



Performing Arts

Genre

Nonfiction Articles provide information about topics.



Text Feature

Interviews are accounts of questions asked by one person and answered by another.

Content Vocabulary

director

casting

roles

rehearse

audition

PRESENTING THE PUDDLEJUMP PLAYERS

by Liz Ray

Have you and your friends ever put on a play? A group of children in Massachusetts did more than that. First, they found a **director**. Then they began performing classic and new plays. The group called itself the Puddlejump Players.

Children have been performing with the Puddlejump Players for more than ten years. The actors are 3 to 17 years of age. The director and many other staff members are adults.

Perry Kroll, one of the oldest child actors in the group, answered some questions about the Puddlejump Players.

Q: Do children have to try out for **roles** in the Puddlejump Players?

A: The children do **audition** for the roles that interest them. They often give the director a list of parts they'd like, and then try out for one or two of them.

During the auditions, stand-ins are sometimes required. These are actors who read the lines for the other characters in the scenes that have been selected. It's not uncommon for a stand-in to do so well that they end up with that part!

Q: Who makes the **casting** decisions?

A: A few older members can have a little influence, but it is really the director's decision. I am always surprised by the way she can predict someone's skill at a role they didn't audition for.



Reading an Interview



An interview is made up of questions and answers. The letter *Q* stands for the question, and the letter *A* stands for the answer. Each *Q* paragraph may have a question mark at the end, but it also may not.

Q: How many plays are performed a year?

A: One play per year, in the spring.



Q: How long does the company **rehearse** before performing a play?

A: Rehearsals usually start in January. The auditions begin in November or December. The show is in May.

Q: Do children do any behind-the-scenes work, such as making sets?

A: Absolutely! There is a core group who helps Sheila [the director]. Sheila usually designs the sets herself—though during the last show a few members of the cast painted some pieces. Then she stays up nearly around the clock putting them up with help from the older members.

Q: Who makes the costumes and props?

A: In general, cast members find or create their own costumes, make-up, and props. Sheila makes some of the more complicated ones herself.



Q: Do children play music for the performances?

A: The music is usually played live by a few parents with musical experience. In the past a few excellent musicians from the cast have helped as well.

When the curtain rises and the actors step on stage, all the hard work pays off. Once again, the children get to put on a play and an audience experiences a wonderful performance.



Connect and Compare



1. In this interview, how can you tell when a question is being asked? How do you know when you are reading an answer?

Reading an Interview

2. Do you think that adults should help in a children's theater company like the Puddlejump Players? Explain your answer. **Evaluate**
3. If the Puddlejump Players were putting on *Ranita, the Frog Princess*, what might the actor playing Ranita use for a costume and make-up? What about the actor playing Vieja Sabia?

Reading/Writing Across Texts



Performing Arts Activity

Research a play that a children's theater group could put on. Act out a scene from the play with some friends.



Find out more about the performing arts at www.macmillanmh.com

Write a Descriptive Poster



Writer's Craft

Word Choice

Good **word choice** brings writing to life. Precise adjectives help readers picture the person, place, or thing being described.



School Spring Funfest!

I wanted to vary my word choices on my poster.

I used colorful adjectives.

School Spring Funfest!

by Jenny G.

Enjoy yourself at the
Annual All-School Spring Funfest
on April 10 from 12-6 p.m.



The Spring Funfest is a festival for everyone. Kids can have their faces painted like birds or lions or bears. You can eat spicy tamales, crunchy eggrolls, and hot dogs that are a foot long. Grades 3 and 4 will put on a play called The Frog Princess in the gym, and all the teachers will dress up in elegant, old-fashioned costumes.

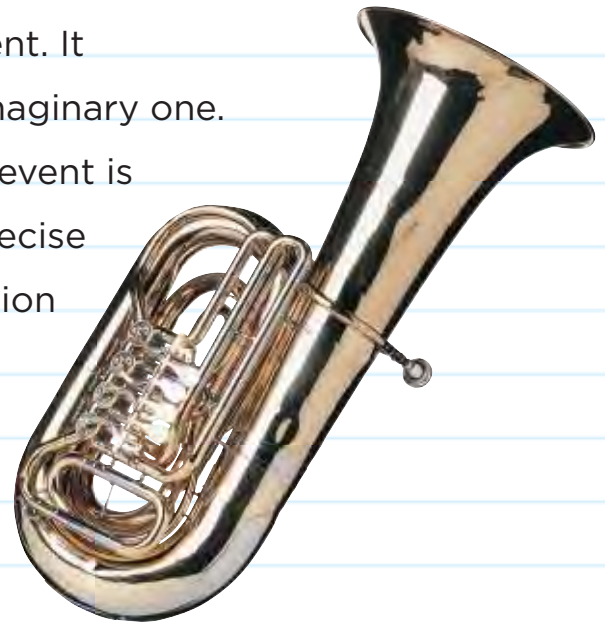
For sports fans, there will be an exciting soccer game outside between parents and 6th graders.

Everyone will have a great time. Mark your calendars!



Your Turn

Make a poster that announces a school event. It may be a real event at your school or an imaginary one. Begin with a catchy title. Explain what the event is and then describe it in a paragraph. Use precise adjectives that will get your readers' attention and make them want to attend. Include details about the date, time, and place of the event. Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did I clearly state the purpose of the event? Did I explain what will happen?
- Organization:** Did I start with a catchy title? Did I include the date, time, and place of the event?
- Voice:** Will my readers feel my enthusiasm?
- Word Choice:** Did I strengthen my **word choices**? Did I use precise adjectives?
- Sentence Fluency:** Does my writing flow smoothly?
- Conventions:** Did I use the articles *a* and *an* correctly? Did I check my spelling?