



SchoolTime
passport

Teacher's Guide
2013-2014

A Night In New Orleans
A Magic Tree House® Adventure

A Night in New Orleans



Mary Pope Osborne

(Author)

Mary Pope Osborne is the award-winning author of more than 100 books for children and young adults, including retellings of mythology and folklore, picture books, biographies, mysteries, and young adult novels. Her many titles include *American Tall Tales*; *One World, Many Religions*; *Favorite Greek Myths*; *New York's Bravest*; *Tales from the Odyssey*, and a number of books in the *Dear America* collection. Ms. Osborne is best-known as the author of the *Magic Tree House* books, a New York Times No. 1 Bestseller series about the time-traveling brother and sister team, Jack and Annie. The series itself has traveled to young readers all over the world, having been translated into 31 languages in 33 countries. Since publication of the first title in the series in 1992, *Magic Tree House* has sold more than 100 million books worldwide. Along with her husband, Will Osborne and her sister, Natalie Pope Boyce, she has created a companion series of non-fiction *Magic Tree House Fact Trackers* to expand upon the history,

geography, biology, and science introduced in the fiction series. The *Fact Tracker* series is currently the bestselling non-fiction children's series in America. From 1993-1997, Ms. Osborne served as president of the Authors Guild, the country's leading organization for published authors. She has since traveled extensively in the States and abroad, visiting schools and speaking on issues related to children's literacy. Recently she delivered a speech at the UN regarding worldwide literacy goals; in November she attended the Tokyo International Film Festival for the premiere of a full-length Japanese anime film based on her *Magic Tree House* series, which is currently the No. 1 bestselling children's book series in Japan. She is an active supporter of literacy causes around the world, helping get books into the hands of deserving children to stimulate their imaginations and engender a lifelong love of reading.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of her *Magic Tree House* series, Ms. Osborne has created the Magic Tree House Classroom Adventures Program, which will be available free of charge to teachers in elementary school classrooms around the country. Developed with a panel of educators and childhood learning specialists, the program is designed to energize a teacher's entire curriculum and help raise reading scores, providing a "gift of time" to teachers with detailed

lesson plans, activities and other resources. As part of the program, Ms. Osborne, in partnership with First Book, a not-for-profit organization in Washington, D.C., will make donations of *Magic Tree House* books to underserved schools.

In addition, Ms. Osborne and her husband Will are currently working with Music Theater International to offer a series of classroom musicals based on *Magic Tree House* books. These plays will give children the opportunity to perform in professionally created adaptations of the *Magic Tree House* adventures, exposing many of them to the magic of theater for the first time.

Also in the works is a full-scale, Broadway-style family musical based on *Christmas in Camelot* (*Magic Tree House* No. 29).



Will Osborne

(Book and Lyrics)

An internationally produced and published playwright and book author and respected director, teacher and actor, Mr. Osborne

enjoys a career in professional theater that spans four decades. His play *Smoke & Mirrors*, a comic murder mystery co-authored with Anthony Herrera, has been produced in theaters throughout the United States, as well as in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Seoul, Korea. In 2007, collaborating with Randy Courts, he provided book and lyrics for *Magic Tree House: The Musical*, a full-scale, Broadway-style family musical based on the bestselling series, which traveled to 54 cities around the country.

Mr. Osborne's writing for musical theater also includes *Saddle Jazz*, a Western Swing musical (music and lyrics by Nick Plakias); *The Wonderful O*, an adaptation of the James Thurber novella (also with Randy Courts), produced at the West Bank Café in New York and the Leonard Bernstein Institute in Nashville; and *Manifest Destiny*, an NEA-funded extravaganza set in 1840s America.

Mr. Osborne has authored more than a dozen books for children and young adults, many co-written with his wife Mary Pope Osborne, including the *Magic Tree House Research Guides* series, two retellings of Greek mythology, *A Time to Dance* for the *My America* series, and a picture book, *Sleeping Bobby*, with award-winning illustrator Giselle Potter. He has also created several highly acclaimed multi-media shows for the Morehead Planetarium in

Chapel Hill, N.C., two of which featured William Shatner and the late Walter Cronkite.

A specialist in interpersonal communication skills, Mr. Osborne has developed and delivered highly successful workshops in Group Presentation, Creativity & Spontaneity, Managerial Counseling, and Diversity and Discrimination, as well as providing individual executive speaker training and coaching for clients including AstraZeneca, Merck, Glaxo Smith Kline, and AT&T. His corporate writing includes scripts and speeches for live presentation, training videos, promotional videos, CDs, and interactive websites for clients including Novartis, AstraZeneca, Smith Barney, Ericsson, Nortel, Electronics Industry of America, MCI, and many others. He is also founding editor of *Youth Markets Alert*, a market research newsletter focused on America's youth market.

Mr. Osborne is a member of the Dramatists Guild, a founder of The Writers Group in New York, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – and lead vocalist and guitarist for the blues/R&B group WillPower.

Murray Horwitz

(Book and Lyrics)

Murray Horwitz's accomplishments in the performing arts include authoring

the hit Broadway musical *Ain't Misbehavin'*, originating the hit National Public Radio comedy quiz, *Wait, Wait ... Don't Tell Me*, and writing the song lyrics for John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* at the Metropolitan Opera. His other playwriting credits include *Sole Sisters* at LaMama E.T.C., *Hard Sell* at the N.Y. Shakespeare Festival, and *RFK – The Journey to Justice* for L.A. Theatreworks.



The winner of three Peabody Awards, numerous ASCAP songwriting awards, Tony, Obie, and N.Y. Drama Critics Circle awards (for *Ain't Misbehavin'*), the National Medal of Arts (for NPR Cultural Programming), and the Order of Arts and Letters from the government of France, Mr. Horwitz began his career as a clown in the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He appears frequently as a commentator on NPR, and as a panelist on public radio's *Says You!*



Allen Toussaint (*Music and Additional Lyrics*)

Allen Toussaint (born January 14, 1938) is an American musician, songwriter and record producer and one of the most influential figures in New Orleans R&B. Mr. Toussaint has crossed many paths in his 40-years-plus career in music. He has produced, written for, arranged, had his songs covered by, and performed with music giants The Judds, Paul McCartney, Paul Simon, Elvis Costello, Patti LaBelle, Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack, Jr., Aaron and Art Neville, Joe Cocker, The (original) Meters, Glen Campbell, The Band, Little Feat, The Rolling Stones, Devo, Ernie K-Doe, Lee Dorsey, Irma Thomas, Etta James, Ramsey Lewis, Eric Gale and the countless others.

His songs/productions have been featured in numerous films, including but not limited to *Casino*, *Moulin Rouge!* and *Maid in Manhattan*. He served as musical director for the off-Broadway play, *Staggerlee*, which won the prestigious Outer Circle Critics Award.

Toussaint's career began in his early 20s, when he was hired by the local Minit Records to supervise its recording activities,

awaiting the arrival of Harold Battiste, Jr. Toussaint quickly accumulated an amazing string of hits for the label, producing, writing, arranging, and often performing on tracks by Ernie K-Doe, Irma Thomas, Art and Aaron Neville, Chris Kenner, and Benny Spellman, putting his signature New Orleans sound on the map.

Toussaint got his shot as a solo artist with a record for RCA. Two of his earliest tunes, *Java*, which became a mega-hit for trumpeter Al Hirt, and *Whipped Cream*, the Herb Alpert hit, became Al Hirt, and *Whipped Cream*, the Herb Alpert hit, became instrumental standards. Toussaint then teamed up with Lee Dorsey, who was often backed by the funky rhythm section known as The Meters, turning out a string of hits that included *Working in the Coal Mine*, *Holy Cow*, *Ride Your Pony* and many others. *Working in the Coal Mine* was then recorded by The Judds; *Yes We Can Can* became a smash hit by The Pointer Sisters; *Sneakin' Sally Through the Alley* was recorded by both Robert Palmer and Ringo Starr.

Toussaint went on putting his mark on the music business with his arrangements on LaBelle's hit, *Lady Marmalade*, and continuing with Patti LaBelle through the early stages of her solo career. After establishing himself as one of the greatest songwriters, accredited to him by BMI Music, Toussaint was honored with a Grammy® nomination for 1977's

song of the year, *Southern Nights*, performed by Glen Campbell. Years later, *Southern Nights* was featured on MCA's Grammy®-nominated compilation CD, *Rhythm, Country and Blues*, where Toussaint teamed up with country legend Chet Atkins to perform his hit.

His career includes being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. After years of writing, producing, recording, arranging, performing, and conducting, Toussaint's music plays on. Several of his songs are commercial themes: *Yes We Can* (Slim-Fast) and *Working in the Coal Mine* (Walmart).

His productions are continuously sampled, introducing them to an entirely new arena of listeners, such as *Louie* (ODB) and *Lady Marmalade* (Christina Aguilera, Lil' Kim, Missy Elliot). The songs *Java* and *Southern Nights* have been credited and cited for over 2 million airings. The most recent of Toussaint's long list of honors and accolades is the Grammy®-nominated pop vocal album of the year, *The River in Reverse*, Toussaint's collaboration with Elvis Costello.

More chat

with Mary Pope Osborne and Will Osborne

Q: Having spent so much time in New Orleans, what did you learn that was new to you in the process of researching the book and the show?

Mary: I guess it was a concern to me when I wrote the book, and to Will also, now working in the show, is that it's possible a lot of young people now don't know about the early jazz. Just the idea that such wonderful music would not be available to young kids — it's just too sad.

Will: Mary wanted to find a hook for kids in addition to the music, and I had read that New Orleans is considered possibly the most haunted city in America. A particularly haunted place was Jean Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop, and it still exists. It's now a bar, but it's preserved exactly as it was in terms of the architecture. So, we've sat out and had a drink on the sidewalk in front of Jean Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop a few times realizing that a huge chunk of the story in the book takes place inside. And Mary was able to get a floor plan, weren't you?

Mary: Yes, from the '30s. Even though that would be 15 years later than my story, I wanted to have a bit of the reality in the building. So, I found this whole floor plan



online, I guess from when they were reconstructing the building at some point. Research like that takes you into amazing details you never expect to be looking for.

Q: You mentioned before that kids don't have access generally to this music. When they do get it, why do you think it's such a rich experience for them? What about the music so excites kids?

Will: I think there's a joy in the music. It's without irony, it's without comment, it's just pure joy. And rhythmically it's contagious. The New Orleans rhythm — I don't know what the physiology of

it is, if it's somehow linked to a heartbeat or a natural rhythm, but it's almost impossible for anybody of any age to listen to that rhythm without getting involved physically in it — foot tapping and movement. When we've gone to rehearsals for the show, it's completely uplifting, even watching a very, very rough form. You come out happy. It's music that makes you happy. Even the blues. There are quotes about the blues — it's not about having the blues, it's about singing to get over the blues. To get the blues out and move on, and I think that's true. It sounds corny, but it's a life-affirming kind of music.

Q: How should teachers prepare their students to see the show? Should they talk to them about jazz, should they talk about Louis Armstrong? Should they read the book, not read the book?

Mary: Well, I recommend that they talk to them about Louis Armstrong and that they talk about jazz. And then as an extra treat, we're going to give a copy of the book to each child who sees the show. So I think that that will make the biggest impact, to give it after the show ends. That's our plan now — it could change — to have kids literally line up to get the book when the show is over, so that they'll be motivated, because motivation is what we're looking for with literacy. They'll be motivated to jump into the book.

Will: I think they can also help them understand a little bit of the history of New Orleans. It might be useful for teachers to discuss a little bit the history of segregation and the reality of that in the South at that time. It's touched on lightly in the show, but I think pretty effectively, and it's certainly a springboard for discussion of racism and segregation in America and how far we've come. There's a line in the show where Jack and Annie, our kids from the future, are talking to Louis Armstrong about how things are going to change.

And when Mary was writing the book, it was just before the 2008 election. So we have a line where Jack and Annie tell young Louis

that one day, an African-American man will run for president of the United States. And at that point, we didn't know if he was going to win. So, she added the line, "and millions of people of all colors will vote for him," because we knew that whatever happened, that would be the case. And then, just before it went to press, the last round of copy editing was right after the election. And so we had one of the characters pipe up, "And he'll win!" And at that point, Louis says, "Okay, now I know I'm dreaming, but I love this dream."

Q: What do you recommend teachers do with all this material after their students have seen the show?

Mary: Well, with *Magic Tree House*, kids often write their own stories across the country. It might be really fun if the kids are so motivated to do some of their own creative writing. Of course we wish for them to pick up a musical instrument. We would love for them to listen to old jazz, if teachers could bring in CDs, if they could download some Louis Armstrong music to share in those wonderful, rich cultural experiences with their classrooms. They could have a meal that is based on the New Orleans dish of gumbo.

There are all kinds of creative ways that teachers use *Magic Tree House*. We even have our own classroom program for free for teachers around the country and we

would really, really, really want teachers to look that up and it's mthclassroomadventures.org. And that will give a teacher lesson plans for that book and every other book in the *Magic Tree House* series and discuss all the fun things you can do to bring kids into the excitement of reading and learning.

Will: There are two songs early in the show. One introduces the band, the members of the band and what they play, and the second one is the song called "What Is Jazz," where the musicians talk about the elements of jazz, what makes a song a jazz song in particular. I think for teachers to find examples of great trombone playing, great drummers from that era and share that with the kids, so that they understand the elements that come together to make that early jazz sound would be a fun thing for teachers to do.

Q: Speaking of more modern musicians, how was working with (composer) Allen Toussaint?

Will: Ah, for me that is a dream come true. I've been a fan of his for years and years and years and years. When I was working with Murray Horwitz, who is my collaborator on the book and lyrics, and we were talking about possible composers, because Murray was a cultural programmer for NPR for many years, he has a lot of contacts and we discussed possibilities in the jazz world. I suggested Allen Toussaint and Murray thought that

was a good idea, so we put him on the list. Right about that time, Mr. Toussaint came out with an album called *Bright Mississippi*. It's a fantastic CD nominated for lots of awards. It's all his arrangements and performance of traditional New Orleans music. And it was exactly the sound we were looking for. For me, our shortlist became a list of one. I was just desperate to have him do the music.

So, Murray knew somebody who knew him, and sent an e-mail describing the project and what we hoped to do in terms of introducing kids to jazz and generating enthusiasm among young people for this kind of music, and sent him a copy of the book. He sent an e-mail back saying, "sounds interesting, tell me more." So we sent him the book and then we actually went down and met with him. And he couldn't have been more gracious and warm. He immediately signed on to the project.

I started sending him lyrics and Murray sent him lyrics. And fabulous music started coming back. And more than just the piano/vocal score. He would create these charts on his synth that had all the parts played in just wonderful, wonderful arrangements. It was exactly the sound we were looking for. We never had anything other than just the most minor notes or suggestions. Everything he did seemed exactly right for kids, exactly right for the show, exactly right for the period. And throughout, he has been a model of

graciousness and warmth and generosity. I can't say enough good things about him. He is a saint.

Q: So, what can you and your wife tell teachers and students about the experience you had collaborating with Murray Horwitz and with Allen Toussaint, and what lessons can you give to people about collaboration in general?

Mary: Well, my lesson was just to turn it over to the boys, and to rejoice in what they were doing. There's an old Irish storytelling saying that goes, "take my story and make it better." And every time I've given something to Will, he makes it better, especially through music. So, I've just been nothing but a cheerleader. And his role is quite different.

Will: The whole theatrical experience is collaboration from beginning to end, and I think that's a wonderful lesson for kids. In the show we have a song called "Gumbo," and it's about mixing things together. Louis is sort of extrapolating a metaphor from the dish. There's a line, "everything gets better side by side with something else." I think if you can keep your ego out of the way, then allow everybody to bring their own creative strengths to the table, the project is only going to get better and better and better the more you work together. And that's really the lesson for kids — everybody has different strengths and different

talents. And when you combine everybody's different talents, you come up with a whole that's richer and deeper and more satisfying for everybody, including the audience.

Q: One final question. In the script, you never say the show takes place on Halloween — it's always the night before All Saints Day, Nov. 1. Is there a particular reason for that?

Mary: I love the magic of All Saints Day, which is very much a part of New Orleans. I did another *Tree House* years ago that involved Halloween. I thought this would be a different kind of a slant on the same time of year, a very New Orleans thing. I didn't want to deal with the macabre, but I think having a ghost be a part of the story adds an element that's appropriate to All Saints Day. I don't know if that really answers your question, but —

Q: No, that makes perfect sense. And I think also when you — I'm not going to put this very elegantly, but when you wave Halloween in front of kids, they get really distracted.

Mary: That's true.

Will: And we didn't want anything in it to feel like a Halloween show. We want it to have more the feel of Mardi Gras. The parade in the show should feel more like a Mardi Gras parade than a Halloween parade.



Before the Performance

1. Students can think up an original way to take a “magic” trip to New Orleans. Have them visit the New Orleans for Kids website (neworleanskids.com). Each student should check out three places he or she would most like to visit and write the first short chapter of a personal travel book. (Be sure they devise a magical way home!)

2. Wynton Marsalis is also a famous trumpet player who was born in New Orleans about 60 years after Louis Armstrong. Have the class listen to him play the classical piece *Flight of the Bumblebee*, then listen to him perform *Jazz in Marciac 2000* with his band. Discuss the differences between classical music and jazz. How are they the same? How are they different? Which do the students like better? Why?

3. Students can hold a pencil in each hand, using the eraser to beat time to Armstrong's band playing *Basin Street Blues*. Do the same with Marsalis and his band, playing at the 2009 Marciac festival. Do you think jazz changed between 1915 and 2009? If so, how?

4. Students should read about the history of music in New Orleans (see "Did You Know?" and "More Resources" in the *Teacher's Guide*) and answer these questions:

- Who were the people who created jazz?
- Where did many of the tunes originally come from?
- What did those musicians do to turn the tunes into jazz?
- Why did Armstrong have so much success with his raspy voice and his trumpet?
- Why is New Orleans still so important to jazz music?
- Why do students think jazz has changed so much between Armstrong's time and Marsalis' time?

5. Armstrong had several nicknames. Have students find them in their research and write them down. Then let them explain why he had so many!

6. Have students ask a music teacher or a trumpet player what they must do to get a good sound from a trumpet. They should ask about his or her “embouchure,” or the way the mouth is applied to the instrument. Students can look in a mirror and try fixing the muscles of their faces so they know what a trumpeter’s embouchure feels like. Is it hard to do?

After the Performance

1. Plan an online field trip to the Louis Armstrong House Museum, 34-56 107th St. in Corona, Queens, N.Y. Armstrong and his wife, Lucille, moved to the modest home in 1943 and it remains much as it was at the time of his death in

1971. On its famous stoop, Armstrong entertained celebrities, dignitaries and children from the neighborhood. There are guided tours, audio clips, exhibits and a Japanese-style garden. (louisarmstronghouse.org); a Teacher's Kit is also available.

2. Pair off students and have each team read another *Magic Tree House* book by Mary Pope Osborne. Using just the first two chapters, ask students to write a play together about the story so far. They must create at least two characters, a short description of the scenery for the play and at least one action that involves one or more of the characters.

3. Listen to Hoots the Owl teach scat singing on *Sesame Street* or to Cab Calloway singing scat. (See "More Resources.") Using the song *Happy Birthday*, have students attempt some scat singing, adding notes and rhythms to change it a little.

4. Using Energy Kids/Coal (energykids.eu), have students research how coal is mined. Discuss how heavy it is and how hard it was for young Louis to deliver it to lots of places. He sang as he worked. Have the class compose a song that reflects such hard work. Or ask students to create a dance that would show how hard Louis worked as a boy.

5. Ask students if they think *A Night In New Orleans* conveyed the real atmosphere — the surroundings — in which Armstrong grew up. Discuss the ways in which the show’s writers followed the original story. What about the songs? Did they add to the students' enjoyment of the show?

6. Find a book about instruments and have students draw a diagram of all the parts of a trumpet, labeling each. Then have them craft a trumpet out of clay.

7. Using pictures of Armstrong on allposters.com for reference, have students paint or sketch a portrait of Armstrong, depicting him playing the trumpet.



Giving Educators the Tools Needed to Instill Excitement for Reading and Learning in Children

The mission of **Mary Pope Osborne's Classroom Adventures Program** is to use kids' love of *Magic Tree House* adventures and their identification with Jack and Annie to spark interest in learning across the curriculum and accomplish classroom requirements in creative, meaningful and long-lasting ways.

The **Classroom Adventures Program** is Mary Pope Osborne's gift to teachers who have inspired her with their dedication to their students and their creative use of *Magic Tree House* books in the classroom. Program resources are provided free of charge online and include:

- A complete "Curriculum Key" that classifies every *Magic Tree House* book and non-fiction Fact Tracker with regard to subjects and core curriculum standards.
- A Reading Level Guide for all books and non-fiction Fact Tracker in the series.
- Individual Lesson Plans for each book in the series including lesson plans specifically tailored for Special Education classrooms.

"The *Classroom Adventures Program* is designed to help teachers who are looking for creative ways to engage their students and still meet the curriculum standards. I like to describe the initiative as a "Gift of Time." *Mary Pope Osborne*

In addition, through **Mary Pope Osborne's Gift of Books** program, Mary provides for a gift of *Magic Tree House* books to children in Title 1 and other underserved schools across the country. Proposals submitted through the Classroom Adventures website are reviewed and grants are awarded to Title 1 teachers allowing them to order the *Magic Tree House* books they need for their classrooms through the non-profit organization, First Book.

Visit our website:
MTHClassroomAdventures.org

More Resources

Websites for Students

eia.gov/kids/energy.cfm?page=coal_home-basics
Energy Kids lesson on coal.

tripadvisor.com/Guide-g60864-1273-New_Orleans_Louisiana.html
New Orleans for kids.

allposters.com/-st/Louis-Armstrong-Posters_c1450_.htm?AID=2020321730

Pictures of Armstrong to adapt into original artwork.

Videos

Cab Calloway sings scat on Sesame Street. squidoo.com/nonsense-songs

Louis Prima's role in Disney's *The Jungle Book*. ebaumsworld.com/video/watch/81862665

Sesame Street's Hoots the Owl teaches kids about scat singing. youtube.com/watch?v=rT1Kuy922c0

Books for Students

de Jong, Klaas. *Kids Play Blues*. Book with CD trumpet. De Haske Publications.

Woods, Brenda. *Saint Louis Armstrong Beach*. Puffin, 2012.

Books for Teachers

Wood, Marilyn. *DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: New Orleans*. DK Travel, 2012.

Websites for Teachers

barnesandnoble.com/s/?category_id=826108

A list of all the Magic Tree House books.

gmc.edu/library/neworleans/

The Institute for New Orleans History and Culture, Gwynedd-Mercy College. Resource for cuisine and music of New Orleans.

aviewoncities.com/neworleans/frenchquarter.htm

The French Quarter, before and after Hurricane Katrina.

pbskids.org/jazz/lesson/index.html
Louis Armstrong for Kids. "What Is Jazz?" lesson plan.

u-s-history.com/pages/h3768.html
Armstrong bio and commentary.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Armstrong#Nickname
Armstrong bio on Wikipedia.

wyntonmarsalis.org/about/bio
Wynton Marsalis bio and Jazz at Lincoln Center.

teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory/history_of_jazz.htm
The beginnings of jazz.

gonola.com/2011/10/26/nola-history-jean-lafitte-the-pirate.html
GO NOLA's history of Jean Lafitte.

CDs for Teachers

Definitive Collection. Louis Armstrong. Hip-O Records, 2006.

Ella & Louis. Armstrong with Ella Fitzgerald. Polygram Records, 2000.

The Complete Louis Armstrong Decca Sessions (1935-1946). Mosaic Records, 1935 original release date.

Goin' Home: A Tribute to Fats Domino. Vanguard Records, 2007.

DVDs for Teachers

Jazz Icons: Louis Armstrong Live in '59. Tdk DVD Video, 2006.

The Portrait Collection: Louis Armstrong. Hip-O Records, 2008.

Make It Funky! Aaron Neville, Allen Toussaint, Amadee Castenell, more. Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005.

Credits

Photo of Mary Pope Osborne by Elena Seibert

Photo of *A Night in New Orleans* by Yasmeeen Anderson

Photo of young Louis Armstrong courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum