



ZOOT SUIT **Educator Resources**

Our Student Matinees (formerly Young Audiences Program) are for teachers of every subject across all grade levels, and provide a unique model for integrating the arts in your class, not just for a single performance but throughout the year.

Whether your students are seasoned theatregoers or first-time attendees, we want them to have a rich and fulfilling experience when they come to see a play on one of our stages. We want them to feel smart, ready, and welcomed when they arrive at the theatre.

Getting the most out of your visit...



In order for students to get the most out of *Zoot Suit*, please explore the educational materials provided by Center Theatre Group. For this production, students will receive a Discovery Guide that introduces them to the world of the play with thought-provoking questions and information about Center Theatre Group and the world of theatre. Educators will receive lesson plans detailing the activities covered at the Educator Conference.

Use the Discovery Guide to go over Who, What, When, Where, and Why of going to the theatre. Take time to discuss the upcoming performance. Have your students seen live theatre before? If they have, what were their experiences like?

When students are connected to the world of the story and feel comfortable in the audience, they feel free to react heartily with laughter, gasps, tears, and applause. Emphasize the impact that each audience member has on the show. Let students know it is great to react to and enjoy the show. And remind them that the actors can see and hear them. Talk about the responsibility each audience member has to help shape that performance and how that makes every piece of theatre a one-of-a-kind event.

Also, please go over the section for students on the "Performance Day Logistics" handout. If they are aware of these details, they won't be surprised when they arrive at the theatre.

We can't wait to have you and your students visit the Mark Taper Forum for Center Theatre Group's *Zoot Suit*!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

“Right here, ese. What do you want to know?”

Joey, *Zoot Suit*

If you would like to dive more deeply into the world of *Zoot Suit* with your students, please explore the links and resources below.

THE SLEEPY LAGOON MURDER TRIAL

In the early hours of Sunday August 2, 1942 a Mexican-born 22-year-old named José Gallardo Díaz was murdered in Commerce (just a few miles from Downtown Los Angeles) just before he was to report to the U.S. Army recruitment center for his induction. Five months later, 15 Mexican-American and two Mexican-born youths between the ages of 17 to 24 were convicted of murdering Diaz and sentenced to terms ranging from a few months to life imprisonment. Additionally five young women who refused to testify against the 17 were sent to a girls' reformatory school with no due process. This miscarriage of justice would inspire a community of activists including Alice McGrath (on whom the character Alice Bloomfield is based) to form The Citizens' Committee for the Defense of Mexican-American Youth to help the unjustly accused and convicted.

THE ZOOT SUIT RIOTS

The “zoot suit riots” was the name the media gave to a series of racially motivated attacks and retaliations between Mexican-American youths and mostly Anglo service members stationed in Southern California in 1940s Los Angeles. The fighting, spurred by the Sleepy Lagoon case, broke out on May 31, 1943. By the second day service members hired a convoy of taxicabs to go into East Los Angeles to hunt *pachucos* and in some cases broke into private homes. For eight days Navy service members and *pachucos* openly clashed in the streets of Los Angeles. Many non-*pachucos* were physically assaulted, stripped of their zoot suits, had their ducktails cut, and their property destroyed as the Los Angeles Police Department stood by and watched. The riots finally came to an end when the Navy declared Downtown Los Angeles off limits to all servicemen.

BOOKS

Alvarez, Luis. *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II*. Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 22 Sept. 2009.

Berumen, Frank Javier Garcia, and Frank J. Garcia. *The Chicano Hispanic Image in American Film*. New York, Vantage Press, U.S., 31 Dec. 1994.

Broyles-González, Yolanda. *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. 2nd ed, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1 June 1994.

Bruns, Roger. *Zoot Suit Riots*. Greenwich, CT, United States, Greenwood Press, 28 Feb. 2014.

Camarillo, Albert. *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1 Dec. 1979.

Huerta, Jorge A. *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*. 2nd ed., United States, Bilingual Press, U.S., 1 June 1982.

McWilliams, Carey, and Matt S. Meier. *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*. 2nd ed., New York, Greenwood Publishing Group, 9 Mar. 1990.

Pagán, Eduardo Obregón. *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon: Zoot Suits, Race, and Riot in Wartime L.A.* New York, NY, United States, University of North Carolina Press, 31 Dec. 2003.

Peiss, Kathy Lee. *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*. Philadelphia, PA, University of Pennsylvania Press, 23 May 2011.

Ramirez, Catherine S. *The Woman in the Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 16 Jan. 2009.

Valdez, Luis. *Zoot Suit and Other Plays*. Houston, TX, Players Press (U.K.), Feb. 1992.
--- *Zoot Suit: A Bilingual Edition*. Houston, TX, Arte Público Press, 1 May 2005.

Valdez, Luis, and Teatro Campesino. *Luis Valdez—Early Works: Actos, Bernabé, and Pensamiento Serpentino*. Houston, TX, Arte Publico Press, U.S., Sept. 1990.

Weitz, Mark A. *The Sleepy Lagoon Murder Case: Race Discrimination and Mexican-American Rights*. Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 15 Nov. 2010.

WEBSITES

Mapping LA's Notorious Zoot Suit Riots by Elijah Chiland, interactive map of the riot locations

<http://la.curbed.com/maps/zoot-suit-riots-map>

Chicana Pachuca culture and clothing of the 1940s by Maria Rios, exhibit at Museum of the City in Portland Oregon

<http://www.museumofthecity.org/project/la-pachuca-mexican-subculture-in-1940s-los-angeles/>

History of the *pachuco* zoot suits

<http://www.elpachuco.com/history.html>

Official website of El Teatro Campesino includes Luis Valdez's biography:
<http://elteatrocampesino.com/>

Article from the *Mercury News*, "Zoot Suit Riots: Sailors vs. *Pachucos*, a Turning Point for Latino Culture in California"
<http://www.mercurynews.com/2013/06/04/zoot-suit-riots-sailors-vs-pachucos-a-turning-point-for-latino-culture-in-california/>

PBS companion website to the film *Zoot Suit Riots*. Includes maps, timelines, pictures, and narrative accounts
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/zoot/>

PBS companion website to the film *Chavez Ravine: A Los Angeles Story*
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/chavezravine/index.html>

Oral histories of Latino contributions in wartime. Created by University of Texas journalism professor Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/voces/>

Official website for the United Farm Workers, an organization that figures prominently in the development of El Teatro Campesino and the Chicana/o theatre movement:
<http://www.ufw.org/>

FILM & VIDEO

Edward James Olmos speaks about his experience as the original El Pachuco for the Archive of American Television
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTQYws4Anag>

The film adaptation of *Zoot Suit*, directed by Luis Valdez
Watch on HBO Go with a subscription or YouTube, Amazon Video, or Google Play for a small fee

A look at the play *Zoot Suit*, and the history of Chicanos in Los Angeles in *Zoot Suit: The Play and the Promise*, directed by Vincent di Bona for KXNT in 1978
https://archive.org/details/cusb_000186

Discusses the events of the Sleepy Lagoon Murder Trial and Zoot Suit Riots
Zoot Suit Riots directed by Joseph Tovares
(WGBH Education Foundation, 2001)

Comprehensive history of Latinos in America
The Latino Americans directed by David Belton and Sonia Fritz
(PBS, 2013)

The iconic style and looks of *pachuca* women:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErMZjKPgJmk>

MARK TAPER FORUM SEATING CHART

A seating chart for the Mark Taper Forum, where *Zoot Suit* will take place, is provided. Use this as a tool to familiarize your students with the layout of the Taper. The seating capacity for the Student Matinee performance is 725 seats.