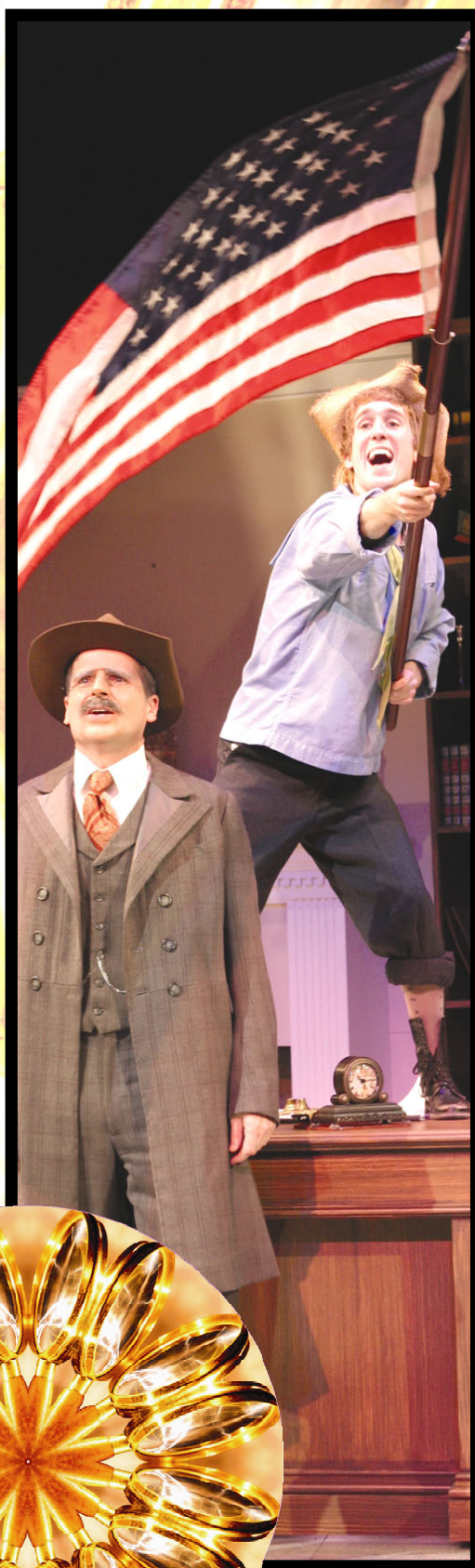


TPAC Education's
Humanities Outreach in
Tennessee presents

Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major

by Tom Isbell and
Mark Russell

2007-2008
Teacher
Guidebook



Paul Morella (bottom) and
Matthew McGloin (top)
Photo by Carol Pratt





THANK YOU

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Dear Teachers,

Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major was co-commissioned by the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences and the White House Historical Association. The performance offers an imaginative, theatrical exploration of the experiences of White House children. Both organizations have created materials to support the performance, and with their generosity and help, we are able to share their information with you. Both the Kennedy Center Cuesheets and the White House Historical Association packets are colorful, informative and fun and can easily spark interest and projects to capitalize on the performance. In addition, a new series of books called Capital Kids is being published and *Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major* is now available at bookstores.

Tom Isbell has built the play on authenticated stories and characteristics of the Roosevelt family. Though this particular adventure is fictional, it is exactly the type of entertainment that Teddy Roosevelt might devise for his children. From all accounts and the evidence of his own correspondence, he was an inventive and involved father, delighting in his children's interests and exploits. The lively and rambunctious Roosevelt children and their menagerie of pets provided some of the most humorous anecdotes in all of White House history. The participation of the character of Count Cassini also has a basis in fact. President Roosevelt had a well-known penchant for including ambassadors and other political figures in his outdoor activities, from chopping wood at Sagamore Hill in New York to "scrambles" with the children through Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C.

Mark Russell has shared his bright and funny wit in the arena of political spoof and satire for years. Encourage students to listen to the ways he plays with familiar tunes in the melody lines and orchestration of the songs in the show.

TPAC Education

An online version of this guidebook at www.tpac.org/education allows students and teachers to click the links throughout and immediately access listed websites. Written and compiled by Lattie Brown and Erin Meyer.

The Roosevelts

From left: Quentin, Teddy Roosevelt, Ted, Jr., Archibald, Alice, Kermit, Edith, and Ethel



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Special note:

The synopsis has been provided for teacher information and context. We ask that you share only the basic premise of the play as you prepare your students, so that the surprises remain intact. If your students don't know what Ursa Major is, we encourage you to keep it a mystery until after the show.

Synopsis and Character List

CHARACTERS

TEDDY ROOSEVELT – Mid-40s, 26th President of the United States, a man with an insatiable appetite for living who never seems to stop moving

KERMIT ROOSEVELT – 18ish, bright but somewhat timid

ETHEL ROOSEVELT – 16ish, serious, smart, sometimes too analytical for her own good

ARCHIE ROOSEVELT – 13ish, young, naïve, Prone to speaking before thinking

JAMES OTIS – Early 30s, Teddy Roosevelt's African-American valet, smart, loyal, reserved

MRS. DUFFIT – 50s, English governess, flustered, harried, somewhat neurotic

COUNT CASSINI – 50s, Russian ambassador, gregarious

TIME: June, 1905

PLACE: Various rooms in the White House

Scene 1 – Upstairs Library: It is a typical day in the White House – or at least typical for the Roosevelt White House. President Roosevelt is discussing schedules, policies, and ambassador visits while his children play in the background, foreground, and everywhere. Mrs. Duffit, the brand-new governess, is escorted into the chaos. Roosevelt implores his children to be quiet for the evening as he has an important meeting with Count Cassini of Russia to discuss the Russo-Japanese War. The children start to follow his suggestion to read a book but are side-tracked by a torn paper that falls out of *Treasure Island*. It is a piece of an old blueprint of the White House with several riddles signed “Jura Roams” written on the back. The children wonder if it is a kind of treasure map and set out to solve the first clue.

Scene 2 – President's Upstairs Office: Archie, Ethel, and Kermit find a plaque on the famous Presidential desk that supplies a mysterious answer to the first riddle. As they are guessing its meaning, James, the president's valet, discovers the children are on treasure hunt. James assists them with the second riddle which refers to the burning of the White House during the War of 1812, when Dolly Madison saved the portrait of George Washington from the flames.

Scene 3 – The Red Room: The President and Mrs. Duffit enter to find the children standing on chairs to examine the enormous portrait. Suspecting they are up to something, the President encourages his children to be adventurous and overcome their doubts and fears. Once the children are alone again, Ethel suggests that maybe “Jura Roams” isn't a true name, but an anagram. The children continue to analyze the next poem puzzle, and then take off to the East Room to figure it out. Archie, falling behind his older siblings, thinks he sees a ghost. The figure speaks, urging him to find the treasure first. He rushes out of the Red Room in fright.

Scene 4 – The East Room: Mrs. Duffit is on a chair looking up at the chandelier of the East Room as Kermit and Ethel enter. She faints to the floor when Archie comes screaming into the room after his ghost encounter. Roosevelt and the Count enter the room. Not wanting the men to think Mrs. Duffit asleep on the job, Ethel jumps behind her, moves her arms, and speaks for her. After a strange and amusing conversation, the Count and the President seem to be fooled, and leave to continue their diplomacy. The search takes on a new urgency as the children suspect Mrs. Duffit might be hunting the treasure, too.

Scene 5 – Lincoln's Bedroom: The children find a clue in the Lincoln Bedroom, but suddenly the lights go out. The glow of a lantern at the door startles them. James enters and proceeds to share a rumor about treasure hidden in the walls by President Lincoln. Archie, Ethel, and Kermit discover another section of blueprints hidden in the bed which leads them to the top floor of the White House.

Scene 6 – Attic: The children cautiously venture into the dark attic. At first terrified by a large stuffed bear, they are surprised by the ghost Archie met before. The ghost proves to be a helper and indicates that the bear is the location of the next clue. They find one last riddle and suddenly Archie puts all the clues together and solves the mystery. He runs to the roof with his brother and sister close behind.

Scene 7 – Rooftop: Archie shows Ethel and Kermit the *Ursa Major* constellation in the sky. Latin for *Great Bear*, of course it is also called the Big Dipper. The clues all fit, with each describing some aspect of the starry treasure. President Roosevelt joins them on the roof, and the children realize that all along their father was the mastermind of the hunt with help from his three conspirators: Mrs. Duffit, James, and even Count Cassini. Teddy Roosevelt declares that challenging his children with a great chase had to conclude with something truly spectacular, an assertion that reflects his belief that the real treasure for mankind is the world around them.

Artists

Tom Isbell

A graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Tom Isbell spent his professional career acting in theatre, film and TV, working opposite Robert DeNiro, Ed Harris, Helen Hunt, Lynn Redgrave, Rosemary Harris, Hal Holbrook, Anne Bancroft, Sarah Jessica Parker and others.

He has taken two productions to the Kennedy Center as part of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival: *Dear Finder* in 1999 (co-written with seven students) and *The Movie Game* in 2002 (written by UMD alum, Adam Hummel).

A professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth, he was recently named the Albert Tezla Scholar/Teacher of the Year, as well as a Horace T. Morse Distinguished Teacher, the highest undergraduate teaching honor given within the four University of Minnesota campuses. His book, *Lessons: The Craft of Acting*, was published by Meriwether Press and released in April 2006.



His most recent play is *Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major*, directed by Gregg Henry with songs written by political humorist Mark Russell. It opened at the Kennedy Center's Family Theatre in October, 2006, and begins a four-month national tour in January 2008. Simon & Schuster has published a book based on the play with a forward written by First Lady Laura Bush. Mr. Isbell is currently working on a musical adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* with noted French composer Louis Dunoyer de Segonzac.

Mark Russell

Whenever Mark Russell is down in the dumps, he opens the newspaper and immediately cheers up. Practically everything he sees strikes him funny. "Some days," he says, "the jokes jump off the pages and write themselves."

After serving three years in the Marine Corps, he began his career as a comedian and political satirist by working as a pianist in various clubs around Washington, DC. He was hired by the Shoreham Hotel, and for twenty years, he made their Marquee Lounge the place where politicians would come every night to hear his jokes about the things they had done that day.

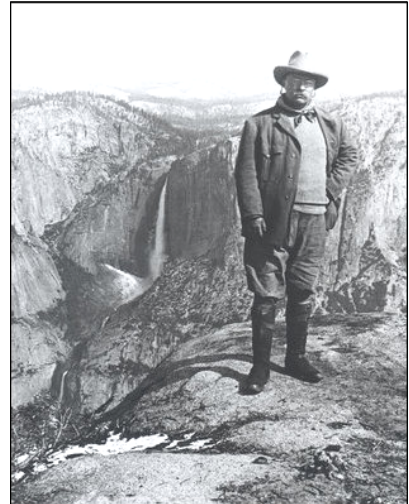
Mark Russell was the author of the syndicated column "Mark Russell's World," enjoyed all over America and a weekly commentator on the CNN's "Inside Politics Weekend." His series, "The Mark Russell Television Special," ran for 23 seasons on PBS. He has won numerous comedy awards and sells his hilarious recordings of political humor across the country. He spends most of the year on the road as a popular speaker and entertainer.



When people marvel at Mark's wealth of fresh material and ask "Do you have any writers?" he's always quick to admit "Oh, yes, I have 535 of them--100 in the Senate and 435 in the House of Representatives!"

Theodore Roosevelt

The life of Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919) was one of constant activity, immense energy, and enduring accomplishments. As the twenty-sixth President of the United States, Roosevelt was an avid conservationist, the builder of the Panama Canal, and the nemesis of the corporate trusts that threatened to monopolize American business at the start of the century. His exploits as a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War and as a cowboy in the Dakota Territory were indicative of his spirit of adventure and love of the outdoors. Reading and hunting were lifelong passions of his; writing was a lifelong compulsion. Roosevelt wrote more than three dozen books on topics as different as naval history and African big game. Whatever his interest, he pursued it with extraordinary zeal. “I always believe in going hard at everything,” he preached time and again. This was the basis for living what he called the “strenuous life,” and he exhorted it for both the individual and the nation.



In Yosemite National Park, California, 1903
Thanks to Sagamore Hill National Historic Site, NPS

Teddy Roosevelt’s childhood was marked with ill health, but he overcame it in his teens with physical exercise and outdoor pursuits. After graduating from Harvard, he married Alice Lee and was elected that next year to the New York Assembly. In 1884, just three years after their marriage, and two days after the birth of their first child, both his wife and mother died in the same day. Leaving Baby Alice with his sister, Roosevelt spent much of the next two years on his ranch in the Badlands of Dakota Territory. Upon returning to New York, he resumed his career in public service and reunited with childhood sweetheart, Edith Carow, marrying her in London in 1886. The two took up residence at Sagamore Hill, New York with Alice, and over the next ten years, gave her five siblings: Theodore, Jr., Kermit, Ethel, Archie, and Quentin. The Roosevelts were a very close family; the high spirits of all six offspring and the strong bond between Theodore and Edith remained constant throughout the whirlwind of his career.

From 1889 to 1900, Roosevelt served as U.S. Civil Service Commissioner, Police Commissioner of New York City, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Colonel of the Rough Riders, and Governor of New York. He was Vice-President not even a year when President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, and Theodore Roosevelt became the youngest President in the nation’s history at 42.

His impressive achievements expanded Presidential powers. In foreign affairs he led the country into the arena of international politics, thrusting aside the American tradition of isolationism, while on the domestic scene, he reversed the traditional federal policy of laissez-faire, and sought to bring order, social justice, and fair dealings to American industry and commerce.

His specific achievements are numerous. Perhaps his greatest contribution was his work for conservation. During his tenure in the White House, he designated 150 National Forests, the first 51 Federal Bird Reservations, 5 National Parks, the first 18 National Monuments, the first 4 National Game Preserves, and the first 21 Reclamation Projects. Altogether, in the seven-and-one-half years he was in office, he provided federal protection for almost 230 million acres.

He negotiated an end to the Russo-Japanese War for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize; he preached a “Square Deal” for all Americans, enabling millions to earn a living wage; he built up the Navy as the “Big Stick,” establishing America as a major world power; he reduced the National debt by over \$90,000,000; and he secured the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act for consumer protection.



After his presidency, he continued his active life, leading expeditions to South Africa and South America and even running for President for the new Progressive Party in 1912. During this time he became the first prominent politician to endorse women’s suffrage. While campaigning in Milwaukee, he was shot in the chest by a fanatic. Roosevelt soon recovered, but his words at that time would have been applicable at the time of his death in 1919: “No man has had a happier life than I have led; a happier life in every way.”

To learn more about all of Roosevelt’s accomplishments, read the excellent timeline that the Theodore Roosevelt Association created: <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/timeline.htm>.

With thanks to Theodore Roosevelt Association, the White House web site, and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery from which this biography is compiled.

Web Quests

~ an online version of this guidebook at allows students and teachers to click the links throughout and immediately access listed websites. www.tpac.org/education/hot/guidebooks.asp

1.

Find a picture of this famous monument that includes Teddy Roosevelt. Who are his other “friends” on the monument?

<http://www.nps.gov/moru/historyculture/stories.htm>

2.

Why are toy bears called “teddy bears”?

http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/tr_teddy.htm

3.

What national treasure did Teddy Roosevelt protect? (Scroll all the way down to read about it.)

<http://www.americanparknetwork.com/parkinfo/content.asp?catid=85&contenttypeid=43>

4.

What did Teddy Roosevelt do to help the sport of football? Read the first few paragraphs and then click on the image of the book at right to see his picture on the cover.

<http://www.ncaa.org/about/history.html>

5.

Look at the list of “first things” Teddy Roosevelt did as President. Who did he invite to dinner, and why was it so important?

<http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/firsts.htm>

~ Web quest sites needing more advanced reading and comprehension skills and longer read times ~

6.

Read a first hand account of the Roosevelt children living in the White House. In your opinion, what is the craziest and most fun thing they did?

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/trwhitehouse.htm>

7.

Choose two or three of Theodore Roosevelt’s letters to his children (some are about his children) and read them. What kind of father was Teddy Roosevelt?

<http://www.bartleby.com/53/index.html>

8.

Read about Teddy Roosevelt’s interest in nature and what he did as President to preserve it. If he was alive today, what do you think he would he say to us about how we treat the environment?

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tr/envir.html>

9.

What new kind of treasure hunting is now popular all over the world?

<http://navicache.com/>



Make a Treasure Hunt

OBJECTIVE: Students will use critical thinking skills to create and follow clues for a treasure hunt.

This activity takes a little extra time to set-up and to execute and will work best if it can be done in small increments over a week or so. Making up their own clues and following the clues of classmates will bring a big reward in interest and investment for students.

A treasure hunt within your class:

Preparation

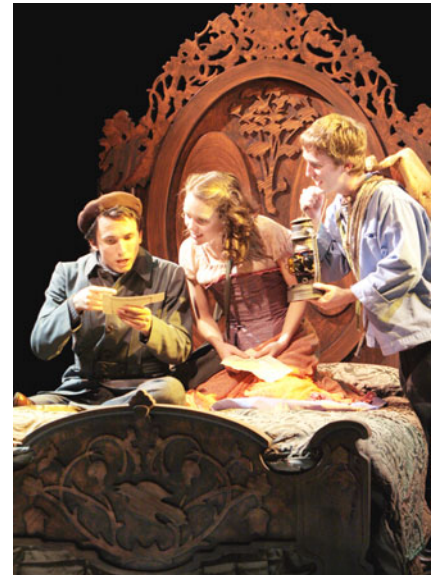
✕ **CHOOSE A TREASURE** ~ Ahead of time, choose a historical or literary figure as a “treasure.”

✕ **CHOOSE FIVE FACTS** ~ Before working with your class, identify five interesting facts about him or her and write them out in sentence form. Use separate pieces of the same color paper and number them 1-5 (or type, print and cut.) If possible, choose the most quirky details about their life or work that will peak the interest of your students. (Alternately, choose an historical event or literary work with each sentence being about a different character.)

In Class

✕ **PRACTICE MAKING CLUES** ~ Create a few example clues together as a class to get them going. First, choose an obvious hiding place and together write a few types of clues about it. Clues can be riddles, rhymes, codes, or visual clues. Short rhymes generally have the most flexibility and are easiest for a group to create. (<http://www.rhymezone.com/> is a terrific website to help with rhyming clues.) Often the hiding place can be personified, describing itself. (See the sample clue on the next page.)

✕ **DIVIDE THE CLASS** ~ Break into five groups of four (adjust the group size and number to suit your students, but more than five groups requires more facts to hide.) Explain that each group gets a sentence to hide. They must create a clue to lead another group to the hiding place. Group 1 receives Sentence 1 to hide and writes clue 1 for another group to find Sentence 1. (Group 2 receives Sentence 2 and writes clue 2, etc.)



From Left: Alexander Strain, Jenna Sokolowski, and Matthew McGloin
Photo by Carol Pratt

For Students

✕ **PLAN A PLACE TO HIDE IT** ~ Each student group needs to first choose a place to hide their sentence. Encourage students not to plan a place impossible to find; in the show, Teddy Roosevelt has planned the treasure hunt so that his children will have fun as well as learn. It also needs to be a practical place, where the clue won't be destroyed (clues hidden outside are subject to weather.) The “hide” can also be with a school secretary, other teacher, or coach. Younger students can restrict their hiding places within the classroom.

✕ **WRITE THE CLUE TO GET THERE** ~ Students must devise a clue to get the treasure hunters to their hiding place. Encourage students to try describing the hiding place in different ways, even writing pieces of clues before they decide on the final form. Ask students to think of each other and to create clues with what they consider just the right amount difficulty. It's helpful if students have a little time to think about what the clue will say between assignment and production.

Image above and on the next two pages of the characters Kermit, Ethel, and Archie from the Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences On Tour production.

The Hunt

✕ **HIDING CLUES** ~ Once a group finishes its clue, they turn it in to you with the number of their sentence written on the clue. 6th and 7th graders might hide their sentences on campus during the school day. Younger children give you their sentences with the hiding place written on the paper, and then you will hide their sentence for them (so other students cannot see where it is concealed.)

✕ **SOLVING CLUES** ~ Groups can work one at a time in sequential order to find clues over a few classes, or they may all search at the same time. Enforce that they must puzzle out the clue, figuring out the exact place to look before they go to find it.

Group 5 receives clue 1 (to find Sentence 1)

Group 3 receives clue 2 (to find Sentence 2)

Group 4 receives clue 3 (to find Sentence 3)

Group 2 receives clue 4 (to find Sentence 4)

Group 1 receives clue 5 (to find Sentence 5)

✕ **FINDING THE PRIZE** ~ Once all the clues are found and turned in to you, the whole class should have one last clue to solve (that you have written) that will lead them to the place where you have hidden the solution to the puzzle. The pay-off in finding treasure is essential. Since this has been a puzzle search, finding a reward of some sort beyond just the solution will be important: candy, something silly from the dollar store, a casual day for the class, or extra credit.

Make the treasure hunt for another class. Students can help decide the “treasure” and research the interesting facts to hide.

From Left: Matthew McGloin, Jenna Sokolowski, and Alexander Strain
Photo by Carol Pratt



Examples:

TREASURE: Mark Twain:

SENTENCES:

- 1: This man said, “Supposing is good, but finding out is better.”
- 2: Shortly after he finished the fifth grade, this man began working for the newspaper setting print type, and then as a teenager, he began writing articles for the newspaper.
- 3: Though Teddy Roosevelt liked this man’s work, this man thought Teddy Roosevelt was a show-off.
- 4: Halley’s Comet was visible in the sky the year this man was born and the year he died.
- 5: This man joined the Confederate Army and deserted after only two weeks.

SAMPLE CLUE:

Wood with lead is my favorite meal;

I devour all colors inside my small wheel.

(for the pencil sharpener, of course)

Imagine a Sequel

OBJECTIVE: Students will experiment with concepts and ideas for another play about the Roosevelt children in the White House as if they had a commission.

The White House Historical Association and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts co-commissioned a play about the children who lived in the White House. Organizations often commission a work of art such as a play for a particular reason: to illuminate a certain subject, to honor an occasion, or to explain something. Without knowing anything more about the constraints of the commission or about the creative process of Tom Isbell and Mark Russell, “commission” another play from your students about the Roosevelt children in the White House, a kind of “Further Adventures of...”

Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major provides the opportunity for students to connect to the important history surrounding the White House in a way that means something to them through the experiences of the kids who lived there. With each new President and each new era, those experiences change. Knowing that Teddy Roosevelt’s children enjoyed the White House more freely than perhaps any other children who lived there allows students to imagine all kinds of great ideas for additional White House adventures.

❖ **ASK STUDENTS TO THINK ABOUT ALL THE ROOMS IN THE WHITE HOUSE.**

Make a list of all the rooms in any house. Do some research if possible with books from the library or at the White House web-site, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/whtour/>. Ask students to think about all the games they could play in those rooms during the Roosevelts’ day, back at the beginning of the 20th century. Talk about what kind of games every kid has played –tag, hide-and-seek, etc. (Remind them there was no TV, video games, or computers.)

❖ **BRAINSTORM WITH THE CLASS** about what could happen in each room before, during, and after the game. Encourage students to begin with a “what if” question and continue the “question string” as far as they can take it. *What if they made a fort in the Map room? How would they build it? How big would it be? What happens when they start playing? What problems could come up?*

❖ After brainstorming a few scenarios as a class, **ASK STUDENTS TO CHOOSE** the rooms in which their play will take place (students can pair up and create a play concept together.) Ideas below help students imagine indoor and outdoor activities, but ask them to keep their play inside the White House.

❖ **ASK STUDENTS TO WRITE A PARAGRAPH** describing what the Roosevelt children would do in this new play.



Clockwise from Top: Alexander Strain, Matthew McGloin, and Jenna Sokolowski
Photo by Carol Pratt

IDEAS FROM THE ROOSEVELTS

(They did all these things!)

- ❖ “Scrambles” through nearby Rock Creek Park with their father and friends.
- ❖ Taking their pony in the elevator to the second floor of the White House to visit Archie when he was sick
- ❖ Sandbox construction and water wars
- ❖ Carrying snakes into the Oval office to show their father
- ❖ Bringing school teams home to play baseball and football on the White House lawn
- ❖ Playing long, involved hide-and-seek games inside the White House
- ❖ Having romps in the hay barn
- ❖ Wrestling matches with their father and each other
- ❖ Races up and down the White House hallways

After the play ~ Now that students have a feel for the characters of Kermit, Ethel, and Archie, ask them to write some dialogue for their play. Begin with Ethel saying the line, “Archie, what are you doing?”

Write a Personal Code

OBJECTIVE: Students will consider the strong personal standards that Theodore Roosevelt set for himself and identify their own ideas about life and what they need to do to be their best selves.

Throughout his life, President Theodore Roosevelt held strong views on personal character. From his writings, speeches, and letters, we can learn about his guiding principles. He believed in working hard and playing hard, and developing a strong mind and body.

“There are two things that I want you to make up your minds to: first, that you are going to have a good time as long as you live - I have no use for the sour-faced man - and next, that you are going to do something worthwhile, that you are going to work hard and do the things you set out to do.”



In *Teddy Roosevelt and the Treasure of Ursa Major*, in the midst of the fun and intrigue of a treasure hunt, President Roosevelt is subtly (and sometimes not so subtly) teaching his children parts of his own personal code for living. Following are a few more of his ideas that are embodied or quoted in the play.

THINGS TO KNOW:

The worst of all fears is the fear of living.

From *An Autobiography*, 1913

It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed.

From "The Strenuous Life" speech, 1899

Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

Speech in New York, 1903

THINGS TO DO:

Overcome your fears and doubts.

Never give up even when something is difficult.

Apply yourself and work hard.

- ✦ **READ STUDENTS THE ABOVE QUOTE** in the grey box from a talk to schoolchildren in 1898.
- ✦ **DISCUSS WITH STUDENTS** what President Roosevelt meant by that quote and the above things to know and things to do. Discuss why it is important to know what you believe about everyday life.
- ✦ **ASK STUDENTS TO THINK ABOUT** what they have learned about living so far. What have they learned are important things to know and things to do? (Try not to ask for “the MOST important,” because students will be more apt to answer with what they think they are supposed to say.) For modern parallels, look at National Public Radio’s *This I Believe* series and Oprah Winfrey’s “What I know For Sure” articles.
- ✦ **ASK STUDENTS TO WRITE THEIR OWN PERSONAL CODE.** Ask them to write three things that they believe it is important to know about life and three things they should do in life. Their code can include elements they have learned from parents, teacher and others, but it needs to be in their own words. Remind them that their code is a work in progress. Like everyone, they are still learning.
- ✦ As a class, **CREATE A CODE FOR THE CLASSROOM:** three things to know and three things to do. These should not be rules for the class, but ways to get the best out of learning and the everyday classroom environment. Post the code and periodically review it, to judge if it continues to be true. After the play, ask students if they think Teddy Roosevelt would agree with their code.



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