

# TALKING POINTS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: MISS NELSON HAS A FIELD DAY

## Show and Theater Company:

- *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day* presented by Dallas Children's Theatre

## Art form:

- A musical – a story with songs
- ? Can you think of other musicals? What other stories have songs with them?

## Context:

- Based on a book series by author Harry Allard and James Marshall.
- The first book, *Miss Nelson Is Missing!*, tells the story of the nicest teacher in the world, Miss Nelson, and the meanest substitute teacher in the world, Viola Swamp. There's a twist ending at the end of the book where we find out Miss Swamp is actually Miss Nelson in disguise!
  - ? What other stories have surprises at the end?
  - ? Miss Nelson and Viola Swamp look very different. If you wanted to disguise yourself so nobody could recognize you, what would you do?

## Main Characters:

- Miss Nelson, the nicest school teacher in the world
- Viola Swamp, the meanest substitute teacher in the world
- Coach Armstrong, the football coach
- Mr. Blandsworth, the school principal
- The Smedley Tornados, the football team who hasn't won a game all year
  - ? Have you been on a sports team? Have you ever lost a game? What did you do about it?

## Special Things to Look for:

- This play has a twist in it (that Miss Nelson and Miss Swamp are the same person). The play drops little hints about this so maybe some audience members can figure it out ahead of time.
  - ? What clues did you notice that Miss Nelson and Miss Swamp are the same person? Did you figure it out before the end?
    - These clues about what might happen next are called *foreshadowing*. Can you think of any other examples from stories?
- This is an adaptation of a book. It's the third book in a series of stories—the first is *Miss Nelson is Missing*, published in 1977; the second is *Miss Nelson is Back*, published in 1982; and the book *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day* was published in 1985.
  - ? Have you read any of the books in this series?
    - If you have *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day* before, you may notice some differences.
    - ? What are some of the things they changed? What things did they keep the same?

## Virtual Theatre Etiquette:

- As you watch this show, try to immerse yourself as you would if you were at the theater in person.
  - Find a quiet space to watch.
  - Respect your space – in the theater, we don't put our feet on the seats in front of us or jump and down in our chairs; wherever you're watching this, treat your space with the same level of respect.
  - Limit distractions.
  - Use the restroom before the show starts so you won't miss anything.
  - Put any other electronic devices away.
  - Clap when you see something you love!

**Show Info: *Miss Nelson Has a Field Day* • April 4-29, 2022 • Grades K-5**