

PEBBERHING AN

SUGAR SKULL! A Día de Muertos **Musical Adventure**

Study Guide



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Capitol Kids is the Capitol Theatre's way of ensuring that children from all walks of life have access to the one-of-a-kind experience of live theatre arts. Capitol Kids programs are entertaining and engaging, inspiring children to wonder, imagine and dream. Presented by professional touring companies, each Capitol Kids show is specially designed to appeal to young audiences and present them with learning opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom.

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A CAPITOL THEATRE STUDY GUIDE

DÍA DE MUERTOS?

Día de Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a traditional two day holiday that celebrates, honors, and remembers deceased loved ones.

uring Día de Muertos, families create ofrendas "offerings in their homes or at the gravesites of their relatives. These ofrendas are adorned with marigolds, candles, incense, and the favorite foods, drinks, and mementos of the departed. During this time,

the spirits of the deceased are believed to return to visit their loved ones. The ofrendas are meant to welcome and honor them. Día de Muertos celebrations often include plenty of parades, parties, and gatherings. People paint their faces to resemble skulls, which is known as "calavera" makeup. The idea is not to be scary, but to represent the cycle of life and death, where death is not feared but accepted as a natural part of existence.

Día de Muertos is a vibrant and colorful celebration that emphasizes remembering and celebrating the lives of those who have passed away. It's a time for families and communities to come together, sharing stories and memories of their loved ones while rejoicing in the cycle of life.



FACTS ABOUT Día de Muertos

- Celebration of Life: It's a joyful celebration where families and communities gather to remember and honor the lives of those who have passed away rather than mourn their deaths.
- Altars (Ofrendas): Families create altars in their homes or at gravesites adorned with marigolds, photos of the deceased, candles, food, and mementos, to welcome the spirits of the departed.
- Sugar Skulls (Calaveras de Azúcar): Elaborately decorated sugar skulls are crafted and placed on altars as offerings to honor the deceased.
- **Mexican Tradition:** Although primarily associated with Mexico, Día de Muertos is also observed in various forms in other Latin American countries.

- **Calavera:** The iconic skull makeup, called "calavera," is often worn during celebrations. It's a vibrant and colorful symbol representing the cycle of life and death.
- Marigolds (Cempasúchil): Bright orange marigold flowers are used to decorate altars and create pathways to guide spirits back to the living world.
- **Cemetery Visits:** Families visit the graves of their loved ones, bringing offerings, cleaning and decorating the burial sites, and spending time in remembrance.

THEATRE VOCABULARY

Act: A major division within a play, usually comprising multiple scenes.

Backdrop: A large painted cloth or set piece hung at the back of the stage to represent scenery.

Curtain Call: The bows at the end of a performance when actors come forward to acknowledge the applause from the audience.

Dialogue: The conversation between characters in a play, typically delivered as lines by the actors.

Ensemble: A group of actors working together as a whole rather than focusing on individual performances.

Set: The physical surroundings on stage that represent the location where the story takes place.

Green Room: A backstage room where actors wait before and after their scenes.

Intermission: A break between acts or scenes in a performance, allowing the audience and actors to rest.

Monologue: A long speech or a solo performance by one character in a play. **Props:** Items or objects used by actors during a performance to enhance the storytelling.

Rehearsal: Practicing and preparation sessions undertaken by the cast and crew before a performance.

Fourth Wall: An imaginary barrier between the actors on stage and the audience, which is usually maintained to create the illusion of reality.

Stage Left and Stage

Right: Refers to the actor's left and right when facing the audience.

Stage Manager: Person responsible for coordinating the technical and artistic elements of a theatrical production during rehearsals and performances.

Upstage and Downstage:

Upstage refers to the area farthest from the audience, while downstage is closest to the audience.

Wings: Offstage areas to the sides of the acting area where actors wait to make their entrances.

House: The area of the theatre where the audience sits.



ABOUT THE SHOW SUGARSHOW A DIA DE MUERTOS MUSICAL ADVENTURE!

UGAR SKULL! A Día de Muertos Musical Adventure is a touring bilingual/bicultural musical for young audiences and families that uses traditional regional music and dance from Mexico to tell the story of twelveyear-old Vita Flores. Vita thinks her family has gone loco planning a celebration for deceased loved ones. Why throw a party for the dead? But when a spirited candy skeleton suddenly springs to life, Vita finds herself on a magical, musical journey to unravel the true meaning of Día de Muertos. Meet Sugar Skull, a charismatic skeleton with a secret or two. With her skeletal new friend, Vita dances with ancient ancestors, sings with a sorrowful sorceress, escapes the trickster Chanegues, and even meets the famous Catrina Calavera. But can this clever youth gather the missing pieces needed for her family ofrenda before it's too late?

Developed by Rhythm of the Arts, Gregory Van Acker, Sinuhé Padilla, and Elena Aráoz, with Mexico Beyond Mariachi, SUGAR SKULL! is a joyous, heartfelt adventure that delves into the rich, tuneful traditions of Día de Muertos. Featuring a company of gifted musicians and dancers, this colorful stage production is the perfect fall entertainment for youth and family audiences alike.



Here are a few of the characters you will meet in Sugar Skull! A Día de Muertos Musical Adventure:

Vita

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- Sugar Skull
- Channed Street
- Marigold Mamá
- Iviania
- Abuelita
- Catrina Calavera
- La Bruja
- Chaneques

El Coco

- Meshica
- Aztecas
- Viejitos

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SHOW VOCABULARY

Día de Muertos: Day of the Dead is a vibrant and culturally significant Mexican holiday where families honor and celebrate the lives of deceased loved ones through joyful remembrance, colorful ofrendas, and traditional rituals.

Ofrenda: An "ofrenda" is an elaborate and decorative altar or offering, adorned with photos, favorite items, food, and symbolic elements, created to honor and remember deceased loved ones during the Day of the Dead celebration in Mexican culture.

Pan de Muerto: A traditional sweet bread baked and enjoyed during Día de Muertos, typically decorated with bone-shaped patterns and consumed as part of the celebration.

Abuelita: A term of endearment that affectionately means "grandma" or "little grandmother."

Calaca: A Mexican Spanish term that refers to a whimsical and decorative skeleton or skull, often associated with the Day of the Dead (Día de Muertos) celebrations, symbolizing the cycle of life and death.

Nahuatl: An indigenous language of Mexico, historically spoken by the Aztecs and still used by some indigenous communities in Mexico today.

Marigold (Cempasúchil): A bright orange flower used abundantly in decorations and altars during the Day of the Dead, believed to guide spirits of the deceased back to the living world.

QUESTIONS



- Can you describe the setting or the place where the story took place?
- Who was the main character and what was their role in the play?
- Were there any special effects or props used in the performance that caught your attention?
- 04 What was the most exciting or interesting part of the performance for you? Why did it stand out?
- How did the performance make you feel? Did it make you laugh, cry, or feel excited? Explain.

- What is something new that you learned from watching the performance?
- Which was your favorite character, and what characteristics or actions made them stand out to you?
- Did the music or sound effects in the play add to the overall experience? How?
- Were there any unexpected moments in the performance that caught you by surprise?
- What would you tell a friend about the performance that would have them want to see it?

CREATVE

It's time to be creative! Here are a few activities you can share with your students before or after the performance.

Create a Character Drawing:

Ask each student to choose a character from the play they just watched. Ask them to draw a picture of the character, including their costume, expressions, and any thing else the student thought notable about the character.

Write a letter to the Capitol Theatre:

In their letters, encourage them to express what they enjoyed about the performance and how it made them feel.

Create a Sugar Skull:

Using the Skull Art provided in this Study Guide, have students create their very own sugar skull.

Act Out a Scene:

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group a scene from the play. Have each group reenact the scene, allowing students to take on the roles of the characters they watched.

Design a New Set or Costume:

Challenge students to use art supplies to design their own set or costume for a scene from the play. Encourage them to think creatively and explain their design choices.

Find the Words:

Challenge the students to find all the Sugar Skull character names in the provided word find.

THE CAPITOL THEATRE

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SUGAR SKULL WORDFIND

Е	L	С	0	С	0	С	Н	Т	Α	Α	С	L	0
Α	Μ	L		Μ	Μ	V		Т	Α	D	Α	0	Т
Α	R	S	Α	Α	Μ	Е	L	С	0	Α	Т	С	Μ
Ζ	Μ	S	Κ	В	S	Α	S	J	Α	0	R	Μ	н
Т	Α	U	V	U	R	R	Α	Н	Μ			Ε	В
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S	D	U	0	S	Q	Е	С	L	G	Α	Μ	Ζ	В
С	0	L	S	Μ	U	Α	Μ	Ε	С	Α	Α	Ε	Q
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VITA SUGAR SKULL MARIGOLD MAMA ABUELITA CATRINA EL COCO LA BRUJA CHANEQUES MESHICA AZTECAS VIEJITOS







ABOUT THE COMPANY MEXICO BEYOND MARIACHI

Mexico Beyond Mariachi is a multicultural ensemble of professional musicians, actors, dancers and teaching artists, who perform traditional music and dance from Mexico as opposed to the overly stylized "Folklorico" that most people associate with Mexican culture. This focus on the "Folk" music and dance of Mexico creates a visceral connection with the audiences of all ages . Our philosophy is rooted in the belief that art and culture are an integral part of the development of every individual's outlook on life. Personal engagement, community experiences, and the celebration of commonality are themes Mexico Beyond Mariachi

bring to our shows as well as to our extensive arts-in-education offerings (residencies, workshops, and lecture demonstrations).

Mexico Beyond Mariachi was founded in 2005 in New York City and was quickly established as one of the leading providers of Mexican performance and education programs for young people and families in the New York Tri-State area. Every year, Mexico Beyond Mariachi performs in dozens of schools, theatres, and museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museo del Barrio, Queens Theater, New Jersey State Museum, Newark Museum, and more.





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