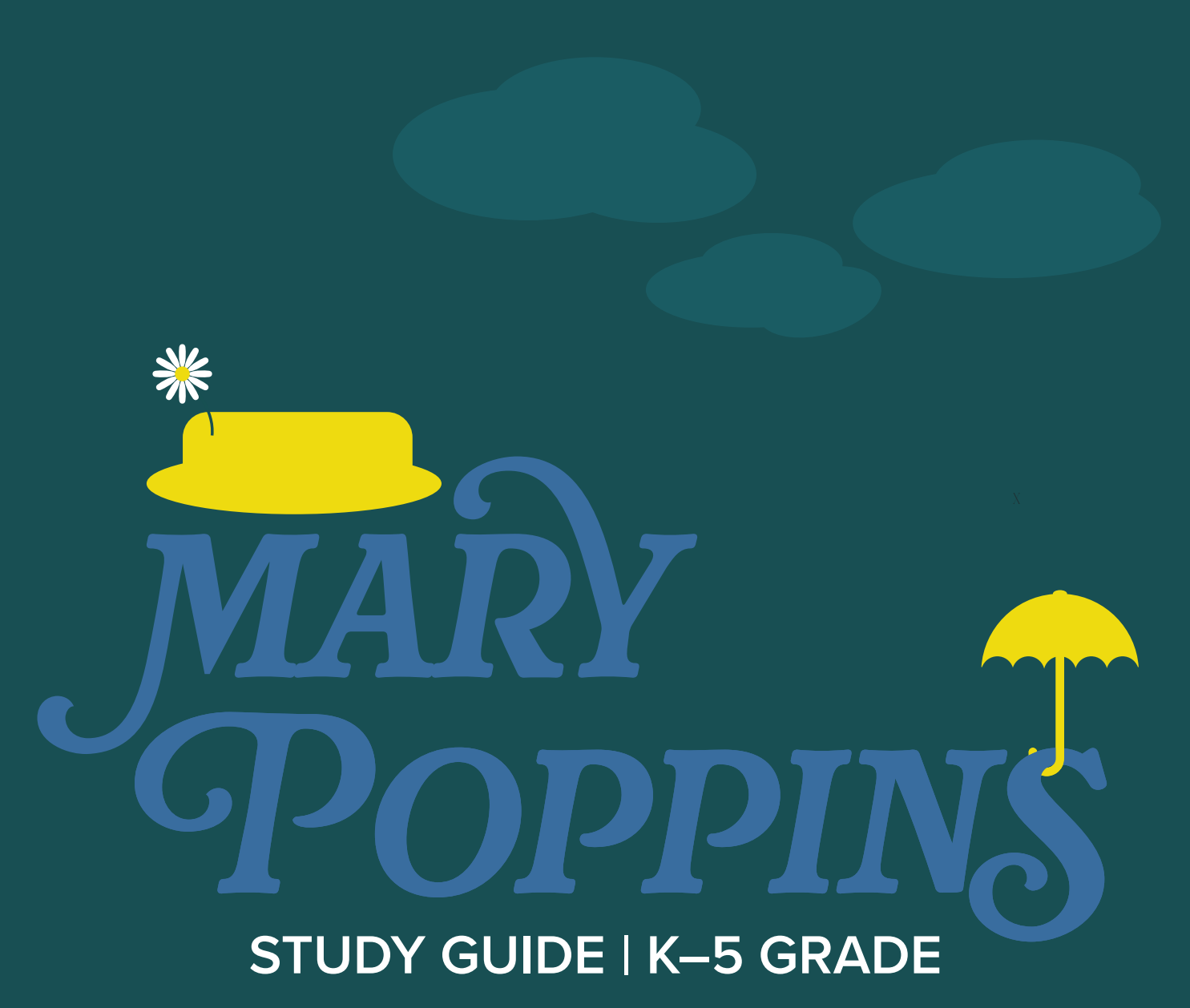
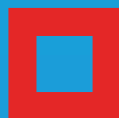




MARY POPPINS

STUDY GUIDE | K–5 GRADE



COLORADO SPRINGS

Fine Arts Center

at COLORADO COLLEGE



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Supercalifragilisticexpialadocious.

Can you say that? It's a hard word to say, but by the end of the show, you will be singing and dancing it!

The Fine Arts Center at Colorado College is excited to welcome you to the show, Mary Poppins, where you will discover the importance of family, kindness and imagination.

Oh, what's this? A letter from Mary Poppins herself!

Looks like she has an important note about theatre etiquette. Let me read it.
(clear throat and in a British accent, if possible :)

Dear Children

I am beyond thrilled you are coming to see me in my show. I must tell you of some simple rules to follow in the theatre called theatre etiquette.

Theatre Etiquette

Stay in your seat during the show. There's no need to get up. If you leave, you will miss something important! But, if it's an emergency, please tell your nearest teacher.

- Go to the bathroom before the show starts. If you need to go to the bathroom during the show, try to wait until intermission.
- I hope you laugh! I am quite charming. But please don't talk to your neighbor during the show. That will truly annoy me.
- Please clap when the show is done. I love a good applause!

I can't wait to see you at the theatre!

From,

Mary Poppins





SYNOPSIS



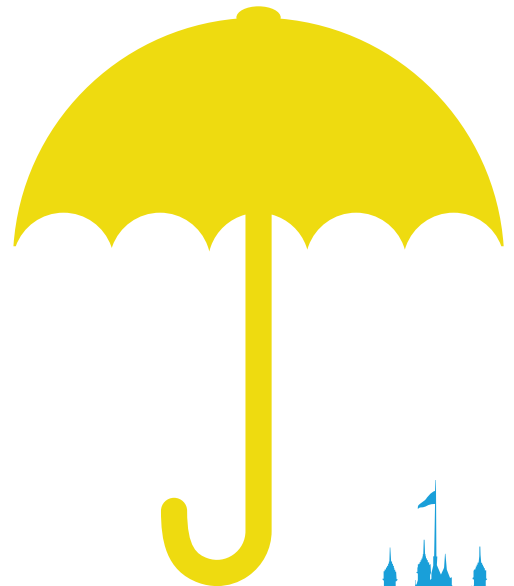
In the heart of London in 1910, the Banks family is having a tough time. Jane and Michael Banks are two curious and energetic children who keep scaring away their nannies! Their father, Mr. Banks, works at a big bank and believes everything should be neat, proper, and serious. Their mother, Mrs. Banks, used to be an actress and is trying to find her place in the busy world of grown-ups.

Everything changes when a mysterious and magical woman named Mary Poppins arrives with her umbrella and a big bag full of surprises. Mary Poppins isn't just any nanny—she can fly, slide up banisters, and turn chores into games! With the help of her cheerful friend Bert, a jack-of-all-trades, Mary takes Jane and Michael on amazing adventures: jumping into paintings, dancing with chimney sweeps, and learning how to see the world in a whole new way. As the children explore with Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Banks begin to notice something too—magic isn't just about tricks, it's about love, kindness, and being together. Mr. Banks learns that being a good father means more than just working hard, and Mrs. Banks discovers her own strength and voice. By the end of the story, the whole Banks family learns that “anything can happen if you let it!”

Pre-show questions to ask students:

In small groups or as a full class, discuss these questions to start thinking about themes in the show.

- What does kindness look like?
- When was someone kind to you? How did that make you feel?
- How are you kind to others?
- What is something you enjoy doing with your family?
- Who is important to you in your life? Family? Friends? Why are they important to you?
- What do you like to imagine? Do you like to make up stories?
- How does imagination make something fun?





CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

Mary Poppins Mary Poppins is a magical nanny who arrives just when the Banks family needs her most. She's smart, kind, and can fly with her umbrella! She teaches everyone how to have fun while learning important lessons.

Bert Bert is Mary's cheerful friend who works many jobs—he's a chimney sweep, a painter, and more! He loves to sing, dance, and help Mary bring magic to the world.

Jane Banks is the older Banks child. She's curious, clever, and sometimes a little bossy. She loves adventures and learns a lot from Mary Poppins.

Michael Banks is Jane's younger brother. He's playful, silly, and full of energy. He enjoys going on magical journeys with Mary and Bert.

Mr. Banks Mr. is the father of Jane and Michael. He works at a bank and thinks everything should be serious and proper. But he learns that spending time with family is the most important thing of all.

Mrs. Banks is the mother of Jane and Michael. She used to be on stage as an actress and is trying to find her place at home. She loves her children and wants to help her family grow closer.

Mrs. Brill is the cook in the Banks household. She's a bit grumpy but has a good heart and keeps the house running.

Robertson Ay is the houseboy who helps out at the Banks' home. He's clumsy and forgetful, but always tries his best.

Katy Nana is the Banks children's nanny before Mary Poppins arrives. She's tired and frustrated because Jane and Michael are always getting into mischief.

Admiral Boom is a retired navy officer who lives next door to the Banks family. He treats his house like a ship and even sets off fireworks to mark the time!

The Policeman is a kind and helpful officer who tries to keep things in order. He helps bring Jane and Michael home when they wander off.

Miss Lark is a fancy lady who lives next door to the Banks family. She loves her little dog, Willoughby, and treats him like royalty!

The Bird Woman sits on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral and sells birdseed to people passing by. She's gentle and kind, and she reminds everyone—especially the children—that caring for others, even little birds, is an important part of life.





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The Park Keeper is in charge of keeping the park neat and tidy. He likes rules and order, and doesn't enjoy too much silliness.

John Northbrook works at the bank with Mr. Banks. He's kind and wants to help people who need money to build things and make their lives better.

Von Hussler is a businessman who wants to make money fast, even if it means being unfair. He tries to convince Mr. Banks to invest in his tricky ideas.

The Bank Chairman is the boss at the bank where Mr. Banks works. He's very serious and wants the bank to make smart choices.

Mrs. Corry owns a magical shop filled with words and surprises! She's colorful, cheerful, and a little mysterious.

KEY THEMES AND VOCABULARY

Importance of Family: Before Mary Poppins arrives at the Banks' house, Mr. Banks is overly concerned with work, Mrs. Banks has little confidence in

herself as a mom and a wife, and the children don't believe their parents love them. Through magical adventures and fun lessons, Mary Poppins shows the Banks family how to listen to each other, show kindness and and they learn the importance of being together.

Kindness: Jane and Michael learn that kindness can happen in big and small ways. One of the most magical moments in the play is when the Bird Woman teaches the children to feed the birds. A small gesture of kindness can make a big difference.

Imagination: Mary Poppins teaches the children that with a little imagination, anything is possible! Chores can become games, a walk can be a colorful adventure, and rules can become big dreams. Imagination helps people to learn, grow and connect with one another.





OTHER FUN AND INTERESTING WORDS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER:

Brimstone and Treacle: Medicine commonly used in Victorian times (a clue as to how old Miss Andrew is!). Brimstone is another name for sulphur; treacle is a medicinal mixture used as antidote to poisons, including snakebites.

Cod-liver oil: A supplement high in Vitamins A and D, which comes from the liver of cod fish. Given to children because of Vitamin D's usefulness in preventing rickets, a disease of the bones.

Neleus: A statue in the park. A character from Greek mythology; the son of Poseidon (God of the Sea) and Tyro (a Greek princess).

Plinth: The heavy base used to support a statue.

Rococococious: A play on the word "Rococo," an 18th-century artistic period ("Late Baroque") characterized by its ornateness, elegance, and as Mary Poppins suggests, its flourishes.

Spit-spot: An expression like "chop-chop," basically, "hurry up."

Sovereign: A supreme ruler, like a king or queen.

PART 2: THE WORLD OF THE PLAY

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Setting of Mary Poppins

Mary Poppins takes place in London, England, a big city full of busy streets, tall buildings, and beautiful parks. The story happens a long time ago, in the year 1910, during a time called the Edwardian Era. Back then, people wore fancy clothes, rode in horse-drawn carriages, and didn't have cell phones or computers!

Most of the story happens at the Banks family's house on Cherry Tree Lane. It's a lovely home with a big front door, a nursery for the children, and a kitchen where the cook works. The house is sometimes a little messy and loud—especially before Mary Poppins arrives!

Other fun places in the story include:

- *The park, where magical things happen (like statues coming to life!)*
- A sidewalk painting, that turns into a colorful adventure
- St. Paul's Cathedral, where the Bird Woman sells birdseed
- The rooftops of London, where chimney sweeps dance under the stars





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The setting helps make the story feel magical, showing how even ordinary places can become extraordinary with a little imagination!

The Edwardian Era: The Edwardian Era was from 1901-1910. King Edward VII ruled England. It came right after the Victorian Era and before World War I. People dressed very fancy, rode in horse-drawn carriages, and lived in big houses if they were rich. But not everyone had a lot—many people worked hard and didn't have much money.

During this time:

- Big machines and factories helped make things faster.
- Trains and ships were used to travel and trade.
- Electricity and telephones were becoming more common.
- People cared a lot about manners and how they looked.
- Children started going to school more often, and learning became important.
- During the Edwardian period, British society was divided into the following general classes:
- Upper class: Royalty, the nobility, and the very rich.

- Upper middle class: The wealthy, bankers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, and
- Manufacturers.
- Lower middle class: A growing class in early 20th century Britain, consisting of
- Shopkeepers, managers, civil servants, and small manufacturers.
- Working class: Chimney sweeps, farmers, factory workers, shop employees,
- House servants, and clerks.
- Lower class: The homeless and destitute, which were a grave and growing
- Concern during the Edwardian era.





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Rise of the nanny:

During the 19th century and into the early 20th century, something unique happened in Great Britain. Rather than raising their children themselves, mothers and fathers from rich and middle-class families handed over their children to special caregivers called “nannies,” who were hired to address children’s every need from food and education to discipline.

Did you know Mary Poppins was a book, movie and a stage show? The book was first written by P.L. Travers. Mary Poppins’ adventures were written across 8 books in 1933. In 1964, Disney adapted the stories into a movie. In 2004, the story was adapted for the stage by Disney and Macintosh.

About P.L. Travers:

P.L. Travers was the author who created Mary Poppins. She was born in Australia in 1899 and later moved to England. Her real name was Helen Lyndon Goff, but she used the name P.L. Travers when she wrote books. She loved stories and had a big imagination. Her books about Mary Poppins became so popular that they were turned into a movie and a stage musical!

PART 3: AFTER THE SHOW

Post-Show Discussion Questions

In small groups or as a full class, discuss these questions after seeing the show.

- How did Mary Poppins make a difference in the Banks’ family lives? What were they like before she arrived? How did their lives change because of her visit?
- What did Mary Poppins help the family discover?
- Is there someone in your life who has made a difference? How did it make you feel?
- What was Mr. Banks like before Mary Poppins arrived? What was he like afterwards?
- What was Mrs. Banks like before Mary Poppins arrived? What was she like afterwards?
- What were Jane and Michael like before Mary Poppins arrived? What were they like afterwards?
- Both Mary Poppins and Mr. Banks are strict. But how are their approaches different?
- Why does it matter that the Bird Lady feeds the birds?
- How do you use imagination in your own life? In what ways can you use it more?
- Why did Mary Poppins leave at the end of the story?





Classroom Activities

Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious Dance

Mary Poppins' character brings joy into the Banks family home. Engaging in fun and imaginative play creates a sense of belonging, as we learned in the show. In this activity, students will learn choreography to a made-up word. Then students will work in teams and use their imagination to create their own made-up words and movements.

The word Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious is a made-up word full of Latin and Greek phrases.

Super: Above

Cali: Beauty

Fragilistic: Delicate

Expiali: To atone

Docious: Educable

Mary Poppins put them all together to make a word that means something fantastic and whimsical

Did you notice that the actors in the show danced to the song Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious?

That's called choreography. First let's practice saying the word. Repeat after me:

- Super (repeat)
- Cali (repeat)
- Fragi (repeat)
- Listic (repeat)
- Expi (repeat)
- ala (repeat)
- Docious (repeat)
- Supercali (repeat)
- Fragilistic (repeat)
- Expliala (repeat)
- docious (repeat)
- SupercaliFragilistic (repeat)
- Explialadocious (repeat)
- Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (repeat)





“Now, we are going to watch a clip on how to put movements with the word.” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy_qy9EvlUQ

“Follow along and see if you can learn the choreography too.”

Students can follow along with the teaching of the choreography. Focus on enjoyment of using their bodies in space and less on being perfect.

Make up your own!

Break students up into groups of 3. Give them each a word or have them think of a word. Have the students write the words on paper. Then they will put all of their words together to make up a new word. They can be creative on which word goes first or mix them up altogether. For example, “breath” “tree” “strong” could be strotreegbreath.

Next, have students create movements to go with their word. You can also have students think of the movements when they first receive their word and then they can put the movements together.

And, Snap! The Jobs a Game

In this activity, students will work together to bring

imagination and a bit of magic into an everyday task.

Break students off into groups of 3-4. Give each group an everyday task. See the list below. Then tell them that they first need to show the task as it is. You can do this through pantomime or with materials around the classroom. Then, ask them to use their imagination to make the task more fun but by also staying safe. Share their presentations with the class.

List of every tasks:

- Sharpening a pencil
- Putting supplies away in the classroom
- Making a bed
- Emptying the dishwasher
- Picking up toys off the floor
- Vacuuming
- Sweeping
- Making toast
- Washing dishes





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Let's Go Build A Kite

Much like creating a paper airplane, students will work to design a kite. In the theatre, the kite is rigged, meaning that there are special materials to make it fly. The theatre also does not have wind and rain like the outdoors does. Students are encouraged to think about the elements in the outdoors while creating their kite. What materials do they need? What shape does it need to be? diamond, box, sled, delta.

Think about lift, drag, weight, and thrust.

Lift Lift is the force that pulls an airplane up into the sky. It happens when air moves faster over the top of the wings than underneath. That difference helps the plane rise!

Thrust is the force that pushes the airplane forward. It comes from the engines (or your hand if you're throwing a paper airplane). Without thrust, the plane wouldn't move!

Drag is the force that slows the airplane down. It's caused by air pushing against the plane as it moves. It's like when you walk into the wind—it pushes back!

Weight is the force that pulls the airplane down toward the ground. It's caused by gravity. Planes

need enough lift to fight against weight so they can stay in the air.

With pencil, markers and paper, students individually create their own kite.

If time and materials allow, have students create their kite and test it outside on a windy day!

Kindness Letters

Kindness is powerful, as we learned in the show. In this activity, students will reflect on kindness in the show and in their own lives and write a letter of kindness towards another.

Mary Poppins has many demonstrations of kindness. With the class, make a list of all the ways the characters in Mary Poppins or Mary Poppins herself showed kindness. Talk about kindness in their own lives.

Write a letter:

Is there a teacher or worker in your school who shows kindness on a regular basis? As a full class or individually, write a letter to that person thanking them for what they do. Then deliver the letter!





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Further Resources

Mary Poppins Education Series: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL90E7F7094B88D11F

This 10-part series on YouTube covers everything from the literary inspiration for the Broadway musical, its music, movement, and characters to playing Jane and Michael Banks.

P.L. Travers's Mary Poppins series: Read the books that were the inspiration for the film and Broadway show. The musical was adapted from the first three of the eight books in P.L. Travers's series. Here is a list of them all:

Mary Poppins (1934)

Mary Poppins Comes Back (1935)

Mary Poppins Opens the Door (1943)

Mary Poppins in the Park (1952)

Mary Poppins From A to Z (1962)

Mary Poppins in the Kitchen (1975)

Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane (1982)

Mary Poppins and the House Next Door (1988)

Edwardian Promenade:

www.edwardianpromenade.com

Novelist Evangeline Holland has a website dedicated to this era in history, as well as a portal for the popular television shows *Downton Abbey* and *Mr. Selfridge*, which partially take place during this era. Use the search function on the right side of the page to locate specific topics of interest, such as Edwardian women's or men's fashion. The Resources page has a section on Edwardian era-themed films.



