jasmine, the Sultan's daughter, must choose a prince to marry, a task that she does not relish. After several potential suitors are presented, Jasmine finds a way to escape from the palace and her pending decision about a future husband. She finds herself in disguise in the bustling city of Agrabah, where she meets the local “street rat,” Aladdin. Although Jasmine learns that Aladdin is a petty thief, she is fascinated with his

carefree approach to life. Aladdin also begins to fall for the princess. The palace guards enter the scene and arrest Aladdin for stealing a loaf of bread. To the shock of Razoul and the guards, Jasmine removes her disguise and orders the guards to release the prisoner. They refuse and demand that she take it up with the grand vizier, Jafar.

Jafar is in his room scheming as to how to take Jasmine as his wife and thus inherit the throne from the bumbling Sultan. Meanwhile, Razoul and his henchmen throw Aladdin in a cave on the outskirts of Agrabah. Aladdin discovers an old lamp among the hidden treasures of the cave. He rubs the lamp and a boisterous Genie appears, granting Aladdin three wishes. Aladdin wishes to become a prince in order to have a shot at winning Jasmine's hand.

Aladdin, in disguise as Prince Ali and with a fabulous entourage, is presented to the court as a final suitor for the princess. Jasmine continues to be unimpressed until Aladdin arrives on a magic carpet at her balcony later that evening. The two fall in love and agree to marry but are swiftly interrupted by Jafar and the guards. In making another escape, Aladdin drops his lamp, which is recovered by Jafar. At the wedding the next day, Aladdin reveals his true identity while Jafar uses the confession as an opportunity to call off the ceremony and demand that he marry Jasmine. Everyone is in an uproar. Jafar reveals that he possesses the lamp and therefore all of the power. Aladdin challenges Jafar, making him believe that real power rests with the Genie. Jafar blindly agrees and wishes to become the most powerful genie ever. The Genie obliges and Jafar becomes eternally trapped in the magic lamp. Aladdin frees the Genie, professes his love for Princess Jasmine, and is finally accepted by the Sultan and the royal family.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Aladdin, "street rat" of Agrabah

Princess Jasmine, independent daughter of the Sultan

Genie, able to grant three wishes

Prince Baba of Ganoush, a flashy suitor

Prince Dahdú Rahn-Rahn, a high-energy suitor

(The) Prince Formerly Known as the Artist, a suitor with a groove

Jafar, the villain

Iago, Jafar's parrot sidekick

Razoul, the bumbling palace guard

Sultan, Jasmine's scattered father

Narrators, Townspeople, Guards

LESSON IDEAS

Classroom Discussion (Pre-Performance)

1. *How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What did you see?*
 2. *What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?*
- Theater features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
 - The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation for the performers is shown by close attention, participation, and applause at the proper times. The success of the production often depends on the audience.
 - The theater is a very special place. Its atmosphere is entirely different from your home, where the television is always available.
 - It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.

- Actors wear costumes and make-up to help create the impression of the characters they portray.
- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, effects, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

Theater Etiquette

Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience while trying to get comfortable in your seat. Lights go out before the curtain goes up and seating is very difficult after that time.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- The KiMo Theatre is a historic building. Please respect and preserve the beauty of the KiMo by not bringing food and beverages (including water, gum and candy) into the theater. These items are permitted in the lobby only.
- There is no intermission during the performance, which is 75 minutes in length. Be sure to use the restroom before the performance begins.
- Although you may wish to say something to the actors, you need to hold your thoughts, as you will disturb their concentration.
- Sing or participate *if and only if* you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the mood and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song or dance or joke.
- Be sure to turn off *all* electronic devices and cell phones. Do not text during the performance. This is very inconsiderate to the performers and distracting to your fellow audience members.

Classroom Discussion and Activities (Pre or Post-Performance)

Reading/Writing

- Discover the tales of the *Arabian Nights*. The collection contains many wonderful short stories for your students to read.
- Share the concept of the “frame story” with your class. Define the term and read the story of “Scheherazade” (the frame story for *Arabian Nights*) as a large group.
- Assign stories from the *Arabian Nights* to small groups to read. Have the groups create reports to share with the class. Require a drawing or other artwork as part of their presentation.
- Read the story of “Aladdin” from the *Arabian Nights*. How does the short story differ from the musical? What did the playwright maintain from the original story? Why do you think the playwright chose to eliminate or change certain elements of the original? Do you agree with the playwright’s decisions?

- Have students write a question about a specific scene or character in the musical. They can ask the questions as a whole class activity or work in small groups.
- Explore the relationship of protagonists and antagonists in classroom stories and draw a comparison to relationships in the musical, such as Aladdin and Jasmine, Jasmine and Jafar, Jasmine and the Sultan, etc.

Vocabulary

The following are some words that are associated with *Aladdin*:

Act	Plot	Set	Props	Downstage	Upstage
Program	Director	Producer	Fiction	Arabia	Vizier
Sultan	Intrigue	Baba ganoush		Riff-raff	Heir
Satus quo	Casbah	Maitre d'	Genuflect	Salaam	Coterie
Fakir	Sheik	Maharajah	Personify	Bona fide	Inconsequential

Science

- *Aladdin* is set in the Arabian desert. Research the desert climate of Saudi Arabia and the greater middle east. What are some prominent features of the desert? What kind of flora and fauna exist? Compare and contrast that desert with other deserts of the world—the Sahara, the Mojave, and the high desert of New Mexico!
- The Sands of Time—have your class create an hourglass sand timer using two funnels taped together. The students can guess how long the timer will be based on the amount of sand used.
- Using the flying magic carpet as a genesis, have your students explore the history of flight. How have humans attempted to take to the sky throughout the centuries? Discuss the mechanisms and history of hot air balloons, hang gliders, helicopters, airplanes, winged suits, rockets, etc.

Art

- Create a class mural of the musical. Include the scenes from the story such as the Royal Palace, Jasmine's balcony, or the Cave of Wonders.
- Draw a picture of a favorite scene or character.
- Re-create Agrabah using clay forms in a box.
- Draw an advertisement or program cover for the musical.
- Design stage scenery for *Aladdin* or another story that you would like to see on stage.

Music & Dance

- Ask the students to identify musical instruments that they heard in the musical. Discuss other instruments that could have been added for greater effect. Define instruments common to middle-eastern music such as the dumbek and djembe.
- Can you identify any recurring musical themes or motives in the music?
- How did the music express the action or emotion of the story (tempo, volume, range of notes, etc.)?
- Did you hear any incidental music (purely instrumental music that functioned as background music for a scene change)?
- *Aladdin* presents music in a middle-eastern style. Have your students identify distinctive characteristics of this music. How does it differ rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically from music that is more common in the west?
- Discuss how dance adds to the storytelling of a musical.

Math

- Create a budget for a theatrical production. List all of the expenses involved (set design and materials, professional musicians, lighting design, props, costumes, theater rental, scripts, royalties, etc.). Discuss ways that a theater company might raise money to cover all of the expenses.
- Using a spreadsheet, create a rehearsal schedule for a theatrical production. Discuss how much time it might take for the cast to learn all of the staging and dancing. How many hours a day/week/month does it take to put on a production?
- People during the time of *Aladdin* would have used a calendar based on the cycles of the moon. It is still used today in much of the Arabic world. Have your students design a calendar based on the moon calendar. Make predictions as to how many months, weeks, and days will be present in the calendar.

History/Social Studies

- *Aladdin* presents wonderful opportunities to teach history, geography, and culture. Find the middle-east on a map and identify different countries. Discuss how certain areas have changed their names over the years—Persia, Arabia, etc.
- Plan a middle-eastern culture day. Consider various foods and attire. Have your students learn a few words of the Arabic language. Invite someone from a local cultural center to offer a presentation. Ask a local middle-eastern restaurant to donate a dish to your event.
- Countries such as Iraq and Iran are considered the “cradle of civilization.” What inventions came from these countries? Research some significant historical events that occurred in this part of the world.
- Create an Arabian Marketplace. Students can act as different townspeople in various trades—food vendors, fabric sellers, cobblers, basket weavers, entertainers. Have the students wear simple costumes and make some crafts to add to the experience.

SOURCES

Internet

Arabian Nights

Definition: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Thousand-and-One-Nights>

Irani Encyclopedia: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/alf-layla-wa-layla>

Copy of *Arabian Nights*: <http://www.read.gov/books/pageturner/2003juv28132/#page/14/mode/2up>

Aladdin

The character of Aladdin: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aladdin-fictional-hero>

Information on the current Broadway production: www.aladdinthemusical.com

Flight

History: <https://www.grc.nasa.gov/www/k-12/UEET/StudentSite/historyofflight.html>

Middle-Eastern History and Culture

Map: [https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle east and asia/middle east pol 2013.pdf](https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle%20east%20and%20asia/middle%20east%20pol%202013.pdf)

Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission: <https://sacm.org.au>

Arabic Customs: <https://www.arabacademy.com/arabic-customs-traditions/>