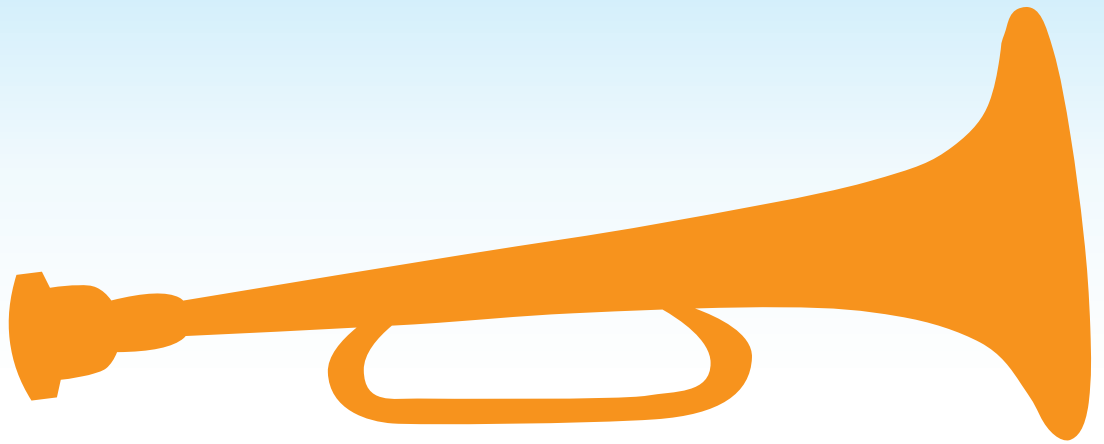


GOODSPEED MUSICALS
TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE



MAMMIE

the musical sensation!



Goodspeed's Teacher's Instructional Guide
is made possible through the generosity of



MAME

Goodspeed Opera House
April 20 - July 1, 2012

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY
JERRY HERMAN

BOOK BY
JEROME LAWRENCE
&
ROBERT E. LEE

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY
PATRICK DENNIS
AND THE PLAY "AUNTIE MAME" BY
LAWRENCE & LEE

LIGHTING DESIGN BY
CHARLIE MORRISON

COSTUME DESIGN BY
GREGG BARNES

SCENIC DESIGN BY
JAMES YOUMANS

CHOREOGRAPHED BY
VINCE PESCE

DIRECTED BY
RAY RODERICK

PRODUCED FOR GOODSPEED
MUSICALS BY
MICHAEL P. PRICE

MAME

Teacher's Instructional Guide TABLE OF CONTENTS

How To Use The Guides.....	3
ABOUT THE SHOW:	
Show Synopsis.....	4
Character Summary.....	6
The Novelist: Patrick Dennis.....	7
Meet the Writers.....	8
Behind the Scenes: Costume Design.....	10
BACKGROUND AND THEMATIC MATERIAL:	
From Page to Stage: Adaptation.....	11
The Great Crash.....	13
The Great Depression.....	14
The Social Class System.....	15
The Role of Women.....	16
LESSONS:	
Middle School Language Arts.....	17
Middle School Social Studies.....	19
High School English.....	21
High School History.....	23
Mame Lyrics.....	26
Resources.....	29
Theatre Etiquette.....	30

HOW TO USE THE GUIDES

THE TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE (TIG) is intended for use by teachers who will bring their school groups to attend performances at Goodspeed Musicals. The TIG provides background information, teaching ideas, and prompts to facilitate students' knowledge and appreciation of the show's themes and characters. The TIG activities are influenced by state and national standards associated with the arts, language arts, social studies, and science.

THE STUDENT GUIDE TO THE THEATRE serves as a companion to the Teacher's Instructional Guide (TIG). It includes a plot and character summary, accessible historical and thematic background information to support the lessons in the TIG, and a behind-the-scenes look at the production. It also includes fun facts, theatre terms, and activities.

Each lesson in the TIG corresponds to a specific section in the Student Guide. Reading the Student Guide before attending a Goodspeed production will increase the likelihood that students will take active, critical roles as audience members, which will then lead to valuable classroom discussions.

The chart below maps the connection between the TIG's lessons and supporting material with the corresponding pages in the Student Guide. (Click page numbers to jump to section.)

LEVEL/SUBJECT	LEARNING PHASE	LESSON TOPIC	TIG	STUDENT GUIDE
Middle School Language Arts	Before the Show	Adaptation through Children's Literature	Lesson: p. 17 Support Material: p. 11-12	Student Material: p. 10
Middle School Language Arts	Understanding	Language and Lyrics	Lesson: p. 17 Support Material: p. 26-28	Student Material: p. 15-17
Middle School Language Arts	After the Show	Conformity vs. Nonconformity	Lesson: p. 18 Support Material: p. 16	Student Material: p. 3-5, 14
Middle School Social Studies	Before the Show	Front Page News	Lesson: p. 19 Support Material: p. 13-14	Student Material: p. 11-12
Middle School Social Studies	Understanding	Social Class	Lesson: p. 19 Support Material: p. 15	Student Material: p. 13
Middle School Social Studies	After the Show	Women in History	Lesson: p. 20 Support Material: p. 16	Student Material: p. 14
High School English	Before the Show	Conformity vs. Nonconformity	Lesson: p. 21 Support Material: p. 16	Student Material: p. 3-5 14
High School English	Understanding	Language and Lyrics	Lesson: p. 21 Support Material: p. 26-28	Student Material: p. 15-17
High School English	After the Show	Adaptation	Lesson: p. 17 Support Material: p. 11-12	Student Material: p. 10
High School History	Before the Show	The Youth of the Great Depression	Lesson: p. 23 Support Material: p. 13-14	Student Material: p. 11-12
High School History	Understanding	Social Class	Lesson: p. 24 Support Material: p. 4, 5 15	Student Material: p. 3, 4, 13
High School History	After the Show	Women During Mame's Time	Lesson: p. 25 Support Material: p. 16	Student Material: p. 14

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The Flame of Mame

By Jerome Lawrence
& Robert E. Lee

Mame constantly amazes us. This is not a lack of modesty—for, although we wrote the play *Auntie Mame* and the book of the new musical *Mame*, many minds have shaped this remarkable lady: Patrick Dennis, who created her in his best-seller, and now Jerry Herman, of *Hello Dolly* fame, who has written a musical score which would make the madcap Mame clap her own hands with delight.

Somehow it seems that Mame herself has plunged into the joyful work of making this musical. She is an almost unique figure in modern fiction: Mame refuses to be imaginary! She is not a fondly remembered Mama or a matchmaker going back to the gas-lights of 14th Street. Mame is more interested in torches along the Ganges and the lightning bugs of Peckerwood. She virtually polevaults out of the gaiety of the twenties into lunar orbit—soaring high above depressions, wars and worries, taking with her a wide-eyed little boy.

We always long for what we don't have. This seems to be the Year of the Mole—a time of blindness and confusion, of fuzzy aims and fading faith. Our theatre lately has been in a Dark Age, reflecting only shadows. Mame, somehow, lifts a flaming light in that blackness. She has optimism! Zest! Bounce! Even when she isn't quite sure where she's going, Mame knows, by God, she'll get there! All of us—even the most despondent and disillusioned—would like to be like Mame. Or we would like to have her take us by the hand, as she does Patrick's, and convince us that our planet isn't such a shabby place. We want to hear her sing "Open a New Window!"—in a decade when so many of us are pulling down the blinds and locking the shutters in pretended security. Mame is fun, by not mere escapist fare: she sings

The boisterous heroine of our story, *Mame*, has been a staple in American fiction since she was first introduced in Patrick Dennis' novel, *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade*. In 1955, this best-selling novel sold over two million copies. In 1956, the book was transferred into a play with the same title. Adapted by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, the play was a huge success running for 678 performances on Broadway. Nearly ten years after the premier of the stage play, Lawrence and Lee collaborated with Jerry Herman to create the musical, *Mame*. With Herman's new lyrics and a tweaked book from Lawrence and Lee, *Mame* was an even bigger success on the Great White Way, lasting three and a half years.



Original Broadway cast of *MAME*

On December 1, 1928, a woman and a young boy walk the streets of Manhattan. Patrick, a newly orphaned 10 year old from Iowa, and Agnes Gooch, Patrick's nanny who is delivering him to his only living relative, Mame Dennis, arrive at Mame's penthouse apartment on 3 Beekman Place. There is a bustling party taking place at her lavish apartment. Mame introduces Patrick and Agnes to the party guests and takes the young boy in as her ward. Patrick is quickly introduced to Mame's liberal lifestyle.

Patrick's father, however, left a will stating that the Knickerbocker Bank would share responsibility with Mame in deciding where Patrick will go to school. The will states that Patrick should attend a conservative school, but Mame disagrees. She pretends to agree with the will and enrolls Patrick in the Laboratory of Life, an experimental school where it is acceptable for the students to be nude. Dwight Babcock,

the Knickerbocker Bank's representative, finds out that Mame has deceived him and immediately removes Patrick from the school, enrolling him at a boarding school called St. Boniface, Babcock's alma mater.

The stock market crashes in 1929 causing the beginning of the Great Depression and Mame loses her fortune. After trying her hand at many different jobs, Mame accepts the role of Moon Lady in a musical which stars her best friend, Vera Charles. Mame's sole responsibility in this role is to straddle a crescent moon as it rises for the climax of the last act. At the show, Mame's performance is a complete disaster and it ruins the production.

Patrick, meanwhile, has hitchhiked to New Haven to see Mame in the musical. After the show, he goes backstage to offer his congratulations. Based on her disastrous performance, Mame knows she's lost another job and deems herself a failure. However, Patrick encourages her and expresses how proud he is of her.

It's early December now and Mame decides to throw an early Christmas to lighten the sorrowful mood caused by the onslaught of the Great Depression. Mame, Gooch, Patrick, who is home from school for the weekend, and other household staff exchange gifts. As they celebrate, an old flame of Mame's, Beauregard Burnside, shows up at Beekman Place and treats everyone to a Christmas dinner. Beau expresses the desire to marry Mame, but explains that he needs his mother's consent first. Beau takes Mame and Patrick to Peckerwood, his mother's home, and meets many people from Beau's life including his mother and his ex-fiancée, Sally Cato. Sally is determined to make a fool of Mame and tricks her into declaring herself an expert horsewoman. Beau has his doubts, as do many others, but he confidently states, "Whatever Mame says she can do, she can do." Beau's faith in Mame rings true as she becomes the first horsewoman in the Southern aristocracy to bring a fox back alive from a hunt. Mame proves herself, wins the hearts of the Burnside family, says yes to Beau's proposal, and is warmly welcomed to the South.

Patrick, meanwhile, has returned to school and writes Beau and Mame as they travel on their endless honeymoon.

SHOW SYNOPSIS

The Flame of Mame (continued)

out a wish to run toward life,
not away from it.

Mame is a dear friend. We have known and loved her for many years. We have seen her indomitable spirit embodied in dozens of stars in dozens of countries. Her battles with Mr. Babcock and her romance with Beau have been eloquently expressed in the major languages of the earth—but no translation could be happier than the musical language of Jerry Herman. But the audience is always the thermometer of the theatre. A blazing conception can sputter out like a match in an ice-cube tray unless it sends its singular incandescence across the footlights. The flame of Mame actually comes from everyone who is warmed by her daring and set aglow by her impudent but loving laughter.

Years pass and Patrick has grown into a young man. Sad news arrives from Babcock, the conservative bank representative, saying that Beauregard has passed away from falling off "an alp." Mame calls Patrick from overseas and Patrick comforts her.

Back at Mame's New York apartment, Vera prepares a new life for the recently widowed Mame. Vera convinces Mame to write her memoirs. As they write, the two reminisce and make a promise that whenever all else fails, they will always be there for each other.

Mame and Vera also decide to makeover Agnes Gooch. They give Agnes a low-cut dress, high heels, and lipstick and send her off to start making the most of her life. Agnes returns six months later looking like she did before the makeover, but also clearly pregnant. Seeing her friend in need, Mame takes Gooch back into her care.

Patrick, now engaged to a well-to-do girl named Gloria Upson, arranges for Mame to meet his new fiancée's parents. Mame's recent decision to take in Agnes Gooch, a fallen woman, could be risky for this engagement but she doesn't mention the subject to the Upsons.

several other friends have joined together for the party. The Upsons leave abruptly, however, after Agnes Gooch comes downstairs, disheveled and pregnant, and Mame announces that she has bought the plot of land next to the Upsons' for the Beauregard Burnside Memorial Home for Single Mothers. As the Upsons leave, Patrick ends his engagement to Gloria. He has developed an eye for Pegeen Ryan and rediscovered his appreciation for his Auntie Mame's lifestyle.

Several years later, Patrick and Pegeen have a newborn baby boy named Peter. Years pass and Mame is off traveling the world again. She returns from India and teaches Peter many things from her travels. Peter requests that his mother allow him to travel with Mame. At first she won't hear of it, but after a convincing argument from Mame, Pegeen changes her mind.



Original Broadway cast of MAME

At Patrick and Gloria's engagement party, Mr. Upson suggests that, as an engagement present, Mame buy Patrick and Gloria the plot of land next door to the Upson's property so they can build a home there. Mame is nervous for what this could mean for Patrick; but, he states that he wants this kind of life and is tired of all the flighty people he's had to associate with as a result of being Mame's ward. He states that he would like to protect Gloria from people who choose not to conform. Mame and Patrick argue and Patrick runs out, leaving Mame behind.

Mame hosts a party in her newly redecorated apartment. The decorator, Pegeen Ryan, along with the Upsons, Babcock, Vera, and

CHARACTER SUMMARY

AUNTIE MAME: A glamorous and eccentric woman who takes her nephew, Patrick, into her care after his father has passed away. Mame has a bohemian and opulent lifestyle in which she hosts frequent parties in her Manhattan apartment, goes on a lengthy trips, and has an expensive taste for fashion.



CLICK HERE to watch Angela Lansbury's interview about playing Auntie Mame

AGNES GOOCH: Patrick's nanny and Mame's personal secretary. Agnes is also a dedicated friend to Mame and Patrick and frequently joins them on their many adventures. Agnes has lived a relatively sheltered life and, after some convincing from Mame, agrees to go out and experience the world.

PATRICK DENNIS: Mame's ten year old nephew who, after being orphaned, becomes her ward. Patrick received a conservative upbringing, but is quickly introduced to Mame's free-spirited lifestyle after his father passes away.

VERA CHARLES: Best friend to Mame and an actress of the stage. Vera is a helpful friend to Mame when she loses all of her money after the stock market crash. Vera does not like children, however she eventually becomes an important person in Patrick's life after he begins living with Mame.

BEAUREGARD BURNSIDE: A wealthy southern gentleman who marries Mame. Together, they travel across the world on a very long honeymoon. Burnside, however, passes away suddenly leaving Mame as a wealthy widow.

GLORIA UPSON: A well-to-do girl from an upper class family. When Patrick has grown, he becomes engaged to Gloria. She is an unexpected choice for Patrick because, in all of her conformity, she represents everything that Mame is not.

PEGEEN RYAN: A young and pretty decorator that Mame hires to remodel her apartment at Beekman Place. After meeting her, Patrick falls for Pegeen and breaks off his engagement with Gloria. Patrick and Pegeen get married and have a son named Peter.

DWIGHT BABCOCK: A stuffy and meddlesome bank representative who supervises Patrick's father's estate and his upbringing with Mame.



*Louise Pitre as Auntie Mame at Goodspeed.
Photo by Diane Sobolewski*

THE NOVELIST

Patrick Dennis

Patrick Dennis was born in 1921 in Evanston, Illinois. A truly prolific writer of the 1950s and 60s, Dennis wrote 16 novels under three different names. Virginia Rowans and Patrick Dennis were his most common pseudonyms. Under his real name, Edward Everett Tanner III, he wrote several novels about foreign affairs. Between 1951 and 1971, he wrote 12 books using the name Patrick Dennis and 4 books using the name Virginia Rowans. As a result, Dennis became the first novelist to have 3 books on the *New York Times* bestseller list at one time.



Dennis wrote many classics including *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade*, *Little Me*, *Around the World with Auntie Mame*, and *The Loving Couple*. *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade* and *Little Me* were both adapted into works for the musical theatre and ended up on Broadway.

Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade was on the bestseller list for 112 weeks and sold more than two million copies. It wasn't, however, a bestseller from the beginning. Before the book's publisher, the Vanguard Press decided to take on the book, Dennis received rejections from 19 other publishers.



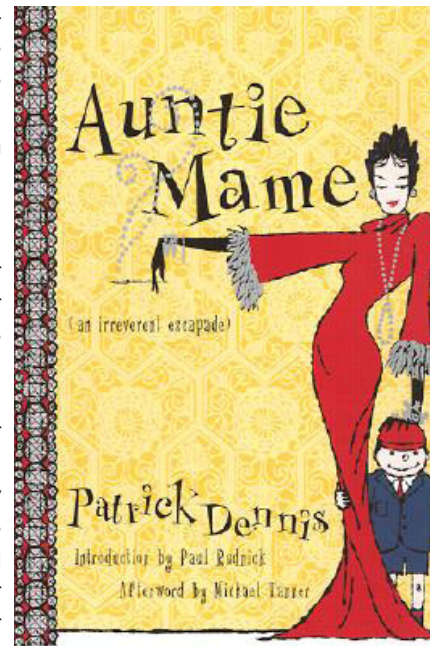
CLICK HERE to read portions of Dennis' novel, *Auntie Mame*

EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO *AUNTIE MAME: AN IRREVERENT ESCAPADE* by Paul Rudnick

"The novel was originally constructed as a series of short stories centering on Mame, but a savvy editor suggested linking the vignettes with a device thieved from that most sedate and suburban of publications, the Reader's Digest. In the Digest, individuals would often recall a Most Unforgettable Character. Patrick Dennis gleefully and maliciously subverted this cozy format, as his Most Unforgettable Character is Mame Dennis, a sparkling, chain-smoking, often inebriated Manhattan socialite for whom 9 A.M. is considered "the Middle of the Night." ...Auntie Mame is a drunken fairy tale, and Mame is a Cinderella with many princes and an independent income."

PATRICK DENNIS ON THE PLAY, *AUNTIE MAME*

"Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee...have caught - far better than I - the moments of heartbreak that are in *Auntie Mame* and placed them on stage so deftly that, between the guffaws and giggles, sniggers and snorts, there are audible sobs and visible tears at each and every performance. That is what I meant to do in the novel and, am afraid, failed. To me, comedy is measured not only by its laughs, but by its tears. With every pratfall the heart should also ache. In this play it does, and I still cry just as hard when I drop into the Broadhurst Theatre now as I did on the night the play was out in Wilmington."



MEET THE WRITERS

JERRY HERMAN was born in New York City on July 10, 1933 and began his career early as a self-taught pianist. His professional work began long before he went to college but, after attending the University at Miami where he studied drama, Herman started playing the piano at cocktail lounges. Shortly after, he began writing musical reviews and had his first success, titled *Nightcap*, in 1958.



Herman's Broadway career began in 1961 with the Tony and Grammy Award nominated *Milk and Honey*. Herman was nominated for writing the music and lyrics. In 1964, following his Broadway debut, Herman won the Tony Awards for Best Composer and Best Lyricist for *Hello, Dolly!*. He won the Variety Award in both categories for *Hello, Dolly!* as well.

After his success with *Hello, Dolly!*, Herman was asked to write the music for *Mame*. His compositions for *Mame* won him the Variety Award for Best Lyricist, a Grammy Award and a Tony nomination.

In 1969, with *Dear World* opening on Broadway, Herman became the first composer-lyricist to have three productions on Broadway running simultaneously. Later, in 1974, *Mack and Mabel* opened on Broadway followed by *The Grand Tour* in 1978.

In 1981, an off-off Broadway review of Herman's work, titled *Jerry's Girls*, opened and ran for two years. After that run, it was transferred to Broadway. Meanwhile, Herman had written the score for *La Cage Aux Folles*, which debuted on Broadway in 1983.

In 2009, Herman received the Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in Theatre and in 2010, he was a Kennedy Center Honors recipient.



CLICK HERE to listen to an NPR interview with Jerry Herman



CLICK HERE to watch an interview with Jerry Herman on PBS' "innerVIEWS"



JEROME LAWRENCE was born in Cleveland, Ohio on July 14, 1915. Lawrence, a graduate of Ohio State University and University of California, Los Angeles, worked as a journalist for an Ohio newspaper for several years of his life. Later, from 1939-1941, he worked as a writer for CBS Radio.

Lawrence's major career credits were in collaboration with Robert E. Lee. Together, they collaborated on over 35 works, many of which went to Broadway. Lawrence directed the first arena production of his and Lee's famous work, *Mame*, in 1968.

Lawrence taught playwriting at the University of Southern California, won the Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical for *Mame*, and was honored with The Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute at Ohio State University in 1986.

Lawrence spent his last years writing from his home in California up until his death in 2004. He wrote the well-known theatre biography, [Actor: The Life and Times of Paul Muni](#).



MEET THE WRITERS

ROBERT EDWIN LEE was born on October 15, 1918, in Elyria, Ohio. Lee, whose interest in the arts began when he was in high school, attended Northwestern University until transferring to Ohio Wesleyan in 1935. After graduating from Ohio Wesleyan, Lee worked as an executive at a small advertising firm, Young & Rubicam. Years into his career, Ohio Wesleyan awarded Lee an honorary doctorate in Literature.



Lee was an active director, teacher, and playwright in both the professional and academic theatre worlds. Spending several years of his career producing for the radio, he was awarded a Peabody Award for a United Nations based radio program in 1948. He also was an adjunct professor of playwriting at the University of California, Los Angeles and was committed to teaching new playwrights. His major career credits, however, were in collaboration with Jerome Lawrence with whom he created over 35 works of literature, many of which went to Broadway. Lee, along with Jerome Lawrence, was co-founder of the American Playwrights Theatre and the Margo Jones Award. He died on July 8, 1994 in Los Angeles.

LAWRENCE & LEE collaborated on many works for the theatre. They received 2 Peabody Awards, the Variety Critics Poll Award, and multiple Tony Award nominations for their work. Their plays have been produced not only in the United States, but also throughout the world.



Lawrence and Lee produced many programs for the Armed Forces and created many of the official Army-Navy programs for special broadcasts, including the D-Day broadcast. After collaborating on the Armed Forces radio, they began creating other radio programs, such as the series "Columbia Workshop," for CBS Radio.

Lawrence and Lee's first collaboration in the theatre was writing the book to *Look, Ma, I'm Dancin'!* Their second theatrical collaboration was writing the book to *Inherit the Wind* which went to Broadway in 1955 and was translated into thirty languages. Lawrence and Lee received the Donaldson Award, the Outer Critics Circle Award, the Variety New York Drama Critics Poll Award, the Critics Award for best foreign play, and several Tony Award nominations.

Later in their careers, Lawrence and Lee adapted James Hilton's "Lost Horizon" into a musical titled *Shangri-La*. Other later works include *Auntie Mame*, *The Gang's All Here*, *A Call on Kuprin*, *Mame*, *Dear World*, *The Incomparable Max*, *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*, *Jabberwock*, and *Diamond Orchid*. *Auntie Mame*, *Mame*, and *Inherit the Wind* were all adapted into films.

In 1990, Lawrence and Lee were named Fellows of the American Theatre at The Kennedy Center Honors in Washington, DC.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Interview with Mame Costume Designer Gregg Barnes

by Katherine Griswold

Vibrant, bold, strong, optimistic - Mame is truly a one-of-a-kind character worthy of one of the best costume designers in the business. And Tony Award-winner Gregg Barnes is certainly the man for the job. With Broadway credits that include *Follies*, *Elf*, *Bye Bye Birdie*, *Legally Blonde*, *The Drowsy Chaperone* (for which he won the Tony), *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, and *Side Show*, there's no doubt that Barnes' designs can match Mame's larger-than-life personality. Not to mention the enormous number of costumes needed to produce the show.

So how does a designer wrap his head around a production with 175 costumes spanning across three decades? First and foremost is research. For *Mame*, Barnes studied architecture, textiles, dress making, film costume, society pages and jewelry from the 1920s to 1940s. "Part of the fun is seeing these decades and the fashions they inspired play out before our eyes," remarks Barnes. "I try to use many diverse inspirations when I am sorting out the research."

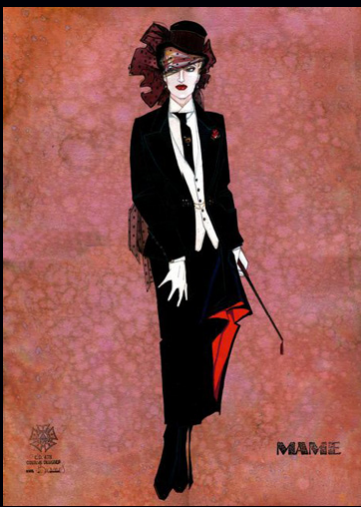
But Barnes isn't starting completely from scratch with Goodspeed's *Mame*. While the production will feature new designs, Gregg Barnes has a great foundation on which to rely, having created the costumes for The Kennedy Center's production of *Mame* in 2006. "Mame is a huge undertaking in so many ways and having been through it I know what a blessing it is to have a place to start!" And he's not exaggerating - with 17 costumes for Mame alone, Barnes believes that she has more costume changes than any other leading character in a musical.

As far as inspiration goes, Barnes explains, "You want to have a big idea to begin with. Something that aides in the storytelling, has wit and a point of view. It narrows the field when going through the endless research files. In

the case of *Mame*, part of the job is to make sure the focus is always on the lady with the bugle! In the spectacular world of the play and with all of the crazy characters we meet, we never want to lose sight of the heart of the story. In many ways I try to put myself in Patrick's eyes and give a sense of how Mame's world would look and feel to a child."



The character of Mame is defined as much by her words and actions as by her costumes. According to Barnes, "Mame is an original and that is the essential character trait that has to be defined." Barnes takes his cues not only from the script, but from the actress - in this case, the Tony nominated Louise Pitre. About a month before rehearsals started, Barnes and Pitre spent two exhausting fitting days getting to the heart of the character and how she should look. "The Goodspeed is in for a treat," says Barnes. "Louise is so smart and has such passion for the character and I was so inspired by our time together. Mame is the center of the cyclone and everything else is chosen in relation to what she wears. A thrilling undertaking!"



FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Adaptation

“Adaptation: a transition or conversion from one medium to another (for example, book to musical). Adaptation implies a process that demands rethinking, reconceptualization, and understanding of how the nature of drama differs from the nature of all other literature” (Brown 179).

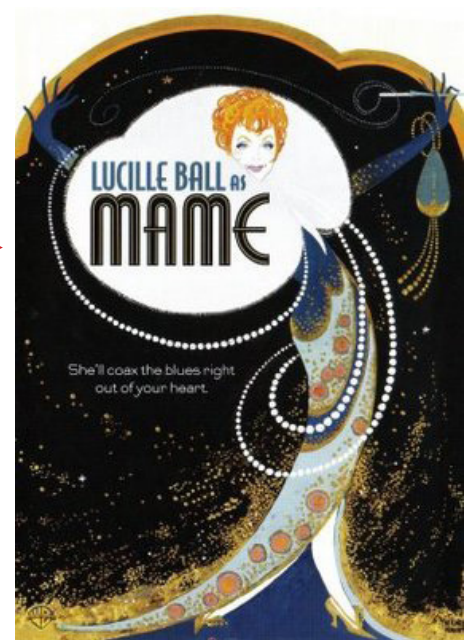
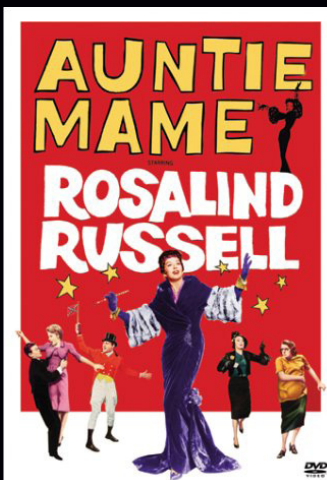
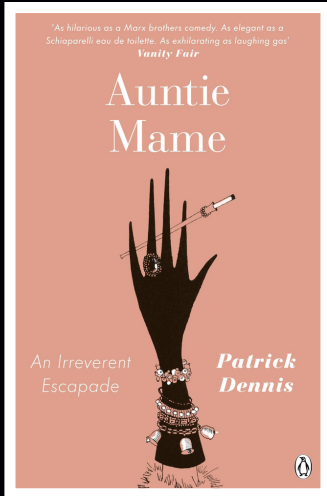
The musical, *Mame* is an adaptation of Patrick Dennis' 1955 bestseller entitled, *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade*. Dennis' book is a fictional work inspired by his eccentric aunt, Marion Turner. Though Dennis used experiences with Turner to write the novel, it is a misconception that she raised him. He was, instead, raised by his parents in the suburbs of Chicago.

The story follows Patrick's life with his Auntie Mame. The book encompasses many adventures among Auntie Mame, Patrick, and several other characters that they meet along the way.

In the musical adaptation, the playwrights not only incorporated the main characters and the excitement of their adventures, but many passages from the book are also easily recognizable on the stage (See example on the following page.)

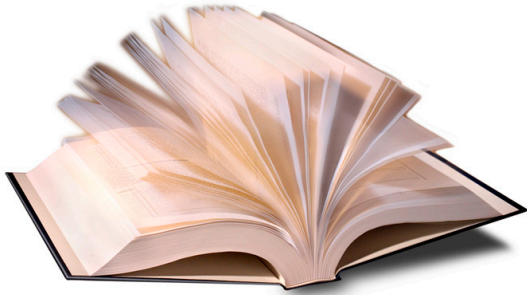
Most novels are comprised of first or third person narration mixed with dialogue. When adapting a novel for the stage, the playwright must convert all of the dialogue into script and stage directions. Take a look on the following page to study how a passage from Patrick Dennis' book, *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade*, was adapted into a scene from the musical. Make sure to note what was added, subtracted, or left the same from the original book.

Keep in mind that not all of the text will become dialogue for the musical. Much of the text often becomes a part of the stage directions in a script. Stage directions are a playwright's written instructions about how the actors are to move and behave in a play. They explain in which direction characters should move, what facial expressions they should assume, and so on. Keep in mind that in a novel or story there is usually a narrator that describes what the characters are doing, but on stage, actors can show an emotion without a narrator having to explain the emotion to the audience. Remember, if the message in the novel is strong and clear, it will be an accurate representation of the original text because it will convey to the audiences what the playwright found to be the strongest part of the text.



FROM PAGE TO STAGE

Adaptation



AUNTIE MAME: AN IRREVERENT ESCAPE

by Patrick Dennis
Original Book
1955, p. 16-17

"But why didn't you tell me you were coming today?
I'd never have been giving this party."

"Mum, I wired you..."

"Yes, but you said July first. Tomorrow. This is the thirty-
first of June."

Norah shook her head balefully. "No, mum, 'tis the
first, God curse the evil day."

The tinselly laugh rang out, "But that's ridiculous!
Everyone knows 'Thirty days hath September, April,
June and...' My God!" There was a moment's silence.
"But darling," she said dramatically, "I'm your Auntie
Mame!" She put her arms around me and kissed me,
and I knew I was safe.

...There were people sitting on the low Japanese
divans, standing out on the terrace, and looking at
the dirty river through the big window. They were all
talking and drinking. My Auntie Mame kissed me a
great deal and introduced me to a lot of strangers, a
Mr. Benchley, who was very nice, a Mr. Woollcott, who
wasn't, a Miss Charles, and a good many others.

She kept saying, "This is my brother's son and now he's
going to be my little boy."

MAME

by Jerome Lawrence, Robert. E. Lee, & Jerry Herman
Adapted Musical, 1966
ACT I, Scene 2

MAME

But that's impossible. You're not coming until
tomorrow. Your telegram said very clearly December
first. This is November thirty-first. And everybody knows
"Thirty days hath September, April, June and—" "
Omigod, I'm your Auntie Mame!

*(Reaching under the bar for the bugle, and handing it
to PATRICK)*

And this is for you. A present.

MAME

*(Crossing to the center of the room, quieting the
CROWD)*

Listen, everybody! This is my little boy!

VERA

What???

MAME

Well, he's not actually my little boy. He's my brother's
son. From Des Moines. My poor late brother.

Glossary

Stock Market: the place where stocks are traded. The goal for an investor is to buy a stock, hold onto it for a period of time, and then sell the stock for more than was paid for it.

Stocks: ownership over a piece of a company.

Roaring Twenties: The decade before the Stock Market Crash of 1929, which was a time of optimism, wealth, and prosperity

Dow Jones Industrial Average: lists the average price of selected stocks on the New York Stock Exchange.

Shares: the pieces of a company that are being sold on the stock market.

New York Stock Exchange: The New York location where stocks are sold and exchanged.

Panic Selling: the attempt to urgently sell a stock item to make any kind of profit, often causing rapid and significant decline in price.

Black Tuesday: This date, October 29, 1929, symbolizes the start of the Great Depression, even though the economy had been in decline for at least 6 months prior to this date.

The Great Crash: In 1929, the day when the stock market became very unstable and the price of stocks on the New York Stock Exchange fell quickly and drastically. The Great Crash was on October 29, 1929, a day known as "Black Tuesday," when the stock market crashed.

THE GREAT CRASH 1929

When the curtain rises on *Mame*, it is just before the stock market crash of 1929. Mame is living a fanciful and extravagant life. She is wealthy, unmarried, does not work, and has frequent parties. However, after the **stock market** crashes, she loses everything, and is forced to enter the lower-working class.

The decade before the stock market crash of 1929, known as the **Roaring Twenties**, was a time of optimism, wealth, and prosperity. People were buying the latest fad items, such as automobiles, appliances, and clothes, more frequently. **The Dow Jones Industrial Average** had a six-year increase and it was assumed that the stock market would stay at this high place for a long time. Unfortunately, in 1929 the stock market became extremely unstable and the price of **shares** on the **New York Stock Exchange** fell quickly and drastically.

prices decreased significantly, causing **panic selling**. The following Tuesday, "**Black Tuesday**," the market continued to fall and eventually crashed. The causes of the Great Depression are still debated and, while many feel it was from foolish investments in stocks and unequal distribution of wealth, we still don't know exactly what caused it. **The Great Crash** brought the Roaring Twenties to a halting stop in 1929 and led to a major crisis in America.



Black Tuesday was the most devastating day of the stock market crash. Wealthy investors became beggars overnight and there was a wave of suicides in New York's financial district. Thousands of investors had lost everything and there was no money to replenish what had been borrowed. By mid-November the stock market had lost nearly half of its value.



The Great Depression was the worst economic disaster in United States history. The first economic downturn of the Great Depression occurred in early September 1929. The price of shares on the New York Stock Exchange began to quickly reduce. On Thursday, October 24, 1929, also known as "Black Thursday,"

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

1929-1941

No one realized the disastrous effect that the Great Crash would have on the United States economy. Herbert Hoover, who was President when the Great Depression began, stated in March of 1930 that the United States had "passed the worst." He didn't know that the economic crisis would not improve for another 11 years.

As investment companies, banks, and businesses failed, jobs also began to disappear. Companies began to close their doors, causing thousands to be out of work. In addition, the banks demanded repayment of all loans to keep their doors open. People who had borrowed money to buy their homes and start up new businesses suddenly found their property repossessed or their businesses bankrupt. Victims of the Great Depression who had lost their homes often lived in "Hoovervilles" and could not support their families. By the 1930s, thousands of schools were operating on reduced hours or were closed down entirely. Nearly three million children had dropped out of the schools that remained open.

By 1932, a quarter of the labor force, or 13 million people, had become unemployed and 40% of the banks in the United States closed. By 1934 a record breaking 10,000 banks had closed their doors. The Great Depression had such a significant impact on the economy that economic hardship also spread internationally.

HOOVERVILLES

Since so many people lost their homes due to bankruptcy during the Great Depression, after being evicted, these victims of the Depression were desperate to find shelter. As a result of this panic and desperation, "Hoovervilles" began to form which were shelters in small communities that were filled with homes made from scrap materials. These homes were often packed with many people, had no electricity, and did not offer much protection.

Hoovervilles, were named after President Herbert Hoover, who served from 1929 to 1933. The name was a deliberate insult towards Herbert Hoover as many people blamed his administration as the cause of the Great Depression.

THE DUST BOWL (1930-1936)

During the Great Depression, an area called the Great Plains was struck by a drought. Terrible conditions, including lack of rain, overuse of land, and high winds, destroyed the soil, grass, and crops. Many poor farmers followed what John Steinbeck called "The Mother Road" in his novel *The Grapes of Wrath* and fled west towards California on Route 66 to find jobs on farms that were not affected by the Dust Bowl. When the farmers

arrived, however, the locals were not welcoming since they were also struggling through the economic depression.

THE NEW DEAL

When Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in 1932, he pledged to create "a new deal for the American people." The New Deal became a term that encompassed all of Roosevelt's efforts to help the millions of people who were affected by the Great Depression.

One of these efforts involved the creation of programs which would provide repair and construction work for Americans. The Empire State Building, The Chrysler Building, The Golden Gate Bridge, and Rockefeller Center were all built during the Depression. Another relief effort from the New Deal era included the creation of relief agencies to help the victims of natural and economic disasters, including residents of the Great Plains who were devastated by dust storms during the Great Depression.

RECOVERY

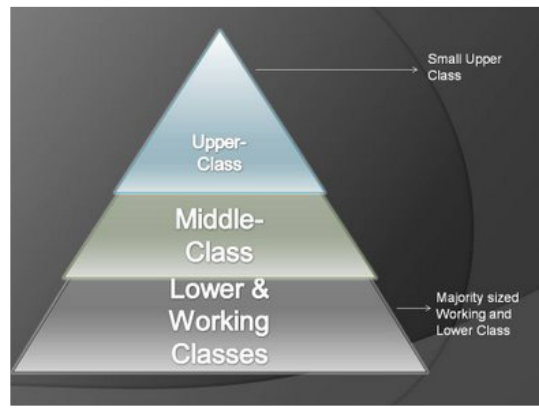
After the stock market crash of 1929, it took approximately 27 years to bring the economy back up to pre-crash levels. In the late 1930s, the Great Depression was coming to an end, but many Americans were still suffering from extreme poverty. Americans listened and watched as German military invaded and took over Poland, causing World War II to erupt in Europe.

The country's recovery from the Great Depression began when the U.S. was able to provide supplies to the countries already involved in fighting World War II. The United States government was able to stimulate the economy by providing jobs to the unemployed while offering assistance to the other allied countries.

After Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941 the United States entered World War II. When the United States began to fight, more than 10 million men and women enlisted into the military. Those who were unable to enlist worked in factories to make supplies for the war effort. There was a desperate need for soldiers, pilots, and workers who could make ammunition, weaponry, and aircraft. Due to its involvement in the war and the need for war-related supplies, America's unemployment rate dropped below 10%. The United States economy had skyrocketed and was finally on the road to restoration.

Glossary

THE SOCIAL CLASS SYSTEM



The United States social class system was well-balanced up until the Great Depression. When the stock market crashed, the middle class severely struggled. Members of this class were some of the first to lose their jobs and found they were moving into the lower class. The upper class, meanwhile, were also fighting to keep their jobs but many were able to sustain themselves for longer from their high incomes.

Roosevelt imposed higher taxes on the wealthy. Members of the upper class felt that he was being unfair and, since Roosevelt had grown up in an upper class household, many felt he was turning his back on his own social class.

In the beginning of the musical, *Mame*, we see the title character flaunting her upper class wealth and lavish lifestyle. She doesn't, however, remain in this same status quo. When the stock market crashed, Mame lost all of her money and needed to find work. She suddenly found herself become part of the lower class and had to make changes in her life to adapt to what was going on in the United States during this time.

Lower Class: the social class, also known as the working class, which is comprised mainly of people in hourly-paid positions.

Middle Class: a group of people who fall between the lower and upper class and typically work for an income that is higher than the lower class but lower than the upper class.

Upper Class: A group of people who are typically wealthy and have high paying jobs.

The upper class, however, showed a significant amount of opposition when Roosevelt created the New Deal. In order to finance the New Deal,



Lower Class



Lower Class



Middle Class



Middle Class



Upper Class



Upper Class



Upper Class



Upper Class

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

1928 - 1940

1920s WOMEN: ENHANCING THEIR ROLES

Women of the 1920s lived amidst a prosperous and changing time. As a result of new attitudes and laws, including the right to vote, women found themselves playing different roles in society. They were beginning to take on more responsibility at home, in the workplace, in politics, and also in education.



Just as women were becoming more visible in the professional and political worlds, they were also beginning to attend universities in greater numbers after high school. These universities, however, were not coeducational. Due to this separation, women, unfortunately, still felt unequal to men. As a result, women of the 1920s began to work for equity reforms in government and education.

Although women were becoming more educated and experienced, and fighting for their equal rights, only about 15% of women in the United States brought an income into the household. In 1920s society, a woman's typical role was to marry, take care of the children, and run the household while her husband was at work. However, the role of women would change drastically during the economic downfall of the Great Depression.

THE WORKING WOMAN



During the Great Depression, working women were the first ones to lose their jobs. Then as the Depression progressed, hardly anyone, male or female, was able to hold onto a job. Many women were forced to look for work while also maintaining their household.

Married women who sought employment during the Great Depression were often looked down upon because first, they were seen as unequal to

men, and second, these women were thought to be taking jobs and money away from more deserving men.



MAME AND CONFORMITY

In the late 1920s, the time period when *Mame* begins, a typical American woman spent her time at home taking care of her family and the household. This was a fairly common expectation for women and very few resisted this role. *Mame*, the title character of our musical, was not one to conform. While most middle-aged women spent their time caring for their families, *Mame* was unmarried and lived an unorthodox lifestyle with stylish accoutrements and fanciful parties. She did not have a job either, at least not until she was forced to acquire one after the 1929 Stock Market Crash. *Mame* stands for independence, rejecting the stereotypes of the period and standing up for women's rights.



LESSONS

Middle School Language Arts

BEFORE THE SHOW: Adaptation through Children's Literature

Mame is a musical that was adapted from a novel titled, *Auntie Mame: An Irreverent Escapade* by Patrick Dennis. An adaptation is a piece of writing that is changed into a script for a movie, TV show, or stage production.

ACTIVITY

Use [page 10 of the Student Guide](#) to familiarize students with adaptations. After explaining and demonstrating examples of adaptations, separate students into groups of three. Assign each group to one of the following children's books:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • <u><i>Where the Wild Things Are</i></u> by Maurice Sendak | • <u><i>No, David!</i></u> by David Shannon |
| • <u><i>The Giving Tree</i></u> by Shel Silverstein | • <u><i>Fancy Nancy</i></u> by Jane O'Connor |
| • <u><i>Green Eggs and Ham</i></u> by Dr. Seuss | • <u><i>Corduroy</i></u> by Don Freeman |
| • <u><i>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</i></u> by Eric Carle | • <u><i>Olivia</i></u> by Ian Falconer |
| • <u><i>The Lorax</i></u> by Dr. Seuss | • <u><i>Curious George</i></u> by Hans Augusto Rey & Margaret Rey |
| • <u><i>Pinkalicious</i></u> by Victoria Kann and Elizabeth Kann | • <u><i>Jumanji</i></u> by Chris Van Allsburg |

Provide each group their assigned book. Have groups sit in a quiet place and read the book together. After reading the book and the adaptation pages in the Student Guide, have students write their own adaptation of the story.

When each group completes their writing, have students rehearse their adaptation. Then have each group perform their adaptation for the class.

For an added challenge, students can perform their adaptations for students in younger grade levels!

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EXPLORATION: Adaptation through Children's Literature

Jerry Herman won 3 Tony Awards and several Grammy award nominations for his outstanding lyrics. He wrote music and lyrics for over 10 Broadway musicals including, *Milk and Honey*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame*, *Dear World*, *Mack & Mabel*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *The Grand Tour*. Herman is known for uplifting lyrics that are sung by vivacious and spunky characters who remain optimistic in the most challenging times.

ACTIVITY

Before attending the show, explore the lyrics of *Mame* with the class. Listen to the Original Broadway Cast Album and read through the lyrics, (found on [pages 26-28 of the Teacher's Instructional Guide](#) and [pages 15-17 of the Student Guide](#)) dissecting the language and identifying the optimistic messages in each song. Students should ask themselves the following questions:

- After reading the rest of the Student Guide, why do you think it would be difficult to think optimistically during *Mame*'s time?
- Why do you think *Mame* is so optimistic? What about her character makes her come across that way?
- Why do you think Jerry Herman wrote such positive lyrics for the character of *Mame*?

Separate the class into pairs. Ask the students to choose one of the songs listed in the lyrics section of the Student Guide. The students will work together to find optimistic lines from their chosen song. They will highlight these optimistic lines in their Student Guide and will then identify the main idea from the lyrics.

Once the students have identified the main idea of the song, they will work with their partner to write a short poem with the same message or main idea.

LESSONS

Middle School Language Arts

AFTER THE SHOW: Conformity vs. Nonconformity

Patrick Dennis used the theme of conformity versus nonconformity in his novel, *Auntie Mame*. Conformity means to observe, accept, and follow what is considered to be the social norm. In contrast, nonconformity means to refuse acceptance of the social norm. Mame does not like to conform. She is someone who stands apart from society and does not accept the societal norms of her time.

When we first meet Mame, she is a single woman who is holding a lavish party in her Manhattan apartment with her similarly gaudy friends in attendance.

ACTIVITY

Have your students read pages 3, 4, 5 and 14 of the *Student Guide* to familiarize themselves with the musical they are about to see. These pages will provide a foundation for this lesson. Have a discussion about your students' concepts of conformity versus nonconformity and then contextualize the concept by exploring examples in their own society.

- Would you identify Mame as a conformist or a nonconformist?
- What evidence did you use to come to that conclusion?
- How do you think most people of her time period would react to Mame's lifestyle choices? Explain their possible reactions.
- What are some ways that you conform? Why do you feel the need to conform?
- What are some ways that you do not conform? What is behind your choices?

Have students write a journal entry in the style of a letter. The students will write a letter to Mame expressing their thoughts on Mame's choice to not conform. Whether they agree or disagree with Mame's choice, the students must use evidence and examples from the musical to support their opinion.

When they are finished, offer students the opportunity to read their letters in front of the class. To add a level of difficulty, ask a student volunteer to play the role of Mame as their classmate is reading the letter. The student volunteer must react to the letter in a way that they think Mame would actually react.

LESSONS

Middle School Social Studies

BEFORE THE SHOW: Front Page News

As a result of the stock market crash in 1929, many people lost everything they had. They lost their jobs, their homes, their money, and much more. The crash of the stock market was front page news for many years.

Have students read [pages 11-12 of the Student Guide](#). Make sure that students look at the pictures of the newspapers in the guide.

- What were some of the headlines during the Great Depression?
- What do you think these articles were about?
- Do any pictures accompany the article?
- What is depicted in the pictures?
- How are these pictures related to the Great Depression?

ACTIVITY

After reading, have students use the internet and the school library to research pictures and newspaper articles from the Great Depression. Then, divide the class into groups of three. The students will create a front page newspaper article based on the Depression. They will write the article, create a title and headline, and draw pictures that they would like to accompany their front page news. Their articles can focus on one of the following subjects:

- The New Deal
- The Great Crash
- Hooverilles
- What People Needed to Survive

Once all have been written, compile articles into a classroom newspaper. As a class, come up with a name for your newspaper and distribute to other classes to show your work.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EXPLORATION: Social Class

During the Great Depression, people were categorized into a social class system. In *Mame*, the title character finds herself as part of one social class and then moves to another over the course of the musical. This social class system, however, existed before the Great Depression and has played a major part in American history. Have students read about the social class system during the Great Depression on [page 13 of the Student Guide](#).

After reading, discuss the following questions:

1. Name all three social classes that existed during the Great Depression.
2. Do you think they still exist today? What evidence can you point to that justifies your response?
3. What social class was Mame apart of at the beginning of the musical? What evidence in the synopsis helped you come to that conclusion?

ACTIVITY

Ask each student to identify one historical person who was a member of each social class. Write down the name of each historical figure on a large easel. Ask students to choose one person on this list and create a presentation based on the historical figure. Students must answer the following questions:

1. What is your historical figure's name?
2. During what time period was your historical figure alive?
3. Why is your historical figure famous?
4. In which social class was your historical figure?
5. What evidence helped you come to that decision?
6. Did your historical figure ever go from one social class to another like Mame? Explain how this might have occurred.

LESSONS

Middle School Social Studies

AFTER THE SHOW: Women in History

The late 1920s through the early 1940s was a time of drastic change for women. They were forced to break their typical roles as homemakers because of the Great Depression and were often forced to seek employment outside of their homes. Before the Great Depression, women were expected to get married, have children, and become housewives. There was a role that women were expected to play and most, but not all, conformed to this role.

ACTIVITY

In the musical, *Mame*, women were expected to follow the same social standards. The title character, however, strongly believed in nonconformity. Have students read [page 14 of the Student Guide](#). In groups of three or four have students research women in history that, similar to Mame, chose not to conform. Each group will write on a slip of paper one name of a famous woman who chose to not conform. They will do this for as many women as they can think of. All students will then put slips of paper in a hat. The class will play a charades-style game in which one person stands in front of the group and describes the woman and how she chose not to conform without saying her name. The rest of the class must guess the name of the woman. Have each student pick a name out of the hat and present for the class at least once. Make sure that Mame is one of the women that are put into the hat.

LESSONS

High School English

BEFORE THE SHOW: Exploring Themes - Conformity vs. Nonconformity

Patrick Dennis used the theme of conformity versus nonconformity in his novel, *Auntie Mame*. Dennis portrays Mame's opinion on conforming very clearly throughout the book. He exemplifies her feelings on the subject through many of her interactions with Patrick, allowing the readers to draw conclusions about how people are expected to behave and how Mame chooses to behave.

ACTIVITY

Have your students read "The Story," "The Characters," and "The Role of Women: 1928-1940" sections on [pages 3, 5 and 14 of the Student Guide](#) to familiarize themselves with the musical they are about to see. These pages will provide a knowledge foundation for this lesson. Have a discussion with your students around their concepts of conformity versus nonconformity and then contextualize the concept by exploring examples in their own society. The following are some questions that might be posed in relation to the musical:

- Would you identify Mame as a conformist or a nonconformist?
- What evidence did you use to come to that conclusion?
- How do you think Mame views people who conform?
- How do you think Mame views people who choose not to conform?
- Do you think society will be accepting of Mame's lifestyle choices? Why or why not?

Divide the class into partners. Using clippings from magazines and newspapers and their own drawings have pairs make a collage that depicts examples of nonconformity. Have the pairs present their collage to the class, explaining each picture and why it represents nonconformity.

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EXPLORATION: Optimism Through Language and Lyrics

Jerry Herman was awarded 3 Tony Awards and several Grammy award nominations for his outstanding lyrics. He wrote music and lyrics for over 10 Broadway musicals including, *Milk and Honey*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame*, *Dear World*, *Mack & Mabel*, *La Cage aux Folles*, and *The Grand Tour*. Herman is known for uplifting lyrics that are sung by vivacious and spunky characters who remain optimistic in the most challenging times.

ACTIVITY

Before attending the show, explore the lyrics of *Mame* as a class. Listen to the Original Broadway Cast Album and read through the lyrics, (found on [pages 26-28 of the Teacher's Instructional Guide](#) and [pages 15-17 of the Student Guide](#)) dissecting the language and identifying the optimistic messages in each song. Ask students to consider the following questions:

- a. After reading the rest of the educational guide, why would it be difficult to think optimistically during Mame's time?
- b. Why do you think Mame is so optimistic? What about her character makes her that way?
- c. Why do you think Jerry Herman wrote such positive lyrics for Mame's character?
- d. What positive messages can you find in the lyrics? What are these messages based on?

Have students choose one of the songs from *Mame* in the "Lyrics" section on [pages 15-17 of the Student Guide](#). Ask students to pair off and choose a modern song that sends a similarly optimistic message as one of the songs from *Mame*. Print out copies of the lyrics to both songs for all pairs in the class. Play each group's two songs for the class. After listening, discuss the similar messages between each group's chosen songs. For example, "Open a New Window" from *Mame* and "Life's What You Make It" by Miley Cyrus are two songs that could be compared.

Consider these discussion questions:

- What are the singers of each song singing about?
- Compare the speed of both songs. How does the tempo of each song help relay its message?
- Which song seems to convey a more positive message better than another? Why?
- What is the positive message of each song? How are they similar and how are they different?

LESSONS

High School English

AFTER THE SHOW: Adaptation

The musical *Mame* is an adaptation of Patrick Dennis' 1955 book entitled, *Auntie Mame*. The book tells the story of a woman's life once she has been given guardianship of her late brother's son, Patrick. The book is a fictitious tale about Mame's eccentric life. It is a comedic and touching story that became the center of attention for filmmakers and screenwriters for several years.

ACTIVITY

In the musical adaptation of *Mame*, the playwrights not only incorporate the main character and her eccentric lifestyle, but also many passages from the book that can be easily recognized on stage. After students have studied the definition and application of adaptation on [page 10 of the Student Guide](#), discuss the obvious omissions, additions and techniques the playwrights used when adapting Dennis' passage into theatrical dialogue.

Next, have your students form groups of three or four to adapt a passage from a book of their choice into a short dialogue. The passage can be no more than two pages long. The groups should perform their scene for the class, assigning a role to each member of the group. After all groups have performed, examine the differences and similarities of each group's dialogue as a class.

LESSONS

High School History

BEFORE THE SHOW: The Youth of the Great Depression

During the Great Depression, thousands of young people wrote letters to the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, asking for her assistance after the crash of the stock market in 1929. Young people from all over the United States asked for clothes, food, shelter, and more items necessary for survival during the desperate times.

During her first year, First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt, received thousands of pieces of mail from children and continued to receive letters throughout her time in the White House. While Mrs. Roosevelt could not reply and aid every single child who wrote, she did help in a different way. Instead, she created programs funded by the government which offered help to youth. These programs included The National Youth Administration and the Works of Progress Administration which helped more than 2 million high school and college students stay in school.

Eleanor Roosevelt also supported many initiatives which would support the New Deal. These initiatives included nursery schools for children of working mothers, nutrition programs in schools, and recreational programs dedicated to disadvantaged children.

ACTIVITY

Divide the class into four groups. Provide each group with a copy of the book Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression or print outs of the letters from this website: <http://newdeal.feri.org/eleanor/er3a.htm> Assign each group four letters from the book or website. Have each student read aloud a letter to their group, make sure that all four letters are read by different students.

After all four letters have been read, ask the groups to identify the young people who wrote each of them. Instruct them to think about the age, gender, religion, race, education, and socioeconomic status of the writer. Then have the groups identify what each writer needs. After 5 minutes of discussion within the groups, open the conversation to the whole class. Ask students to share what they found.

1. How old do you think your writers were?
2. Where do you think your writers were from?
3. What did your writers ask for?
4. How did they ask for it?
5. How did Eleanor Roosevelt respond?
6. What would be involved in a response by Mrs. Roosevelt?

After discussing these topics, have students go back to their seats to work independently. The students will now write their own letter to Eleanor Roosevelt. They will write as if they are Patrick, who grew up during the Great Depression. Writing as Patrick, students will request something that they feel is necessary for his or his Auntie Mame's survival during this time.

When finished, ask for student volunteers to read their letters to the class.

LESSONS

High School History

UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EXPLORATION: Social Class

During the Great Depression, the social class system was extremely unstable. Many people lost not only their source of income, but everything they owned. Members of the middle class began to fall into the lower class with the loss of jobs. The upper class struggled to keep their jobs as well but many members of the upper class maintained stability during the Great Depression due to the wealth they had accumulated before the stock market crash of 1929.

After reading the synopsis on [page 3 of the Student Guide](#), discuss the following questions:

1. At the beginning of the show, describe Mame's social class (low, medium or high)?
2. What evidence in the synopsis helped you come to that conclusion?
3. What other characters from the musical can be characterized into a particular social class? What evidence tells you this?
4. What characters do not begin the musical as part of a specific social class but rather drift into it? How do you know this?
5. Name one character from *Mame* for each social class of the 1930's; lower, middle, and upper. Explain why you categorized each character into the particular social class.

ACTIVITY

For the next part of the lesson, the teacher will need to collect pictures of people from the Great Depression. (These may be found in magazines, books, or from online sources.) There should be pictures of people representing all three of the social classes. Have students stand facing the teacher in an open space. The left side of the space will represent the lower class, the center of the space will represent the middle class, and the right side of the space will represent the upper class.

The teacher will hold up one photo for the students to see. Based on what they see in the picture, the students will walk to the area of the classroom that they feel corresponds to the social class that the person in the picture appears to represent. For example, if the teacher holds up a picture of a person living in a Hooverville, the students should walk to their left side of the space, which represents the lower class. After each picture, ask students why they chose their specific area of the room or social class. What descriptive details about the person/people in the picture made the students think that they were part of that specific social class?

After this activity, have a discussion about social class and equality using the following questions:

1. What specific descriptive evidence did you use to connect the pictures to a specific social class?
2. Based on the pictures, what kinds of equality or inequality appeared to exist between the lower and upper classes? Explain. What kinds of inferences can you make based on the pictures? How reasonable is it to make these inferences in terms of real accuracy?
3. Into which social class do you think working women were classified? Why? What kinds of jobs were prevalent among working class women?

LESSONS

High School History

AFTER THE SHOW: Women During Mame's Time

The late 1920s through the early 1940s was a time of drastic change for women. During this time, women were faced with the Great Depression and, due to its massive hit on the United States economy, women were forced to seek employment outside of their homes. Before the Great Depression, women were expected to get married, have children, and become housewives. Most women conformed to this expected role, however, some chose not to meet society's expectations.

In the musical *Mame*, women were expected to follow the same social standards. The title character, however, strongly believed in nonconformity. There are many examples in the musical of Mame's reluctance to follow the crowd.

ACTIVITY

In groups of three or four have students brainstorm and record the many ways that Mame did not conform to society's expectations. Have students share their ideas and create one large class list.

After creating the class list, assign each group to explore one example of Mame's nonconformity. Each group will create a frozen image with their bodies of Mame resisting the societal norm. One group at a time, students will present their frozen images to the class. After all groups have presented, ask the class to put all frozen images in the order in which they occur during *Mame*. As the entire class stands in their chronological frozen images, ask the students the following questions:

1. What is happening in your groups' frozen image? (ask all groups this question)
2. Who do you think is playing the role of Mame in each group?
3. What other characters are represented in each frozen image?
4. How is Mame resisting conformity in each frozen image?
5. Why do you think she is choosing nonconformity in each of these situations?

MAME LYRICS

IT'S TODAY

MAME

Light the candles,
Get the ice out,
Roll the rug up,
It's today.
Though it may not be anyone's birthday,
And though it's far from the first of the year,
I know that this very minute has history in it, we're here!

ALL

It's a time for making merry,
And so I'm for making hay.

MAME

Tune the grand up,
Dance your shoes off,
Strike the band up,
It's today!

ALL

And we're living
In the world game,
So this whole game's
What we make.

MAME

Call the cops out,
Raise the rockets,
Pull the stops out,

ALL

Pull out the stops,
It's today
Light the candles,
Fill the punch bowl,
Throw confetti,
It's today.

GIRLS

Life can also be lived on a weekday,
So don't depend on a holiday date,
If you need New Year's to bubble,
Then order a double and wait.
Doo doo doo doo dah

ALL

There's a "thank you" you can give life,
If you live life all the way.
Pull the stops out,
Hold the roof down,

MAME

Fellows watch out,
It's today.

ALL

It's a time for making merry,
And so I'm for making hay.
Tune the grand up,
Call the cops out,
Strike the band up,
Pull the stops out,
Hallelujah!
It's today!

OPEN A NEW WINDOW

MAME

Open a new window,
Open a new door,
Travel a new highway,
That's never been tried before;
Before you find you're a dull fellow,
Punching the same clock,
Walking the same tight rope
As everyone on the block.
The fellow you ought to be is three dimensional,
Soaking up life down to your toes,
Whenever they say you're slightly unconventional,
Just put your thumb up to your nose.
And show 'em how to dance to a new rhythm,
Whistle a new song,
Toast with a new vintage,
The fizz doesn't fizz too long.
There's only one way to make the bubbles stay,
Simply travel a new high way,
Dance to a new rhythm,
Open a new window ev'ry day!
If you follow your Auntie Mame
I'll make this vow, my little love,
That on the last day of your life
You'll be smiling the same young smile
You're smiling now, my little love,
If you wake up ev'ry mornin'
And you pull aside the shutter,
And you promise me that these'll be
The first words that you utter
Open a new window,
Open a new door,
Travel a new highway,
That's never been tried before;
Before you find you're a dull fellow,
Punching the same clock,
Walking the same tight rope
As everyone on the block.
The fellow you ought to be is three dimensional,
Soaking up life down to your toes,

MAME AND AGNES

Whenever they say you're slightly unconventional,

PATRICK

Just put your thumb up to your nose.

MAME AND ALL

And show 'em how to dance to a new rhythm,
Whistle a new song,
Toast with a new vintage,
The fizz doesn't fizz too long.
There's only one way to make the bubbles stay,
Simply travel a new high way,
Dance to a new rhythm,
Open a new window ev'ry day!

ALL

Open a new window,
Open a new door,
Travel a new highway,
That's never been tried before;
Before you find you're a dull fellow,
Punching the same clock,

MAME LYRICS

Walking the same tight rope
As everyone on the block.
The fellow you ought to be is three dimensional,
Soaking up life down to your toes,
Whenever they say you're slightly unconventional,
Just put your thumb up to your nose.
And show 'em how to dance to a new rhythm,
Whistle a new song,
Toast with a new vintage,
The fizz doesn't fizz too long.
There's only one way to make the bubbles stay,
Simply travel a new high way,
Dance to a new rhythm,
Whistle a new love song,
Toast with a new vintage,
Open a new window ev'ry day!

WE NEED A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

MAME

Haul out the holly;
Put up the tree before my spirit falls again.
Fill up the stocking,
I may be rushing things, but deck the halls again now.
For we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute,
Candles in the window,
Carols at the spinet.
Yes, we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute.
It hasn't snowed a single flurry,
But Santa, dear, we're in a hurry;
So climb down the chimney;
Put up the brightest string of lights I've ever seen.
Slice up the fruitcake;
It's time we hung some tinsel on that evergreen bough.
For I've grown a little leaner,
Grown a little colder,
Grown a little sadder,
Grown a little older,

ALL

And I need a little angel
Sitting on my shoulder,
Need a little Christmas now.

MAME

Haul out the holly;
Well, once I taught you all to live each living day.

ALL

Fill up the stocking,
Young Patrick:
But Auntie Man, it's one week from Thanksgiving Day now.

ALL

But we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute,
Candles in the window,
Carols at the spinet.
Yes, we need a little Christmas
Right this very minute.

AGNES

It hasn't snowed a single flurry,

But Santa, dear, we're in a hurry;

ITO

So climb down the chimney;
Put up the brightest string of lights I've ever seen.

ALL

Slice up the fruitcake;
It's time we hung some tinsel on that evergreen bough.
For we need a little music,
Need a little laughter,
Need a little singing
Ringing through the rafter,
And we need a little snappy
"Happy ever after,"
Need a little Christmas now.
Need a little Christmas now.

MAME

CHORUS

You coax the blues right out of the horn, Mame,
You charm the husk right off of the corn, Mame,
You've got that banjoes strummin'
And plunkin' out a tune to beat the band,
The whole plantation's hummin'
Since you brought Dixie back to Dixie land.
You make the cotton easy to pick, Mame,
You give my old mint julep a kick, Mame,
Who ever thought a Yankee would put
A little Dixie mouse to shame.
You've made us feel alive again,
You've given us the drive again,
To make the South revive again, Mame.
Beauregard Burnside:
You've brought the cake-walk back into style, Mame
You make the weepin' willow tree smile, Mame,
Your skin is Dixie satin,
There's rebel in your manner and your speech,
You may be from Manhattan,
But Georgia never had a sweeter peach.

ALL

You make our black-eyed peas and our grits, Mame,
Seem like the bill of fare at the Ritz, Mame,
You came, you saw, you conquered
And absolutely nothing is the same.
You're special fascination'll prove to be inspirational,
We think you're just sensational, Mame.
Since you brought Dixie back to Dixie land.
Since you brought Dixie back to Dixie land.
You coax the blues right out of the horn, Mame,
You charm the husk right off of the corn, Mame,
You've got that banjoes strummin'
And plunkin' out a tune to beat the band,
The whole plantation's hummin'
Since you brought Dixie back to Dixie land.
You make the cotton easy to pick, Mame,
You give my old mint julep a kick, Mame,
Who ever thought a Yankee would put
A little Dixie mouse to shame.
You've made us feel alive again,
You've given us the drive again,
To make the South revive again, Mame.
Mame! Mame! Mame! Mame!

MAME LYRICS

THAT'S HOW YOUNG I FEEL

MAME AND ALL

I have the feeling that time has halted,
I'd like two straws and a choc'late malted,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
I feel like peckin' and bunny huggin'
And Lindy hoppin' and jitterbuggin'
'Cause that's how young I feel.
I'm mad for that big band beat,
Wanna ride in a rumble seat.
(Sheldon's got the Chevy)
Love a faceful of frozen custard,
To have a hot dog with sand and mustard,
And ride the Ferris wheel,
Oh, honey,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
I'm ready to ask my mom,
Can I go to the Junior Prom.
(Sheldon's got the Chevy)
Want a coonskin to knock about with,
To start each mornin' by givin' out
With a Rudy Vallee squeal,
Oh, honey,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
[Instrumental]
I find I'm faced with that old sensation,
Will life go on after graduation,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
I'd love to cheer at a football rally
And swap sorority pins with Sally,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
Love a faceful of frozen custard,
To have a hot dog with sand and mustard,
And ride the Ferris wheel,
Oh, honey,
'Cause that's how young I feel.
Young I feel
Young I feel
Young I feel
That's how young
How you, yeah, I feel!

RESOURCES

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Bernstein, Michael A. The Great Depression: delayed recovery and economic change in America, 1929-1939. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. 1987.

Cohen, Robert. Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Letters from Children of the Great Depression. The University of North Carolina Press. 2002.

Downing, David. The Great Depression. Chicago, Illinois: Reed Educational & Professional Publishing. 2001.

McElvaine, Robert S. The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941. New York: Three Rivers Press. 2009.

PATRICK DENNIS

Myers, Eric. Uncle Mame: the life of Patrick Dennis. New York: St. Martin's Press. 2000.

"Auntie Mame's Nimble Nephew: Patrick Dennis." LIFE Magazine Dec. 7, 1962: 59-68.

MAME

Dennis, Patrick. Auntie Mame: an irreverent escapade. New York: Vanguard Press. 1955.

Laufe, Abe. Broadway's Greatest Musicals. New York: Funk and Wagnalls. 1977.

Lawrence, Jerome and Lee, Robert E. Auntie Mame. New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc. 1957.

Wolf, Stacy Ellen. Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical. New York: Oxford University Press. 2011.

JEROME LAWRENCE AND ROBERT E. LEE

Ohioana Library. "WOSU Presents Ohioana Authors: Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee."
http://www.ohioana-authors.org/lawrence_lee/works.php

The Jerome Lawrence & Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute. Ohio State University.
<http://library.osu.edu/find/collections/theatre-research-institute/>

JERRY HERMAN

Bloom, Ken and Herman, Jerry. Jerry Herman: The Lyrics. New York: Routledge. 2003.

Citron, Stephen. Jerry Herman: poet of the showtune. Yale University Press. 2004.

Hirschhorn, Joel and Kasha, Al. Notes on Broadway: Intimate Conversations with Broadway's Greatest Songwriters. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. 1987.

LATE 1920'S- EARLY 1940'S

American Studies Program at the University of Virginia. "Urban and Urbane: The New Yorker Magazine in the 1930s."
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug02/newyorker/historyhome.html>

Benner, Louise. "Women in the 1920s." <http://ncpedia.org/history/20th-Century/1920s-women>

SOCIAL CLASS

McComb, Mary C. Great Depression and the Middle Class: Experts, Collegiate You and Business Ideology, 1929-1941. New York: Routledge. 2006

Smith, Sharon. "The 1930s: Turning Point for U.S. Labor." International Socialist Review. Issue 25. September-October 2002.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Seeing a musical at the Goodspeed Opera House is a unique and exciting experience. All the members of the production, both cast and crew, work hard to give you a great show. As an audience member, you also have an important job. You must help the performers give their best performance possible. You can do this by practicing these rules of theater etiquette:

- Do laugh when the performance is funny.
- Do applaud when the performance is over. Applause is how you say “Thank you” to the performer. The actors will bow as you applaud. That is how they say “Thank you for coming.”
- Do stand and applaud if you thought the show was outstanding.
- Don't forget to turn off your cell phone. A ringing or buzzing phone can be very distracting. It can also be embarrassing for you if it is your phone that is disrupting the show!
- Don't text during the performance.
- Make sure to visit the restroom before the production begins.
- Don't speak or whisper during the performance...whispering is still speaking, so only in an emergency should whispering occur.
- Remember that the Overture (introductory music) in musical theatre is part of the performance, so remain silent when the show begins.
- Don't take pictures during the performance. It can be very distracting to the actors and it can result in an accident.
- Don't put your feet up on the seats or kick the seat in front of you.
- Do sit ONLY when your seat is in the folded down position.
- Do remain in your seat for the entire performance. If you must leave, exit during intermission. In an emergency, calmly walk toward the nearest exit.

The Teacher's Instructional Guide for *Mame* was prepared by Joshua S. Ritter, M.F.A, Education & Library Director and Christine Hopkins, M.A, Education & Library Assistant