




**92NY Theater  
for Young  
Audiences**

Presented by The Diamond Family



Disney & Cameron  
Mackintosh's

# MARY POPPINS



## Curriculum Guide






The fun doesn't have to stop at the theatre. Keep the fun going and continue the experience of *Mary Poppins* at home or in your classroom!

## How to Use This Guide - What's Inside?

This curriculum guide is designed in connection with 92NY Theater for Young Audiences production of Disney & Cameron Mackintosh's *Mary Poppins*. The activities are not only meant to engage children artistically, but kinesthetically and through sensory learning as well. Some of the activities connect with one another. These activities can be done at home and many can be done in the classroom as well.

**“In every job that must be done there is an element of fun. You find the fun and snap! The job's a game!”**  
- Mary Poppins

## The hidden benefits of this curriculum guide include:

-  Gross Motor Development
-  Fine Motor Development
-  Developing Color Recognition
-  Fostering Imagination and Creativity
-  Building Literacy Skills
-  Developing Comprehension Skills

The story of *Mary Poppins* is beloved by all ages, and with this in mind, this guide is filled with information and activities everyone can enjoy. In **Art of Conversation**, **Sensory Spelling** is intended for toddler and early elementary age groups, while **When the Conversation Moves...** is intended for middle and high school age groups. Peruse the historical and biographical information with your children, or students, as an introduction to the show, or use it as an extension to explore after the show. Start a lively debate and continue the conversation, either at home or in the classroom, by discussing the

**Post-Show Discussion Questions** found at the end of this guide.

Either way, your time with *Mary Poppins* doesn't have to end once the final bows have commenced. Have a **Family Movie Night** to watch the classic Disney film, or visit **Mary Poppins at the Library** to check out the entire *Mary Poppins* book series. Have some fun in the kitchen by **Baking with Mary Poppins** and enjoy a delightful **Afternoon Tea with Mary** at home with friends and family.

# P.L. TRAVERS & THE BIRTH OF MARY POPPINS

P.L. Travers was born Helen Lyndon Goff on August 9, 1899 in Maryborough, Queensland, Australia. She loved fairy tales, fantasy and Irish mythology. Travers had a brief stint as a dancer and Shakesperean actor, adopting the stage name Pamela (because it was a popular name at the time) Lyndon Travers (her father's name). She then left Australia for London, England and pursued a literary career.



**“ Mary Poppins,” he cried, “you’ll never leave us, will you?” “I’ll stay till the wind changes,” she said.”**

- P.L. Travers, *Mary Poppins*



Travers published articles and poetry in various papers, including *The Irish Statesman*. The character of *Mary Poppins* first appeared in one of Travers short stories titled “Mary Poppins and the Match Man”. It was published in November 1926 (nearly a decade before the first book was published) in *The Sun*, a local newspaper in Christchurch New Zealand. Check out the original short story of “Mary Poppins and the Match Man” [here!](#)

*Mary Poppins* was first published in 1934 and became a global sensation. Travers wrote seven more books in the series: *Mary Poppins Comes Back*, *Mary*

*Poppins Opens the Door*, *Mary Poppins in the Park*, *Mary Poppins from A to Z*, *Mary Poppins in the Kitchen*, *Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane*, and *Mary Poppins and the House Next Door*. You can check out this fantastical, classic series at your local library or bookstore!

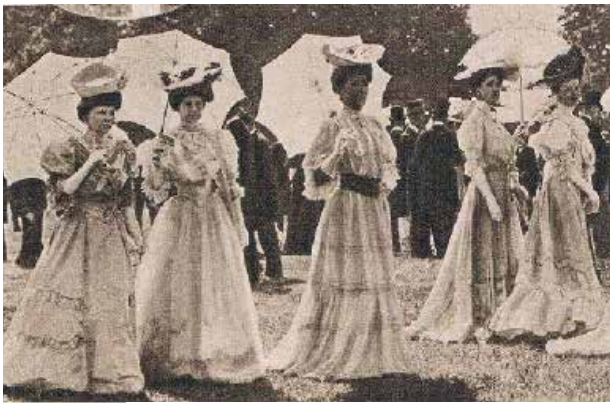
Though Travers did not like the 1964 Disney film adaptation, it did make her very wealthy. Travers was incredibly private, and never married. She lived to be 96 years of age, and passed away on April 23, 1996.

**“ Just outside the front door, stood Mary Poppins, dressed in her coat and hat, with her carpet bag in one hand and her umbrella in the other.”**

- P.L. Travers, *Mary Poppins*

# SETTING OF MARY POPPINS – FAST FACTS

**Life was very different in London in 1910 than New York City in 2024. Check out some fast facts to learn more about the world of *Mary Poppins*.**



☂ *Mary Poppins* takes place in London in 1910 during the Edwardian period.

☂ Great Britain reigned supreme over much of the world – one in three of the world’s population were her subjects - “the sun never set on the British flag”.

☂ The Edwardian period has often been referred to as “the Gilded Age”.

☂ Men were considered the breadwinner of the family and did not handle matters regarding childcare or household chores.

☂ Women were in charge of the household and childcare.



☂ It was important to stay under control, a “stiff upper lip” if you will, even among family and friends.

☂ Having servants, and how many you had, was a sign of wealth and social stature.

☂ The latest inventions included: the radio, the vacuum cleaner, the airplane, the teddy bear, and crayons.



# MARY POPPINS GLOSSARY

**Much of the dialogue in *Mary Poppins* may sound a little funny, and that’s okay! The dialogue is made up of British phrases or slang, which many of us don’t know. Use the Glossary below to help you better understand some of the British phrases and terminology used in the show!**

**Blighters:** a disliked or contemptible person

**Doff (my cap):** to take off (a hat) in greeting or as a sign of respect

**Castor Oil:** Commonly used in households of the time for medical purposes



**Gruel:** a thin porridge made with a type of cereal (oat, wheat, rye, rice) and boiling water.

**Tommy rot:** utter foolishness or nonsense

**Screever:** one who makes a living by drawing pictures on sidewalks in order to obtain charity from passersby; a sidewalk artist

**Chimney Sweep:** someone, at the time usually young boys, who cleans chimneys to remove any and all combustible soot from the chimney to prevent chimney fires. The soot was considered valuable, and would be sold to farmers and gardeners for fertilizer. There is quite a folklore across the world believing the chimney sweep to be lucky. In the



United Kingdom, chimney sweeps are often invited to weddings as they are considered good luck if the bride sees one on her wedding day.

**Lummy:** British slang to mean first-rate

**Neleus:** In Greek mythology, Neleus is the son of Poseidon

**Lime Cordial:** a drink made by mixing lime juice, sugar and water

**British Money:**

**-Pounds:** United Kingdom currency; pound sterling



**-Shillings:** a former British coin no longer in circulation; it equaled 1/20th of a pound sterling or 12 pence



**-Pence:** there are 100 pennies, or pence, to 1 pound



**-Sixpence:** Introduced in 1551, came about because the value of the silver testoon (what the coin was made from), fell from 12 pence to 6 pence. It is no longer in circulation.



**Tuppence:** Also known as two pence



**St. Paul's Cathedral:** An Anglican church in London and one of the most recognized sites in London.



**Heirloom:** something of special value passed down from one generation to the next

**Cheerio:** British term for "goodbye and goodluck"

**Au revoir:** French word for "goodbye, until we meet again"

**Brimstone and Treacle:** Brimstone is a form of sulphur; treacle is also known as molasses, a type of sugar. Ingested together, this "cure-all" was used before medicine was not widely available to everyone.

**Molly-coddle:** to treat with an excessive or absurd degree of indulgence and attention

**Poseidon:** Ancient Greek god of the sea; brother to Zeus and Hades; father to Neleus

**Lamplighter:** Usually a man, a lamplighter's job was to individually light and then later extinguish city street lamps, which were powered by gas at the time.





# BAKING WITH MARY POPPINS!

**Grab a friend, throw on an apron and get to baking with Mary Poppins!**

Check out [The English Kitchen](#) for Mrs. Corry's infamous Gingerbread Stars.

You'll need:

- 🍷 Flour
- 🍷 Baking Soda
- 🍷 Ground ginger
- 🍷 Ground cinnamon
- 🍷 Ground nutmeg
- 🍷 Ground cloves
- 🍷 Ground allspice
- 🍷 Golden Raisins (referred to in the recipe as "sultanas")
- 🍷 Butter
- 🍷 Dark brown sugar
- 🍷 Molasses
- 🍷 Eggs
- 🍷 2 star shaped cake pans or 1 8-in round cake pan



You can also find the story of gingerbread stars, and the recipe for it, in *Mary Poppins in the Kitchen*.

Check out these [Easy Berry Scones](#) to enjoy with your Afternoon Tea!

You'll need:

- 🍷 Flour
- 🍷 Sugar
- 🍷 Baking Powder
- 🍷 Butter
- 🍷 Heavy Cream
- 🍷 Mixed Berries (fresh or frozen)



# AFTERNOON TEA WITH MARY

In the early 19th century, the length of time between lunch and dinner was quite long. Dinner was not served until 8pm! The concept of afternoon tea was introduced by Anna, the Duchess of Bedford, in 1840, as essentially a snack to help tide her over until dinner time. She would invite friends to join her for tea, bread, and cake, and thus the afternoon tea craze was born. You might say she was the first social media influencer.

**“A spoonful of sugar - that is all it takes. It changes bread and water into tea and cakes.”**

- “A Man Has Dreams (The Life I Lead)”  
from Mary Poppins 1964 Film

While there are places you can go to for a lovely afternoon tea, there is nothing more special than having your own British afternoon tea at home! Enjoy a spot of tea and an **Easy Berry Scone** at home with a family member, friends, or stuffed animals (honestly, the more the merrier!). Peruse these easy, creative ways to add a little flair to your afternoon tea:

☂ The dish says it all – use your best dishware at home – or go to your local antique or thrift store to find the teapot and teacup that are “practically perfect” for you!

☂ The Art of Table Setting – have grand time decorating your table for tea! Incorporate flowers, cloth napkins, make a napkin ring out of construction paper, and if an adult is present, add a candle or two.

☂ “Best foot forward, spit spot!” - Put on your finest outfit – perhaps one with sparkles and feathers – and don’t forget to add a hat!

☂ Create a Tea inspired music playlist – it could be filled with songs that have the word “tea” in it or simply be filled with songs that set the tone and vibe you wish to enjoy while having your tea and scones.

☂ Have a Tea Dance – by the early 1900s, it was popular to have a Tea Dance at a social tea gathering in London. Popular dances of the time (the Charleston, the waltz, the tango) were all danced during afternoon tea time. Put on your favorite dance tunes and have some fun doing some of your go-to dance moves.



# ART OF CONVERSATION

## Sensory Spelling

### Spelling with Paint:

Have some fun writing with your little one using some sensory materials.

**You'll need:** Heavy duty ziploc bags, washable tempera paints (various colors), and duct tape.

**Instructions:** Choose 2-3 paint colors. Squirt the paint into the heavy duty ziploc bag. Press the air out, seal the bag and line with duct tape. Tape the bag to the window, table, wall or floor. Kids can now have fun using their fingers to mix colors and write letters. The best part, NO MESS! Challenge them to write words found in the **Glossary**. Have even more fun creating your own words together!



### Spelling with Felt:

Have fun spelling with this no-mess activity! All you need is:

🧺 1 large piece of white or black felt

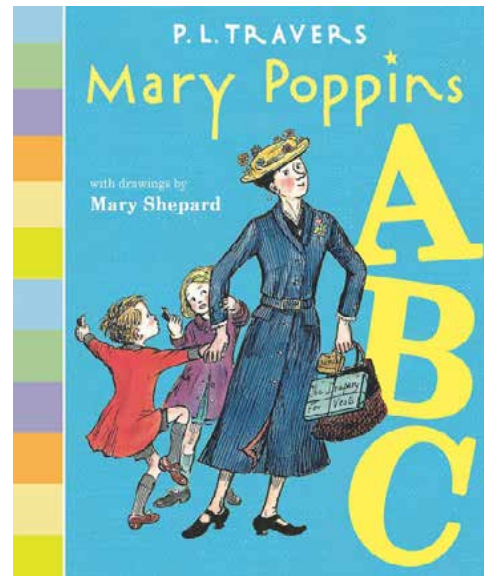
🧺 26 small pieces of felt in a variety of colors

🧺 1 fabric marker

🧺 Scissors

On each colorful piece of felt, write out a letter of the alphabet in block or bubble letter styling. Next, cut out each letter. Use the large piece of felt as a board to spell words with your felt letters. If desired, attach some string, ribbon, or craft rope to the large piece of felt to hang it up on the wall.

Check out *Mary Poppins* ABC book for spelling word inspiration! For an extra challenge: select 4-6 letters at random and see how many words you can spell with just those letters.



## Dance Spelling Bee

This game can be done altogether with a facilitator guiding students through the movement, or can be done by the students in pairs or small groups. Instruct students that they will all be spelling a **Glossary** word from *Mary Poppins* in the air using their body parts. The body parts they will use will be in

this order:

1st Letter: Head

2nd Letter: Arm

3rd Letter: Hips

4th Letter: Knee

5th Letter: Foot

(Repeat the order if the name is longer than 5 letters).

### Game Options:

**Option 1:** Use different character names from the show (or book).

**Option 2:** Do the game in pairs.

**Option 3:** Challenge students to spell Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

**Option 4:** Host a class **Dance Spelling Bee**, where students have to spell the word using movement.



## DID YOU KNOW?...

“Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious” is a real word? Though not printed in the Oxford Dictionary until much later, the word first appears in Helen Herman’s column, “A-muse-ings”, in The Daily Orange at Syracuse University in 1931.

## When the Conversation Moves...

**Have you ever had a conversation without words and just movement? Have some fun, and give this a try! You don’t have to be a dancer, just have a willingness to move and be a little silly.**

This activity is done in pairs. Decide who will be Partner A and Partner B. When you are ready, Partner A begins by moving into a frozen pose (for example, a second position plie with arms outstretched). The Partner B responds by moving into a frozen pose that relates to Partner A (for example, a lunge slightly behind Partner A with their arms circling one of Partner A’s outstretched arms). The conversation continues with Partner A unfreezing and moving into another pose that relates to Partner B’s pose. This movement conversation continues in this fashion. There are no wrong answers

in this conversation. Explore a variety of levels (high/medium/low), explore the space (don’t forget the floor!) and find ways to relate to each other in the conversation (face each other, face away from each other, etc).









# CRAFTING WITH THE BANKS CHILDREN


## Floating Chalk Art

Join Bert in creating these magical, floating chalk art pieces. While Bert primarily creates chalk art on the sidewalk outside, your kids can create these really cool chalk art inside. Turn a rainy day inside into magical fun! Visit this [link](#) from **Toddler Approved.com** for detailed instructions on how to make Floating Chalk Art.

You'll need:

-  Chalk
-  A basin or tub
-  Water
-  White cardstock (or other thick paper)
-  Craft stick or plastic knife
-  A plastic tablecloth (to help ease clean up after the drying process)









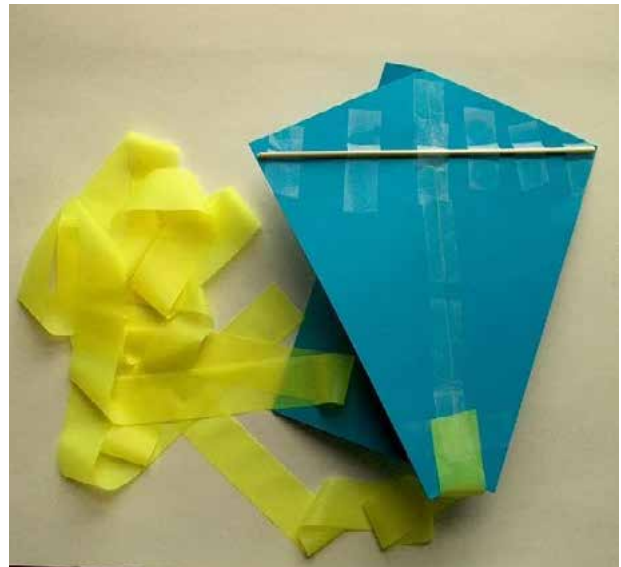
 Allow your kids to get creative with the different colors they use and the different shapes they create!

# Let's Go Fly a Kite

Join the Banks family on their kite flying adventure! Follow these [detailed instructions](#) on how to make a kite at home.

You'll need:

-  8/5 x 11 piece of paper
-  A wooden skewer
-  Kite string
-  Ribbon
-  Scissors or hole punch
-  Tape



While making the kite, have a conversation at home on how kites fly. It's a great way to connect what your child is learning in science class while having fun at home. Or, if you are a science educator, use this activity as a hands-on, artistic learning tool to engage students in the four forces of flight: lift, weight, drag, and thrust). Check out this [article](#) by Mike Hulslander from the National Air & Space Museum for more information on how kites fly!

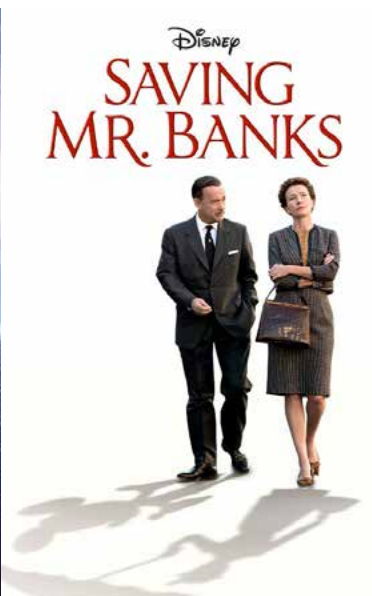


# FAMILY TIME WITH THE BANKS'S

## Family Movie Night

Grab a slice of **Gingerbread Star** and a cup of tea for a *Mary Poppins* family movie night! Check out the Disney classic starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke or the latest Disney sequel, *Mary Poppins Returns*, starring Emily Blunt and Lin-Manuel Miranda! And don't forget to watch *Saving Mr. Banks*, the story of Walt

Disney's quest to obtain the rights to *Mary Poppins* from P.L. Travers. Loosely based on a true story, this sentimental film stars Tom Hanks and Emma Thompson.





# Mary Poppins at the Library

Visit your local library to check out the entire *Mary Poppins* book series! The eight book series was written by P.L.Travers from 1934 - 1988.

**“A cover is not the book so open it up and take a look.”**

*- Mary Poppins*

## Post - Show Discussion Questions

What are the responsibilities of the family members and how do they differ today?

What responsibilities do children have today?

How can music and dance help tell a story?

How is the stage adaptation different from the film adaptation?

What is Bert's role in the story?

What lessons do the Banks children learn from Mary Poppins?

What lesson(s) does Mr. Banks learn?





# Resources

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## **92NY Theater for Young Audiences (TYA)**

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