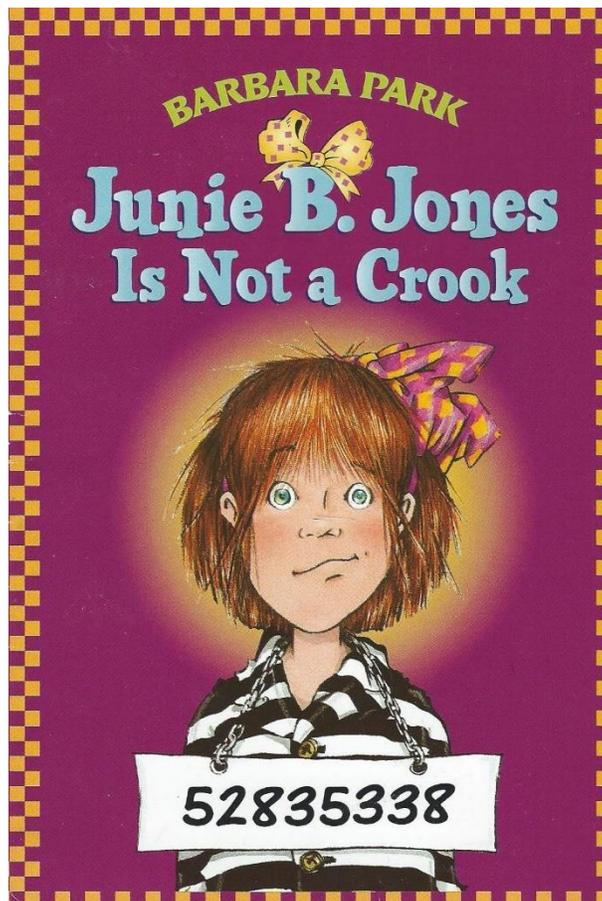


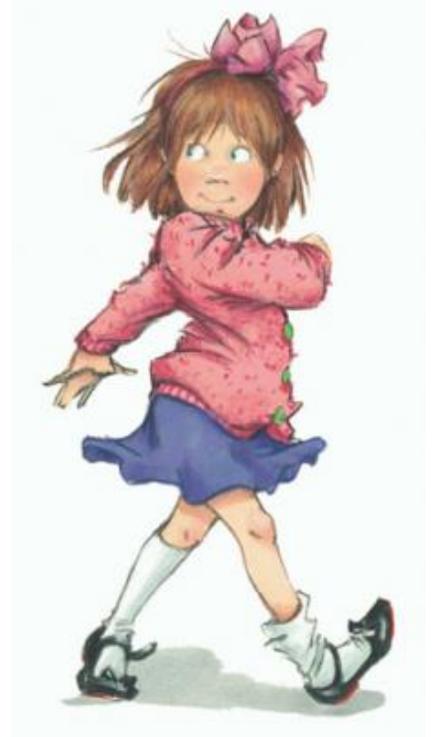
# theatre for young america

# STUDY GUIDE

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An educational supplement to the live theatre experience of



Theatre for Young America revisits a popular character with ***JUNIE B. JONES IS NOT A CROOK***. Children’s book readers first met “almost 6 years old” Junie B. Jones in Barbara Parks’ books. Parks introduced the character in 1992 and eventually authored a series of 29 similarly titled and tremendously popular books. ***JUNIE B. JONES IS NOT A CROOK*** is the ninth in the series. Allison Gregory has adapted this story (with some additions from the seventh book, ***JUNIE B. JONES LOVES HANDSOME WARREN***) for the stage. The Theatre for Young America offers its regional premiere from February 13 through March 24 at City Stage in Union Station, directed by Artistic Director Valerie M. Mackey.



Junie B. (Kyra Weinberger), pint-sized destroyer of grammar and syntax, is a precocious kindergartener who hates her middle name. As we enter the story, she is proudly showing off the furry black mittens given her by Grampa (Steven Eubank) to her friends That Grace (Morgan Walker) and Lucille (Jackie Sass). Although Ricardo (R.H.Wilhoit) is her current boyfriend, Junie B. hopes the mittens will attract the attention of the new boy in school, Handsome Warren (Thomas Eric Morris). During recess someone stole Junie B.’s mittens. She is upset and when she later finds a colorful pen, she decides to keep it because “Finders keepers, losers weepers.” She shows Warren her new pen, but he just thinks she is nutty!

This dilemma and learning opportunity for Junie B. is whether she should keep the pen, or turn it over to lost and found. The audience learns, along with Junie B., the lesson that giving can provide.

### **THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR OF THE JUNIE B. JONES BOOK SERIES**

Barbara Park lived from 1947 to 2013 during which time she won more than 40 children’s book awards. Besides, the wildly popular JUNE B. JONES SERIES, she also wrote award-winning middle school books and bestselling picture books. There are three other plays based on the Junie B. Jones book series that you may have seen earlier at Theatre for Young America. One was JUNIE B. JONES AND A LITTLE MONKEY BUSINESS that was adapted to play form by Joan Cushing. Another play was JINGLE BELLS, BATMAN SMELLS, P.S. SO DOES MAY that was adapted by Allison Gregory. Theatre for Young America has mounted two productions of each of those plays. TYA has also presented JUNIE B. JONES, THE MUSICAL. However, this is the first time Theatre for Young America has presented this play and the first time it has been done in the Kansas City area.

### **THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Allison Gregory adapted the two books into the script JUNIE B. JONES IS NOT A CROOK. Her plays have been seen all over the country. She co-adapted with her husband, Steven Dietz, the book GO DOG. GO! by P. D. Eastman. She lives in Austin, Texas, and Seattle, Washington, with her husband and two children.

## THE CHARACTERS



You will be seeing TWELVE characters in the play, but only SIX actors. All of the actors except the actress playing Junie B. will play more than one role. Doubling of the actors will require them to make distinctions or differences in their characters so the audience will know whom they are portraying in each scene. They will change their voices, their costumes, the way they move, and use their imaginations to help you distinguish what character they are playing. The director, the actor, and the costumer work hard to help you make those distinctions of characters. Here is a list of the

characters you will be seeing in the play: Junie B. Jones, That Grace, Lucille, Meanie Jim, Mother, Ricardo. Grandpa Frank, Handsome Warren, Grouchy Typing Lady, Principal, Mrs., and Pink Fluffy Girl. After seeing the play, discuss what actor played each of the twelve characters. Explain what changes were made by the actors to make each character different and interesting to watch.

## ADAPTING BOOKS INTO PLAYS

An adaptation is a change made to something that that it can fit a new use. This play is an adaptation of two Junie B. Jones books, which are meant to be read,, into a play, which is meant to be performed and watched. Allison Gregory adapted the two Junie B. books so they could be performed on stage for an audience.

### BEFORE SEEING THE PLAY:

- Do you think the play will be shorter or longer than the two books? Why?
- What will the characters look like? Will they match or be different from the book illustrations?
- What about the stories? What changes might you expect in adapting them for the stage? Why might these changes be necessary?

**AFTER** you have read the books and watched the play, think about these questions:

- Were there any characters in the books that were not in the play?
- What do you think the costumer and the set designer had to think about when bringing the book to the stage?
- What things helped to tell the story on stage?

## ART ACTIVITIES

Ask the students to draw a picture of their favorite moment in the play. Share them around the room.

The set designer featured monkey bars, swings, book shelves, and all sorts of toys and games to make the classroom, office, bedroom, and playground for the set. How would you design the set? Draw a picture of your idea and color it. Remember there are four separate locations in the play.

### WRITING A SHORT POEM

The principal recites a short poem: “If you find stuff, bring it in. All day long you’ll wear a grin.” Junie has her own poem: “Finders keepers, losers weepers.” Have the students write their own short poems that communicate a moral or truth. Hang them around the room.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND WRITING PROMPTS

What was the first thing you noticed about the theatre? What did the stage look like?

If you could act out any character in this play, who would you choose? Why? What would you do physically and vocally to portray that character?

What does Junie B. learn over the course of the play?

Junie B. and Lucille like to play horses before school. What do you like to play before school? Ask the students to describe their favorite games.

What lesson does Junie B. Jones learn in the play? Although she loves that pen that writes in four different colors, she takes it to the Lost and Found.

