



Olympia Junior Programs presents
***From the Mixed-Up Files of
Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler***

by ArtsPower, Monclair, NJ

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The Washington Center for the Performing Arts

A Study Guide for Teachers of Grades 4-6
To prepare students for a positive theater experience
(EALR references included)

What Happens in *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*?

The main characters' names appear in boldface type.

Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler is a collector of fine art, facts, figures, and secrets. She narrates the action of this musical play through a letter she is writing to her lawyer - Saxonberg. After she learns about the adventures of **Claudia** and **Jamie Kincaid** in New York City, Mrs. Frankweiler needs her lawyer to change her last will and testament. Among her many files, she will now include the story of how Claudia and Jamie run away, hide out and sleep over in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, investigate whether a statue called Angel was carved by Michelangelo, and become a terrific sister-brother team.

There are sixteen characters or roles in *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, but the cast (all of the actors in the play) has only four actors. Three actors play the main roles - Mrs. Frankweiler, Claudia, and Jamie. One actor plays 13 roles. In theatre, when an actor plays more than one character, it's called "doubling." You will know that the actor who "doubles" has become a new character when he changes hats, speech, and movement - many times right on stage in front of the audience.

Secrets

People who put on plays have special ways of telling stories on the stage. Here are two of their secrets:

- Two scenes appear on stage at the same time. This is called a "split-stage" effect. When the actors "freeze," you are supposed to pretend that they are not there. They will "unfreeze" when they want your attention.
- The actors use mime (silent acting) to suggest some settings. In *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, Claudia and Jamie mime:
 - getting on a school bus and hiding behind the back seat
 - boarding a train and finding a seat

Look for other suggested settings and actions during the play.

Production Information

- The play is set in and around Greenwich, CT; New York City, NY; Farmington, CT; (but mostly) The Metropolitan Museum Of Art, New York City, September 1967, the year that the book was written. **If not prepared beforehand**, our young audience may not be able to relate to the narrator's mention of Claudia and Jamie eating breakfast at an automat, a scene involving a typewriter nor the historical people referenced during their museum stay.
- The set will have many different pieces which will help indicate the various locales of the play - benches, chairs, an empty pedestal, etc. There is a large drop behind the set which is an enlargement of the floor plan of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1967. It shows museum patrons the locations of the many galleries and features of the museum.
- Some scene changes will be made by simply flipping a name plate on a counter.
- The audience's use of imagination is an important aspect of this production.

Vocabulary

indecent	unacceptable, offensive, disapproved of by others
intrigue	to make somebody greatly interested or curious
flattery	paying compliments to win favor
alight	get out of vehicle, to step down from, to land or settle after flight
inconspicuous	not obvious, not easily seen or noticed
depart	leave, begin a journey, change or vary from a pattern
hitchhike	get a free ride from a passing vehicle by standing by the side of the road holding out a hooked thumb
delegate authority	give someone else the power to act or make decisions for you
Daniel Boone	American pioneer and backwoodsman; legendary frontier adventurer; brave scout and trailblazer; helped settle Kentucky
tightwad	miser; someone who dislikes spending money
checkroom	a room where an attendant safely stores customers' belongings
indubitably	not to be doubted, obvious or definitely true
decree	an order issued by a powerful ruler or someone in authority
period room	a room with representations of an identifiable interval of time
sarcophagus	coffin placed above ground usually made of ornately carved stone
Etruscan	a member of an ancient people who lived in Etruria and were overcome by the Romans during the 2 nd century B.C.
commode	toilet; chair or box with a chamber pot covered by a lid
automat	a restaurant where people get food from small compartments with doors opened by putting coins in slots
acquisition	to acquire; recently bought or obtained; developed or gained
Renaissance	end of middle ages, a period in European history from about the 14 th through 16 th century featuring major cultural and artistic changes
typewriter	an electrical or mechanical device with keys that are pressed one by one to make letters and other characters on a sheet of paper

curator	administrative head of museum, gallery, or other collection who organizes and chooses the items exhibited
elementary	simple, requires little skill or knowledge; basic facts or principles
confirmation	the act of verifying or ratifying something; supports or validates
clamor to know	to noisily or loudly shout demanding questions; persistent
counterfeit	forged, a copy made to deceive someone, false, pretending
expeditiously	speedy or prompt and carried out efficiently
follow a hunch	to be lead by or act upon an intuitive feeling about something

Author

E.L. Konigsburg wrote *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. The "E.L." stands for Elaine Lobl. She was born in New York City, but she has never spent the night in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She studied science and chemistry in school, never thinking she would be an award-winning author in the future. After her children were born, Konigsburg began writing stories. She used events from her life and the lives of her children for many parts of her books. She is also a painter and has done illustrations for several books.

Before the Performance

1. Discuss the meanings of the vocabulary words. (Reading 1.2; Communication 2.4)
2. Review the OJP Theater Etiquette Guide regarding student behavior. (Civics 2.2, 4.1)

The Performance Itself (Arts 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2)

Additional Student Activities (before and after)

Facts (History 1.1, 1.2, 1.3; Arts 4.4)

MICHELANGELO (my-kull-LAN-jel-lo) One of the greatest artists of all time. He was born in Italy in 1475. To learn more about him, visit:

www.michelangelo.com/buonarroti.html

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART "The Met" A gigantic New York City museum with art from all over the world and from all time periods. To learn more, visit:

www.ny.com/museums/MET.html

ITALIAN RENAISSANCE (REN-uh-sahnts) A new time of great cultural and artistic achievement in Italy, 1420-1600. To learn more, visit: www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/tl/it-ren

Mapping (Geography 1.1, 1.2, 3.2; Mathematics 1.2, 1.3)

Using maps of Connecticut and New York, locate Greenwich and Farmington, CT and New York City, NY. Plot the miles between these: Greenwich to NY City, NY City to Farmington and Farmington to Greenwich. How many miles total did Claudia and James travel?

Using a map of New York City, locate the famous locations mentioned: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Statue of Liberty, Grand Central Station, Central Park and Fifth Avenue.

The distance Claudia and Jamie walk between Grand Central Station and "The Met" is 40 blocks. Using the legend of the NYC map, calculate how many miles 40 blocks are.

Museum Tour (Geography 3.3; History 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3; Art 4.4)

Conduct research to learn more about these people and things mentioned on the tour: Rome, Greek and American Art; sarcophagus, the Etruscan School, Egypt's mummies, pharaohs and pyramids; armor, knights and "the art of war"; English and French furniture; Marie Antoinette and Lord Robert Dudley. Renoir and Monet are also mentioned prior to the tour. The Italian Renaissance and Michelangelo are a prominent part of the story.

Jamie's "High Finance" (Economics 1.1,1.3; Mathematics 1.1, 1.4, 3, 4 and 5)

The issue of money is a large component of this story. At the beginning of the story Claudia initially planned to run away by herself. Why did she decide to bring her brother Jamie?

Claudia has \$4.18 and Jamie has \$24.53 giving them a combined total of how much?

On Wednesday they set out on their journey. When they arrive at the museum, they eat in the cafeteria snack bar. They now have \$27.11 left. How much did their snacks cost?

Thursday morning they eat breakfast at the automat and have \$26.11 left. What did the breakfast cost each of them?

Saturday they did laundry. The following Monday they spend \$4.50 for a post office box. By Wednesday they have \$5.48 left. On average, what did food and laundry cost them per day?

Research current prices and estimate how much money Claudia and Jamie would need if the story took place today? Would \$5.48 still be enough for train tickets and a taxi? What ways did they save money? (Used Dad's train ticket to get to NYC, walked instead of taking a bus or taxi to "The Met", ate in cafeteria instead of restaurant, washed all the clothes together instead separating colors, typed letter on typewriter display model, hand delivered letter.)

After the Performance

1. The play is set in the year 1967, the year the book was written. As you watched the performance, did you notice any differences in fashion, technology, finances or language, from today? (History 3.2, 3.3; Science 3.2)
2. What made Claudia and Jamie a great team? Who were the famous teams mentioned in the performance? (Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson, Lewis and Clark, Orville and Wilbur Wright, the Three Musketeers) Which are real? What are they famous for? (👉 & 🏹 Communications 1.1, 1.2,1.3; History 3.3; Art 2.1)
3. In what ways did Claudia and Jamie change during their time in New York City?
4. Tell what you did or didn't like about the play, the characters, costumes, or set. Send letters or pictures to Olympia Junior Programs, P.O. Box 1371 Olympia, WA 98507-1371 (Writing 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2; Communications 1.3; Arts 1.5, 2.3)

This study guide was assembled using a portion of the ArtsPower 8-page Study Buddy found at:

<http://www.artspower.org/shows/mixed-up-files/assets/MUF-study-buddy.pdf>

ArtsPower Study Buddy sections used are: "What Happens In *From the Mix-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*", "Secrets", "Author", "Additional Student Activities – Facts". Location and Set information came from the ArtsPower script.

This OJP study guide is also available on our web-site. Visit us on the web at:
www.olympiajuniorprograms.com