



INDIANA
REPERTORY
THEATRE

You Can't Take It With You

by Moss Hart
and George S. Kaufman

April 23 –
May 19, 2019

on the
OneAmerica
Mainstage



STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts, Resident Dramaturg
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YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

BY MOSS HART & GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

Alice loves her eccentric family, but what if her fiancé's straight-laced parents don't feel the same way? Brimming with colorful characters, this farce with heart brings people together in a comedy classic that ignites fireworks of laughter!

In this Pulitzer Prize–winning comedy, Moss Hart and George Kaufman introduce us to an improbably happy 1930s family who pursue passions that range from classical ballet to constructing fireworks. Amongst a chorus of wild characters is Alice, who hopes her family can pose for one night as “normal” in front of her fiancé's staid family. Perfect for drama clubs, theatre classes, or a unit on humor, this hilarious story showcases people who enjoy the richness of life and encourage those around them to do the same.

STUDENT MATINEES 10:00AM on April 30 and May 1, 2, 3, 2019

ESTIMATED LENGTH Approximately 2 hours, 15 minutes

AGE RANGE Recommended for grades 9-12

CONTENT ADVISORY

You Can't Take it With You is a classic comedy that contains adult themes and situations. A script preview is available upon request. Recommended for grades 9-12.

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COVER ART BY KYLE RAGSDALE

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THE STORY OF THE PLAY

You Can't Take It With You by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart was first produced on Broadway in 1936. It won the 1937 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. The Frank Capra film version won the Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Director in 1938. While society has witnessed many changes since the play first appeared, many of the concerns of that time are still found today, including unemployment, economic and political worries, and the struggle to be happy in life. Yet the play continues to stand out for its universal themes and ideas about family, love, and living life fully.

At the center of the play is the Vanderhof-Sycamore family, a collection of happy and spontaneous, sometimes incompetent, yet always lovable characters. Grandpa Martin Vanderhof is the philosophical patriarch of this erratic family, a man who seems to have found the meaning of true happiness. His daughter, Penelope Sycamore, wants to be playwright, and her husband Paul is a fireworks maker who works out of the cellar. Penelope and Paul's daughter Essie studies ballet in the living room, and her husband Ed has a passion for the printing press and the xylophone, which he manages simultaneously. The immediate family is frequently expanded due to their generosity towards strangers and others they have taken in on a more long-term basis—all just as eccentric in their own ways. Penelope and Paul's younger daughter, Alice, seems to be the only “normal” character in the house. Alice works on Wall Street as a secretary. Her boyfriend is Tony Kirby—her boss's son.

The Kirbys are the complete opposite of Alice's family—very successful in business, and very conservative politically and socially. Despite their differences, Tony is head over heels in love with Alice, and he truly likes her unusual family. Alice is much more nervous about their families' differences, and very unsure about the match. With some resistance from Alice, the two agree to have a dinner for Tony's parents to meet her family. Alice reasons with her family to temper their daily activities on the night of the dinner, and her family happily agrees. But the Kirbys mistakenly arrive to dinner a day early, and Alice's worst fears begin to surface as the Kirbys are whirled into the family's crazy antics. In the midst of this chaos, because of a misunderstanding about some flyers Ed has printed, government agents raid the house, discover a basement full of fireworks, and arrest everyone present—including the Kirbys. Convinced that the two families will never get along, Alice, decides to leave, while Tony struggles to win her back and to convince his father that the match is a good one—with a little help from Grandpa, who notes that money isn't everything. After, all, you can't take it with you.



*James Tasse & Karen Nelson
in the IRT's 1983 production of
You Can't Take It With You.*

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

BY JANET ALLEN, EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Many of us recognize the title of this American icon, which won a Pulitzer Prize and has been one of the most produced plays in the American canon since it was originally written, but most of us don't know much else. Maybe we played a role in *You Can't Take It With You* in high school, or saw a production, or saw the Frank Capra movie, loosely based on the play. What's interesting to contemplate is that master playwrights Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman wrote this comedy in 1936, at the point in the Great Depression when many people thought it would never end.

The crash of the stock market in 1929 led to an extended period of economic depression—the longest in American history—creating a decade of devastating economic challenges for most Americans. Sky-rocketing unemployment, plunging crop prices, a deflationary spiral, and a severe drought in the West and Midwest led to starvation, homelessness, and general privation in the American population. In the midst of this, Kaufman and Hart wrote a play that asserted that money isn't everything: after all, “you can't take it with you.”

There is significant surprise in reminding ourselves of this economic and social context around the play. The content of the play suggests deep questioning of the belief that capitalism alone can make America great. It poses, instead, that a singular focus on the economic gain side of the American dream causes many to lose sight of the importance of quality of life, of the “pursuit of happiness” part of the Declaration of Independence.

What makes us happy? Americans seem to be more baffled by that question than many other cultures around the world. The play outlines a number of means of achieving happiness, and all of them suggest that the 9-to-5 office setting may not be the best place to look for it. At a time when there was still considerable focus on making ends meet in American society, *You Can't Take It With You* reminded us that the pursuit of capital at the expense of doing things that make the soul and heart sing is not a viable means to creating a contented American populace.

Encountering this play, with these values, at this point in the 21st century, presents some pretty revealing parallels. Climbing out of the recession of 2008-12 has left many individuals and institutions, and perhaps even our political discourse, over-focused on the bottom line. The reminder to achieve balance, to look around at what makes the world an exciting and vibrant place in its complexity, to find activities that expand our vision and get us interactive and curious about our world—these are among the messages that this play delivers. The picture of unbridled capitalistic pursuit characterized by Mr. Kirby in the play is not terribly flattering: his attachment to Wall Street has literally poisoned every aspect of his life.

Another significant piece of the emotional underpinnings of this most gorgeous of all American comedies is the idea of tolerance—another tenet of human experience that is under fire in our current social moment, and another reason this 83-year-old play packs a punch for us in 2019. The play invites us to consider cultural and ethnic differences, and how they make our world a more interesting

place. The Sycamores, in their largesse, invite many a wayfarer into their home, some for dinner, some for years. This dedication to collecting diverse humans into their household clearly makes this family not only fascinating but empathic, modeling an American way of life that gets at some of our best values: inclusivity, acceptance of the stranger at our door (regardless of their color or creed), and a willingness to share our table.

The Sycamores are quintessential Americans: living their freedom through their various passions, helping those in need, observing family traditions, and questioning social class distinctions. After all, as Grandpa says, "A cat can look at a king." In the Sycamore house, happiness reigns, acceptance thrives, and there is always food (however eccentric) that can be stretched to feed another. May we all strive to be a little bit more like the loving and accepting Sycamores!

The company of the IRT's 1983 production of You Can't Take It With You.



THE AMERICAN FAMILY

BY PETER AMSTER, DIRECTOR

There are many reasons *You Can't Take It With You* might be considered *the* Great American Comedy: its generosity of spirit; its deft depiction of a broad range of unique and amusing characters; its use of surprise, wit, incongruity, and inconsequential disaster to create moments of uproarious humor; its brilliant structure. But for me its greatness rests in the fact that it seems to be a different play, focused on different concerns, every time it appears on the American stage. It feels relevant in every age, and that makes it an enduring masterpiece.

Seven years ago, directing the show at the Asolo Repertory Theatre in Sarasota, Florida, the nation was just as deeply divided as it is now, but there was not the sense of despair, of helplessness, of anger, mistrust, and depression, that seems to permeate the current American moment. What the play celebrated then as now was that money isn't everything, that there are simple joys to be had if we just allow ourselves the permission to enjoy them, whether it's dancing ballet, painting a picture, playing the xylophone, or just hanging out with family and friends. The American Dream is "Pursuit of Happiness," not just the pursuit of money and power.

Now, in 2019, this joyous, funny, endearing play explodes on the stage again. And now, at least for me, the play has new concerns. It's about the importance of family, and how generosity of spirit and inclusion is what makes us the best Americans we can be. The Vanderhof-Sycamore clan feels different: more diverse, more outspoken, more representative of today's America. *You Can't Take It With You* is not simply and narrowly about an extended family living on the Upper West Side of New York in the 1930s, but the American Family, living with open minds and hearts, in a home with a door that is constantly open to new people and new adventure. That's who we are now: America's free and sprawling *extended* family.

Preliminary costume sketches for Olga, Penny, Paul, Essie, & Mr. De Pinna by designer Tracy Dorman.



KAUFMAN & HART



Both separately and as a team, George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart were two of the most prominent figures in 20th century American theatre.

In every Broadway season from 1921 through 1958, there was a play written or directed by **GEORGE S. KAUFMAN** (1889–1961). He wrote only one play alone, *The Butter and Egg Man* in 1925. With Marc Connelly, he wrote *Merton of the Movies*, *Dulcy*, and *Beggar on Horseback*; with Ring Lardner he wrote *June Moon*; with Edna Ferber he wrote *The Royal Family*, *Dinner at Eight*, and *Stage Door*; and with Howard Teichmann he wrote *The Solid Gold Cadillac*. With Moss Hart he wrote *Once in a Lifetime* (which he also directed and acted in, playing—what else?—a playwright), *Merrily We Roll Along*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and *You Can't Take It With You*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1937. He wrote two Broadway musicals for the Marx Brothers: *The Cocoanuts* with Irving Berlin, and *Animal Crackers* with Morrie Ryskind, Bert Kalmar, and Harry Ruby. With George and Ira Gershwin and Morrie Ryskind, he wrote *Of Thee I Sing*, which won the 1933 Pulitzer Prize. Kaufman directed 43 Broadway productions, including *The Front Page*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Of Mice and Men*, *My Sister Eileen*, *Guys and Dolls* (for which he won the 1951 Best Director Tony Award), and *The Solid Gold Cadillac*. Kaufman also occasionally wrote directly for the movies, most significantly the screenplay for *A Night at the Opera* for the Marx Brothers.

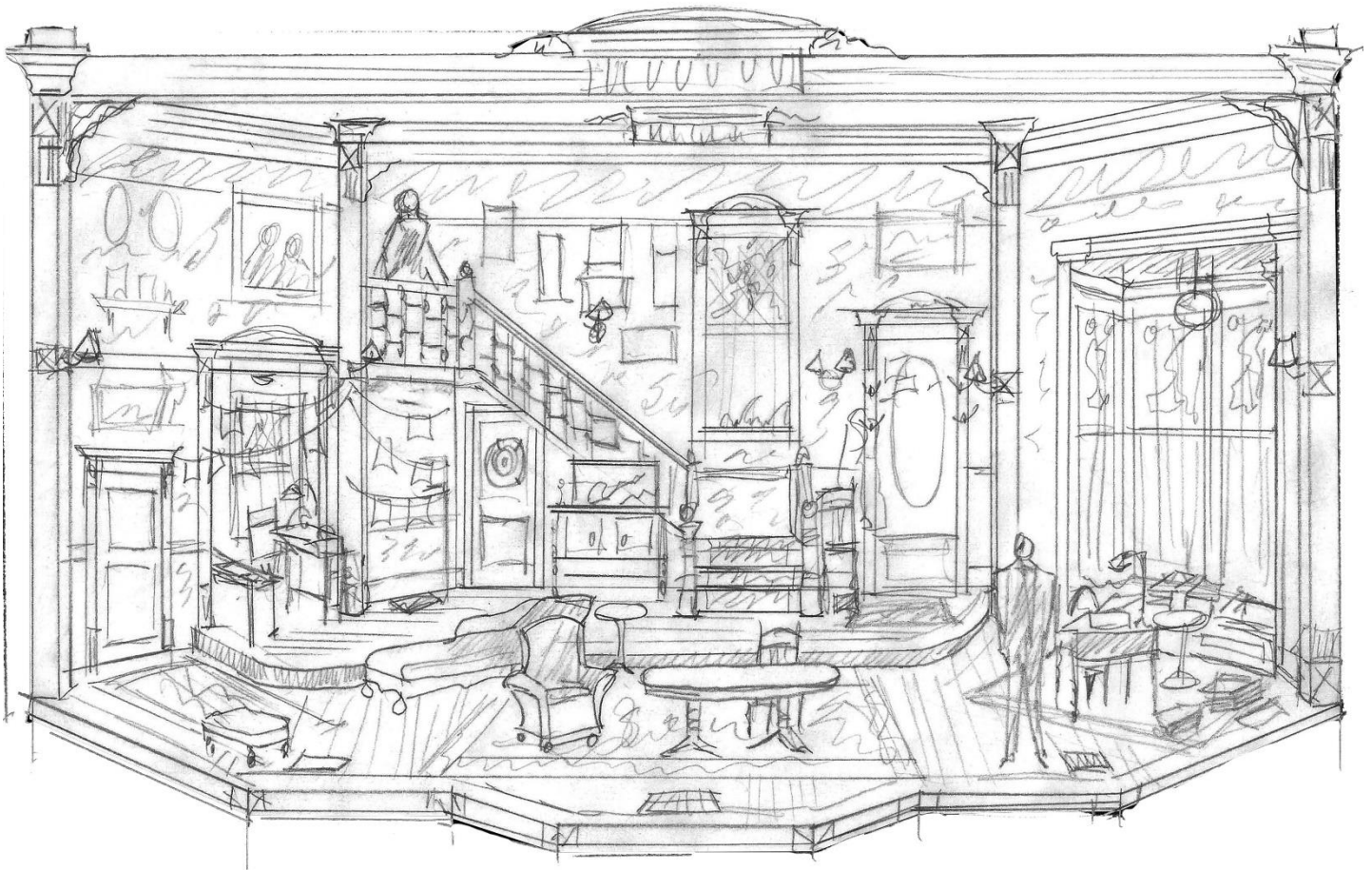
MOSS HART (1904–1961) was a 25-year-old unknown when Kaufman, already a veteran of 21 Broadway productions, agreed to collaborate with him. Over the next decade, the pair wrote nine shows together, including *Once in a Lifetime*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, *You Can't Take It With You*, (which won the 1937 Pulitzer Prize), the musical *I'd Rather Be Right* with songs by Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart and starring George M. Cohan as Franklin D. Roosevelt, and *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. During this time, Hart also wrote several musicals without Kaufman, including *Face the Music* and *As Thousands Cheer* with Irving Berlin, *Jubilee* with Cole Porter, and *Lady in the Dark* with Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin (which Hart also directed). After parting with Kaufman, Hart wrote and directed *Light Up the Sky*, but he began to work more as a director. Among his dozen Broadway directing credits were *Junior Miss*, *Dear Ruth*, and *Camelot*, but by far his biggest hit was *My Fair Lady* by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, for which Hart won the Tony Award for Best Director. Hart also wrote several screenplays, including *Gentleman's Agreement* (for which he received an Oscar nomination), *Hans Christian Andersen*, and the 1954 *A Star Is Born* starring Judy Garland. He was married to singer, actress, and arts advocate Kitty Carlisle. Hart's 1959 memoir, *Act One*, about his impoverished youth, his early struggles in the theatre, and his initial collaboration with George S. Kaufman, was recently adapted for a Broadway production that was broadcast on PBS.

HOME & FAMILY

LINDA BUCHANAN SCENIC DESIGNER

The characters in *You Can't Take It With You* are the most eccentric and quirky bunch of bohemians you could ever imagine. At the same time, they are quintessential American characters: they are willing to try anything, and they believe deeply in personal freedom and their own ability to reinvent themselves. These people are true amateurs in the original meaning of the word: people who do things out of love and enjoyment. The design needs to create room for ballet dancing, playwriting, fireworks making, pamphlet printing, and all the other current and past interests of the inhabitants, contrasted against a conventional period home that they have adapted to accommodate their unusual relationships and their many pursuits. In this production, we also wanted to imbue the house with the warmth and nurture of Mr. Vanderhof's deceased wife, the matriarch of the family. We tried to imagine how she would have decorated and what warm and comfortable touches she would have wanted to provide for her family. The design of a show can also really work to support the physical actions of a play. Certain events in this script call for specific architectural relationships for best comedic payoff. For example, and without giving anything away, a prominent front door, and a long cross from the kitchen door to the front door, are both very useful!

Preliminary sketch by scenic designer Linda Buchanan.



TRACY DORMAN COSTUME DESIGNER

The play is set in Manhattan in 1936 at the height of the Depression. We chose to keep it in the time period because, although the themes and relationships are universal, much of the language and situations in the play are rooted in its time. This play is filled with characters with a capital C, and we've tried to find ways to express their eccentricities without stereotyping them. I've approached the designs of the costumes with a "heightened whimsy," using color, pattern, and silhouette to create a sense of the playfulness of this world the family has created in their home. So while the costumes evoke the period in their detail and silhouette, I've taken liberties so that they exist in their own world of the play—they are by no means naturalistic. There are so many characters to keep track of that one of the main goals is to create a strong visual identity for each one, which is actually quite easy as they are written so well: the playwrights give us so much info about who each character is.



Preliminary costume sketches for Alice, Grandpa, & Reba by designer Tracy Dorman.

MICHAEL LINCOLN LIGHTING DESIGNER

My very first design for IRT was *The Man Who Came to Dinner* in 1984, so encountering this play by the same playwrights 35 years later gives me an instant sense of nostalgia for the play and for my long association with IRT. *You Can't Take It With You* is a play about family, home, and acceptance. While there has never been a time in our lives when such values were more sorely needed, the play itself (as is true of many antiques from the 1930s) may seem a bit dated and worn at first glance. In this production, we have tried to remain true to its original spirit while looking at it with fresh eyes. Like the 1927 Indiana Theatre, home to the IRT since 1980 and a family home to so many of us theatre artists, the play has been lovingly polished and cared for to restore its original gleam, so that we all can appreciate its core value: acceptance.

KOLENKHOV'S RUSSIA

In *You Can't Take It With You*, the character of Boris Kolenkhov is Russian expatriate. From his conversation, one might assume that he fled Russia and came to the United States during the Russian Revolution. Here are some Russian and Soviet topics that are discussed in the play.

PETER THE GREAT (1672-1725), as Tsar of Russia, expanded Russia into a major European power. He led a cultural revolution that replaced traditionalist and medieval social and political systems with more modern, scientific, and Westernized ideas based on the Enlightenment.



< **TSAR NICHOLAS II** (1868–1918) was the last Tsar of Russia, ruling from 1894 until his forced abdication in 1917. (The term *tsar* (archaically spelled *czar*) is derived from the Latin word *Caesar*. The Imperial Russian Army's severe losses in World War I, the High Command's incompetent management of the war efforts, and lack of food and supplies on the home front were all leading causes of the fall of the House of Romanov. Following his abdication, Nicholas and his family were imprisoned in late summer 1917. They were executed by their Bolshevik guards in July 1918.

RASPUTIN (1869–1916) was a mystic and self-proclaimed holy man who befriended the family of Tsar Nicholas II and gained considerable influence in late imperial Russia. In 1906, he began acting as a healer for the Tsar's only son, Alexei, a hemophiliac. Rasputin was seen by some as a mystic, visionary, and prophet, and by others as a religious charlatan.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION was actually a pair of revolutions in 1917 that dismantled the Tsarist autocracy and led to the rise of the Soviet Union. The old regime was replaced by a provisional government during the first revolution in February 1917; alongside it arose grassroots community assemblies (called "Soviets") that contended for authority. In the second revolution that October, the Provisional Government was toppled, and all power was given to the Soviets.

The Soviet red flag.





< **JOSEPH STALIN** (1878–1953) led the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s to his death, establishing it as a major world power. His totalitarian regime has been widely condemned for mass repressions, ethnic cleansing, deportations, hundreds of thousands of executions, and famines that killed millions.

LEON TROTSKY (1879–1940) was a Russian revolutionary, Marxist theorist, and Soviet politician. In the play, he is quoted as saying, “God is the State; the State is God,” but there is no record of Trotsky actually saying that.

COSSACKS were democratic, self-governing, semi-military communities in the Ukraine and Southern Russia. Because of their military tradition, Cossack forces played an important role in Russia’s wars, and the Tsarist regime used them extensively to perform police service.

STALIN’S FIVE-YEAR PLANS were designed to develop the national economy of the Soviet Union. The first of 13 five-year plans began in 1928, transforming not just the economy, but all aspects of society. Individual peasant farming gave way to a more efficient system of collective farming; peasant property and entire villages were incorporated into the state economy, which had its own market forces. By the time this was done, the collectivization plan resembled a very bloody military campaign against the peasant’s traditional lifestyle. Subsequent plans gave heavy industry top priority, liquidated houses of worship, and eliminated clergy. Stalin’s Five-Year Plans helped transform the Soviet Union from an untrained society of peasants to an advanced industrial economy.

V SIBERIA has an extensive history of use by both Russian and Soviet administrations as a desolate, barren place for prisons, labor camps, and exile.



COMMUNISM has as its ultimate goal the establishment of the communist society, a socioeconomic order structured upon the common ownership of the means of production and the absence of social classes, money, and the state. Communism believes that the current order of society stems from its economic system, capitalism; that in this system there are two major social classes; that conflict between these two classes is the root of all problems in society; and that this situation will ultimately be resolved through a social revolution. The two classes are the working class—who must work to survive and who make up the majority within society—and the capitalist class—a minority who derives profit from employing the working class through private ownership of the means of production. The revolution will put the working class in power and in turn establish social ownership of the means of production, which according to this analysis is the primary element in the transformation of society towards communism.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic depression during the 1930s. It was the longest, deepest, and most widespread depression of the 20th century. It started in the United States with the stock market crash of October 29, 1929 (known as Black Tuesday). Between 1929 and 1932, worldwide gross domestic product (GDP) fell by an estimated 15%. (By comparison, worldwide GDP fell by less than 1% during the recession of 2008 and 2009.) The Great Depression had devastating effects in countries both rich and poor. Personal income, tax revenue, profits, and prices dropped, while international trade plunged by more than 50%. Unemployment in the U.S. rose to 25% and in some countries rose as high as 33%. Cities around the world were hit hard, especially those dependent on heavy industry. Construction was virtually halted in many countries. Farming communities and rural areas suffered as crop prices fell by about 60%. Facing plummeting demand with few alternative sources of jobs, areas dependent on primary sector industries such as mining and logging suffered the most.



To combat the Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the New Deal in 1933. The New Deal was a series of programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations that focused on the “3 Rs”: relief for the unemployed and poor, recovery of the economy back to normal levels, and reform of the financial system to prevent a repeat depression. Major federal programs included the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Farm Security Administration (FSA), the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (NIRA), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). They provided support for farmers, the unemployed, youth, and the elderly. The New Deal also included new constraints and safeguards on the banking industry—The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)—and efforts to re-inflate the economy after prices had fallen sharply.

Recovery from the Great Depression began in early 1933, but the United States did not return to 1929 GNP for over a decade, and still had an unemployment rate of 15% in 1940 (down from the 1933 high of 25%). By 1936, the main economic indicators had regained the levels of the late 1920s, except for unemployment, which remained high at 11% (again, considerably lower than the 25% unemployment rate of 1933). Recovery sagged in 1937 and 1938 when the Roosevelt administration cut spending and increased taxation in an attempt to balance the federal budget. The common view among economic historians is that the Great Depression ended with the advent of World War II, when government spending on the war caused or at least accelerated recovery.

ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

READING - LITERATURE

- RL.1 – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently
- RL.2 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas
 - Sample: 9-10.RL.2.2: *Analyze in detail the development of two or more themes or central ideas over the course of a work of literature, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.*
- RL.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view
 - Sample: 11-12.RL.3.2: *Analyze a work of literature in which the reader must distinguish between what is directly stated and what is intended (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) in order to understand the point of view.*
- RL.4 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

READING - NONFICTION

- RN.2 – Extract and construct meaning from nonfiction texts using a range of comprehension skills
 - Sample: 8.RN.2.3: *Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas.*

READING - VOCABULARY

- RV.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
 - Sample: 9-10.RV.3.3: *Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY

What is happiness? How do we achieve it? How do we find balance between the pursuit of happiness and the necessity of work? Are happiness and work necessarily opposed to each other?

What is the importance of family? How does the idea of family sometimes extend beyond those to whom we are biologically related? How does your family sometimes frustrate you or seem to be in your way? How does your family support you and help you, both in difficult situations and in everyday life?

How important is money? How would you define the difference between enough money and a lot of money? How does money have an impact on quality of life? What other issues affect quality of life?

AFTER SEEING THE PLAY

The Sycamore family has many creative pursuits: Penny writes plays and paints. Paul and Mr. De Pinna design and build fireworks. Essie dances and creates candy recipes. Reba sings. Ed and Donald play instruments. How good are they at these endeavors? What do they get out of these pursuits? For the amateur or hobbyist, what is the relative value between skill and enjoyment?

What is the value of creativity? What non-artistic traits or skills are developed by creative activities? How are you creative? How can we develop and nurture creativity?

Throughout the play, there are various moments in which Boris talks about Russian politics and Grandpa talks about paying taxes (or not paying taxes). At what period in time is the play set? What relevance could the time period have to bear on some of the more serious issues characters like Boris and Grandpa bring up? How do you feel about politics and issues relating to the government? Should you be aware of these kinds of things?

You Can't Take It With You was written in 1936, and its discussions about politics (American and Russian), taxes, government relief (welfare), and other economic issues reflect viewpoints from that era in history. How many of these topics are still discussed today? How are the viewpoints in the play dated, and how are they still relevant? How can plays, movies, books, and stories from the past help us to see our own contemporary world and our own lives in new perspectives?

At times during the play, people find themselves at odds with those who are different from them. Alice is embarrassed because her family doesn't adhere to society's norms. Mr. and Mrs. Kirby are discomfited by the Sycamore family's behavior. How do you react to people who are different from you? What can we learn from our differences? What does diversity mean to you?

You Can't Take It With You has sometimes been thought of as a purely escapist play—a play that is all about entertainment and does not necessarily contain anything deeper. What do you think—is this play escapist, or does it have a message or messages? If so, what are those messages? What is the value of escapist art? What is the value of more meaningful art?

Late in the play, Grandpa says to Mr. Kirby, "How many of us would be willing to settle when we're young for what we eventually get? All those plans we make ... what happens to them? It's only a handful of the lucky ones that can look back and say they even came close." What idea is Grandpa trying to express? Do you agree or disagree, and why?

What were the risks for Kaufman and Hart in writing a play that suggests that money is unimportant during a time of severe economic scarcity? How might this message be even more important in such a time? What is the value of this message today?

ALICE: "I love you, Tony, but I love them too! And it's no use, Tony! It's no use!"

TONY: "There's only one thing you've said that matters, that makes any sense at all. You love me." In this passage, Alice expresses her concern over the eccentricities of her family, while Tony insists that the love the couple shares means more than their differences. Who is right and who is wrong? What are the valid points on either side of the argument? Who would you be in this situation, Alice or Tony?

The Vanderhof-Sycamore family includes not only blood relations, but long-term guests and/or daily visitors such as Mr. De Pinna, Kolenkhov, and Donald. What does this open-door policy suggest about the family? What does this habit cost the family? What do they gain from it? Who is in your own extended family? How did they become a part of your lives? What do they bring your family?

When *You Can't Take It With You* was first written and produced on Broadway in the 1930s, the Sycamore family was cast with white actors. In this production, the family reflects more racial diversity. As you watched the play, how did you feel about this casting choice? How did it relate to what you know about America in the 1930s? How did it reflect the world we live in today? How did the casting amplify or contradict the themes of the play?

WRITING PROMPTS

Each member of the Sycamore family has a passion: music, dance, writing, painting, making fireworks. What is your passion? Write about why it is important to you. How does doing this activity make you happy? What is your skill level? How do you work to get better, or is the enjoyment of the activity more important to you than proficiency? Is this activity something that might lead to a career, or is it more of a hobby?

Choose one of the following topics to write about your own family:

Your most embarrassing moment with a member or members of your family.

When you first introduced a boyfriend or girlfriend to your family.

How someone who is not biologically related became an important member of your family.

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting— as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: education.irt@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

For each of the following statements, have students move to one side or another depending on whether they “Agree” or “Disagree” with the statement. Have students discuss their viewpoints.

1. It is important to make money.
2. It is important to have fun in life.
3. It is important to work hard at something you love doing.

Divide students into groups and ask each to choose one of the above values and create a tableau showing a family in which everyone agrees with the statement. Present tableaux without telling the audience their statement; viewers guess each family's shared value. Discuss: How did each character demonstrate her/his agreement with the statement? Why do families share values? What happens when families don't agree on values? Mix students from different family groups, retaining their characters from the first groups; these new families will now hold conflicting values. Improvise scenes in which characters debate values and try to persuade each other why their way is the best.

Have students research the Great Depression, looking at politics, social mores, and economics. Create a bulletin board comparing this era to today's world. Use charts and graphs, photographs, and short articles to illustrate ways these two times are similar, and ways in which they are different.

Help students to explore their family histories on one of the available free genealogy websites, such as the U.S. GenWeb project, FindAGrave.com, or FamilySearch.org. Have them interview older family members for family history and stories and give class presentations on their findings.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Act One: An Autobiography by Moss Hart

The Complete Artist's Way: Creativity as a Spiritual Practice by Julia Cameron

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression by Amity Shlaes

The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl
by Timothy Egan

The Great Depression: A History from Beginning to End from Hourly History

The Happiness Animal by Will Jelbert

The Happiness Advantage: How a Positive Brain Fuels Success in Work and Life by Shawn Achor

The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living by Dalai Lama

The Happiness Equation: Want Nothing + Do Anything = Have Everything by Neil Pasricha

*The Year of Less: How I Stopped Shopping, Gave Away My Belongings, and Discovered
Life Is Worth More Than Anything You Can Buy in a Store* by Cait Flanders

WEBSITES

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/>

<http://www.ipb.com/creative/index.php>

<https://www.history.com/topics/great-depression>

<https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/what-is-happiness/>

MOVIES

You Can't Take It With You (1938)

The Man Who Came to Dinner (1942)

Gentleman's Agreement (1947)

A Star Is Born (1954)

A Night at the Opera (1935)

Moonstruck (1987)

Little Miss Sunshine (2006)

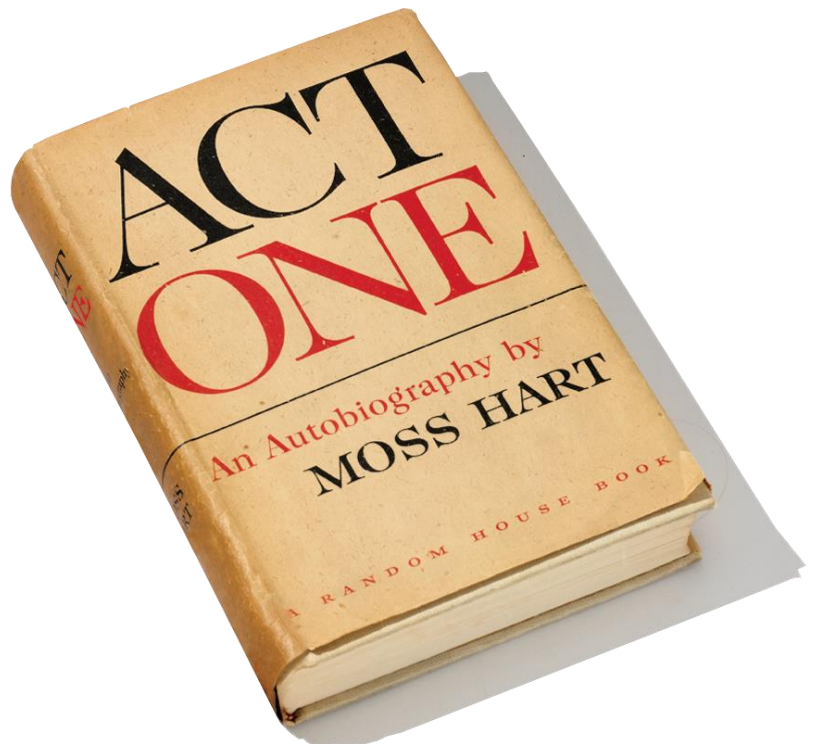
Auntie Mame (1958)

Field of Dreams (1989)

Billy Elliot (1938)

Big Fish (2003)

The Pursuit of Happyness (2006)



GLOSSARY

Page

4 Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon, New York, is located in Westchester County just north of the Bronx.

10 Pompeii

Pompeii was an ancient Roman city near modern Naples in Italy. In the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, Pompeii and most of its inhabitants were buried under 13 to 20 feet of volcanic ash.

10 Coney Island

Coney Island is a commercial entertainment area in Brooklyn, with beaches and amusement park rides. It reached a peak of popularity during the first half of the 20th century.

15 Kay Francis

Kay Francis (1905–1968) was Hollywood’s highest paid film actress from 1930 to 1936. Her lavish wardrobes often solicited more comment than the characters she played.

16 Nicaragua

Nicaragua is the largest country in the Central American isthmus.

19 income tax

The Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution created income tax in the United States. It was passed by Congress in 1909 and was ratified by the requisite number of states in 1913.

21 between three and four thousand dollars

today, between \$54,000 and \$73,000

22 Spanish-American War ... Cuba

The Spanish–American War was fought for ten weeks in 1898 over Cuban independence. Spain lost the war, and the U.S. Military governed Cuba from 1899 to 1909.

26 the Securities Commission

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) was created in 1934 because state laws regulating the sale of securities had failed to protect the public from fraud. The SEC had four missions: to restore investor confidence in the market; to get rid of penny-ante swindles; to end insider trading; and to set up a system of clear-cut rules and guidelines. The SEC reassured Americans that they would no longer be deceived by Wall Street, encouraging ordinary investors to return to the market and enabling the economy to grow again.

29 Pavlova

Anna Pavlova (1881–1931) was a Russian prima ballerina best remembered for the creation of the role *The Dying Swan*. She became the first ballerina to tour around the world.

31 Bakst

Léon Bakst (1866–1924) was a Russian painter and scene and costume designer. He was a member of the Sergei Diaghilev circle and the main designer for the Ballets Russes.

31 Diaghilev

Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929) was a Russian art critic, patron, ballet impresario, and founder of the Ballets Russes, from which many famous dancers and choreographers would arise.

32 Empire

The Empire style is an early-nineteenth-century design movement in architecture, furniture, and other decorative arts. The style takes its name from the rule of Emperor Napoleon I.

32 Neo-Grecian

Neoclassical architecture is an architectural style produced by the neoclassical movement that began in the mid-18th century. It is principally derived from the architecture of Ancient Greece and Rome.

32 Frigidaire

Frigidaire was founded in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and developed the first self-contained refrigerator in 1916. The brand became so well known that many Americans still call any refrigerator a Frigidaire.

33 *The Good Earth*

The Good Earth is a novel by Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973) that dramatizes farm life in a Chinese village in the early 20th century. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1932.

38 spiritualism

Spiritualism is a religious movement based on the belief that the spirits of the dead exist and can communicate with the living. It developed and reached its peak from the 1840s to the 1920s. As early as the 1880s, however, its credibility was weakened by accusations of fraud perpetrated by mediums.

44 *Peg o' My Heart*

Peg o' My Heart by John Hartley Manners opened in 1912 and for many years held the record as Broadway's second-longest running production. It focuses on a poor Irish girl who, in order to receive a large inheritance, must leave her home and live with snobbish aristocratic English relatives.

54 Childs Restaurant

Childs Restaurants was one of the first restaurant chains in the United States. It peaked in the 1920s and 1930s and was a pioneer in design, service, sanitation, and labor relations. The company focused on affordable meals for the working class coupled with extremely high standards (at that time) for hygiene, cleanliness, and food safety.

61 the A&P

From 1915 through 1975, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, better known as A&P, was the largest grocery retailer in the United States (and until 1965, the largest U.S. retailer of any kind).

75 Hot Springs

Hot Springs, Arkansas, is located in the Ouachita Mountains and is set among several natural hot springs, making it a popular spa town.

86 the Adirondacks

The Adirondack Mountains occupy about one sixth of northern New York State. Since the 1850s, it has been a very popular tourist area, with hundreds of hotels and lodges.

87 Bar Harbor

Bar Harbor is a town on Mount Desert Island, a popular tourist destination in the Down East region of Maine. Prior to a catastrophic 1947 fire, the town was a noted summer colony for the wealthy.

92 Hattie Carnegie

Hattie Carnegie (1886–1956) was a designer of women's hats and dresses and a fashion entrepreneur based on Park Avenue in New York from the 1920s to the 1950s.

93 floorwalker

A floorwalker is a senior employee in a large store (usually a department store) who supervises sales staff, in addition to directing and assisting customers, answering any queries they may have.

93 Schrafft's

Schrafft's was a chain of high-volume moderately priced New York restaurants. With table cloths for dinner service, Schrafft's was known for an air of gentility typical of the upper middle-class home. Cooks, supervisors, and even some executives were women. Menus of the 1920s and 1930s included many salads, and more desserts than entrees.

93 pravda

Russian: truth

94 pot-cheese

Pot cheese is a type of soft, crumbly, unaged cheese. It is somewhat dry and crumbly, but with a neutral, creamy texture similar to cream cheese, ricotta, and the Mexican *queso blanco*.

94 blintzes

Blintzes are thin Russian pancakes made from wheat or buckwheat flour, folded to form a casing for cheese or fruit, and then sautéed or baked. Blini are among the most popular dishes in Russia.

98 bicarbonate of soda

Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) mixed with water can be used as an antacid to treat acid indigestion and heartburn.

99 Cleveland and Blaine

Grover Cleveland (1837–1908) defeated James Blaine (1830–1893) in the 1884 Presidential election.

THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

