

STUDY GUIDE



A Peek Behind the Curtain

A live theatre performance requires lots of dedication and teamwork from many different people. The following is some basic information about that, as well as your duties as an audience member that will help create a fun experience for everyone.

Who's Who?

- The director is responsible for putting the show together, from a mere vision to a full production in a short amount of time.
- The cast are the actors in a show.
- It takes a team of dedicated crew members to help put on a show from backstage. They help with makeup, costumes, lights, props and ushering.
- Designers decide what kind of sounds, lights, sets and costumes effectively tell a story.
- The stage manager oversees the rehearsal schedule and performances. He or she also monitors where the actors need to be on stage.

Do's & Don'ts

- Arrive on time for the performance.
- Pay attention to the show. Turn off all cell phones and anything else that beeps, vibrates or lights up. This also means no texting!
- Don't take any photographs during the performance. It's distracting to the actors and your fellow audience members.
- Stay in your seat throughout the entire performance, even if something in the show excites or startles you.
- Don't talk during the performance.
- If something in the show is funny, laugh out loud. If something wonderful happens in the story, clap your hands.

What's Your Role?

Believe it or not, you – the **audience** – are the most important part of a theatre performance! Plays and musicals are created to entertain, enlighten and inspire people. The laughter, tears and applause from audiences are an integral part of the theatre experience.

About San Diego Junior Theatre

Every cast and crew member is enrolled in one of our classes. Ranging from 8 to 18 years old, our students learn from grown-ups who are experienced theatre arts professionals. With their guidance, young people get a taste of what it takes to work in theatre world.

About *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*

The stage musical version of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* was based on the novel by the same name written by acclaimed author Ian Fleming, who is more widely known for his James Bond (a.k.a. 007) thrillers. It began as a bedtime story Fleming had told his son, Caspar. Fleming spun the tale, about a magical car that shoots across the water like a speedboat or flies through the heavens like a jet, from pure imagination, but it was based on truth. He based the “character” of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang on two real-life cars: a car he had owned as a young man that had been wrecked in an accident with a train (with Ian inside!) and a racing car built by an eccentric driver named Count Zborowski called Chitty Bang Bang, which Fleming had seen in the 1920s. While recovering from a heart attack, Fleming began putting his fantastic tale down on paper. *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* shares many elements with the Bond books: wild adventure, heroes, evil villains, and, most of all, a love of the imagination.



ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

THE INVENTION MUSEUM

The story of *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* focuses on the adventures of Caractacus Potts, an eccentric and brilliant English inventor. Have you ever wondered how inventors come up with ideas? Visit a Museum of Inventions – your own home! Although we take them for granted, our homes are full of inventions. Your bed in the morning? An invention! The alarm clock? Your house itself? All inventions, all answers to problems that an inventor looked at and said, “HmMMM. That can be improved!”

Go through your house and make a list of every single invention – that is, every device created by human beings to make life better or help us see things in new ways. Choose one of the inventions you’ve found and research its origins. Write one paragraph describing the invention you chose, the year or era it was created, the inventor, and how it evolved over the years. With your classmates, put the inventions you’ve chosen in chronological order and create a timeline of everyday miracles.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

In *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, quite a lot! Both Ian Fleming in the original novel, and then Roald Dahl and Ken Hughes in the screenplay to the movie, use character names to tell the audience about their personalities. The name “Caractacus Potts” can be shortened to the phrase, “Crack Pot” a slang phrase for an eccentric person. The name “Truly Scrumptious” is, of course, the perfect name for a candy-maker’s daughter, and who but the explosive “Baron Bomburst” could rule a vulgar country like Vulgaria?

Can you think of new names for these three characters? Be sure the names you create give your readers clues about the characters’ personalities!



Information and Activities are excerpted from the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Study Guide by Peter Royston (peterroyston.wordpress.com) and Tim Thayer, created for the original Broadway production.