

PARKER ARTS



Miss
Nelson
is Missing
Jeffrey Hatcher

Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc. (www.playscripts.com)

MISS NELSON IS MISSING

A comedy adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher from the book by Harry Allard and Illustrated by James Marshall.

PARKER ARTS EDUCATION STUDY GUIDE

Themes:

Curriculum: Literature and Language Arts, Math, Emotional and Social Learning, Teamwork and Expression, and Performing Arts.

CONTENTS

- How to be a #1 Audience
- Play vs. Book
- Behind the Scenes
- About the Authors
- About the Play
- Story Comparison & Sequencing
- Discussion Guide
- Writing & Art Prompts
- Student Review

HOW TO BE A #1 AUDIENCE MEMBER

The audience is the reason live theater exists! At Parker Arts, we cherish the actor/audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an active participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged, and to live the story with us!

Here are a few guidelines for being a respectful audience member. Every person has a job to do to make sure the live performance goes on! Here is how you can play your part:

1. Stay sitting in your seat.
2. Keep your hands and feet to yourselves.
3. If the actors ask the audience questions, it's okay to answer!
4. You can laugh when something is funny!
5. Pay attention! Watch and listen carefully to what is going on.
6. Get ready to clap at the end of the show when the actors bow.
7. Have fun, enjoy the show, and be sure to share the story with your parents!

BEFORE THE PLAY: *Discuss Appropriate Behavior*

Have a discussion with your students about proper theater etiquette. For example, it's okay to clap and laugh, but it's not okay to talk to your neighbor. Have students compare and contrast the difference between watching a movie and watching a play. Ask if students have been to a play before. If so, what play? What was the experience like? Talk about the concentration that performing in a play requires, and ask the students what they find distracting when they are trying to accomplish a task in front of people. How can they help the actors succeed and do a good job? Let students know that in plays, actors sometimes play several different characters and change roles by simply swapping out costume pieces and altering their voices and bodies.

AFTER THE PLAY: *Reflect on the Experience*

Ask students if they enjoyed the play. Based on this experience, would they like to see other plays? If they've seen plays before, how did this play compare? What happened that they weren't expecting? How was seeing a play a different experience than seeing a movie? Have the students write a review of the play. Use the attached form or have them write a paragraph or two on their own. Have them show their picture to the class and explain why that scene or character was their favorite.

WE INVITE YOU TO SEND THE REVIEWS AND PICTURES TO PARKER ARTS – WE ENJOY READING THEM AND LEARNING FROM STUDENT FEEDBACK.

TRADITIONAL PLAY VS. LITERARY ADAPTATIONS

Parker Arts student productions are often musical adaptations of picture books and short stories for children. We encourage you to discuss the elements of each version and compare/contrast the two both before and after you see the play.

BEFORE THE PLAY: *Get to Know the Original Story*

Read the story to your students, or have them read the book themselves, before the production. After reading the book, discuss it with your students, using these questions as launch pads:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What happens in the beginning of the story? The middle? The end?
- Is there a character in the story you don't like? What makes you dislike this character? How do you think he/she might be portrayed in the stage version?
- What do you think you will see on stage as the actors tell this story?
- How might the play be different from the story? How might it be the same?

AFTER THE PLAY: *Compare/Contrast the Story to the Play*

- How were the book and the play different?
- How were the book and the play the same?
- What elements of the play surprised you, based on your knowledge of the book?
- Which did you enjoy more, reading the book or watching the play?
- What was your favorite part of the play? Was that your favorite part of the book too?
- Were there any characters in the book that were not in the play, or vice versa?
- Why do you think the playwright added or subtracted certain parts?

BEHIND THE SCENES

BEFORE THE PLAY: *Prepare Your Students to Observe All Aspects of the Production*

When we create a play at Parker Arts, we have a community of artists working together to make a complete production. Ask students to be particularly observant during the performance for the parts of the show that are done by the various theater staff.

AFTER THE PLAY: *Discuss the Students' Observations*

Ask the students about what they noticed about the "behind---the---scenes" jobs:

- How did the costume designer make the actors look like the characters they were playing?
- What about their costumes helped you to know what kind of people or animals they were?
- Did you have a favorite costume in the show? Which one? Why was it your favorite?
- What are some of the locations the play took place in?
- How did the set designer make the settings look realistic?
- What sound effects did you hear in the play? How did those sound effects help you to know what was happening in the play?

THEATER IS A TEAM SPORT

The **PLAYWRIGHT** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The playwright decides what the characters say and gives the designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **DIRECTOR** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.

The **ACTORS** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **DESIGNERS** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes, and sound that will complement and complete the director's vision.

The **STAGE MANAGER** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.

The **SHOP AND STAGE CREW** builds the set, props, and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting, and stage machinery during each performance.

The **FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of the performance.

The **THEATER** is where it all takes place. The Mainstage Theater at the PACE Center, which opened in 2011, seats up to 534 people, and features a proscenium stage, motorized orchestra pit, the latest in theatrical lighting, sound and rigging systems, an orchestra shell and dance flooring.

ABOUT THE CAST AND CREW

CREW

DIRECTOR Tanner Kelly
STAGE MANAGER Kaylin Darst
SET DESIGNER.....August Stoten
SOUND DESIGNER.....Ross Hullender
LIGHTING DESIGNER...Bella Christofferson
COSTUME DESIGNERJessie Page
STAGEHANDS.....Brandi Lopez,
..... Bella Lewis, Cade Anderson

CAST

MISS NELSON/VIOLA SWAMP Jordan Griffiths
PRINCIPAL/DETECTIVE..... Nick Marshall
MORRIS Eli Harvey
LAVITA Olivia Kisicki
PHOEBE..... Nikki Salinas
RAYMOND..... Chris Warren
GEORGE.....Keyen Vang
KIMBERLY Aynsley Upton
ELVIS..... Sam Wersch

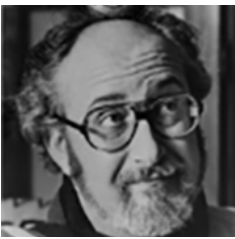
ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



JEFFREY HATCHER Broadway: *Never Gonna Dance* (book). Off-Broadway: *Three Viewings* and *A Picasso* at Manhattan Theatre Club; *Scotland Road* and *The Turn of the Screw* at Primary Stages; *Tuesdays with Morrie* (with Mitch Albom) at The Minetta Lane; *Murder by Poe*, *The Turn of the Screw*, and *The Spy at The Acting Company*; *Neddy* at American Place; and *Fellow Travelers* at Manhattan Punchline. Other Plays/Theaters: *Compleat Female Stage Beauty*, *Mrs. Mannerly*, *Murderers*, *Mercy of a Storm*, *Smash*, *Armada*, *Korczak's Children*, *To Fool the*

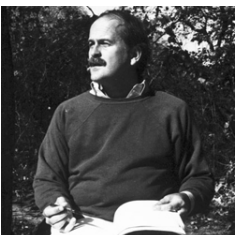
Eye, *The Falls*, *A Piece of the Rope*, *All the Way with LBJ*, *The Government Inspector*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and others at The Guthrie, Old Globe, Yale Rep, The Geffen, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Cleveland Playhouse, South Coast Rep, Arizona Theater Company, San Jose Rep, The Empty Space, Indiana Rep, Children's Theater Company, History Theater, Madison Rep, Intiman, Illusion, Denver Center, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Actors Theater of Louisville, Philadelphia Theater Company, Asolo, City Theater, Studio Arena and dozens more in the U.S. and abroad. Film/ TV: *Stage Beauty*, *Casanova*, *The Duchess*, and episodes of *Columbo*. Grants/Awards: NEA, TCG, Lila Wallace Fund, Rosenthal New Play Prize, Frankel Award, Charles MacArthur Fellowship Award, McKnight Foundation, Jerome Foundation, and Barrymore Award Best New Play. He is a member and/or alumnus of The Playwrights Center, the Dramatists Guild, the Writers Guild, and New Dramatists.

BOOK AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR



HARRY ALLARD was born in Evanston, Illinois on January 27th. He grew up in California, Long Island, and Chicago. He graduated from Northwestern College in 1943 and then performed active duty in Korea. He then lived in Paris for several years and became so fluent in the language that he got a master's degree and then a Ph.D. in French from Yale in 1973. He taught French at the college level for many years. Upon his arrival in Boston, he met James Marshall, whose art and friendship inspired Allard's first book, *The Stupids Step*

Out. This successful collaboration paved the way for the publication of other *Stupids* books and the *Miss Nelson* series. *Miss Nelson is Missing* was voted one of the most memorable books of the century. *Biography courtesy of kidsreads.com. Image courtesy of librarything.com*



JAMES MARSHALL (1942-1992) created dozens of exuberant and captivating books for children, including *The Stupids*, *Miss Nelson Is Missing!*, and the ever-popular *George and Martha* books. Before creating his canon of classic, hilarious children's books, James Marshall played the viola, studied French, and received a master's degree from Trinity College. He also doodled. It was the doodles, and the unforgettable characters that emerged from them, that led him to his life's work as one of the finest creators of children's books of the twentieth

century. In 2007, James Marshall was posthumously awarded the Laura Ingalls Wilder medal for his lasting contribution to literature for children.

ABOUT THE PLAY

CHARACTERS

MISS NELSON the nice, sweet teacher
MISS VIOLA SWAMP the substitute teacher who is the opposite of Miss Nelson
POP HANSON..... the Janitor/Narrator
MR. BLANDSFORD..... the boring Principal
DETECTIVE MCSMOGG..... the inept detective
ADAM..... has a wild imagination and dark thoughts
ALLISONbossy, a leader, take-charge type, especially in times of crisis
GREGORY finds it hard to sit still and pay attention
CHERYL..... a follower, silly, a girly girl

SYNOPSIS

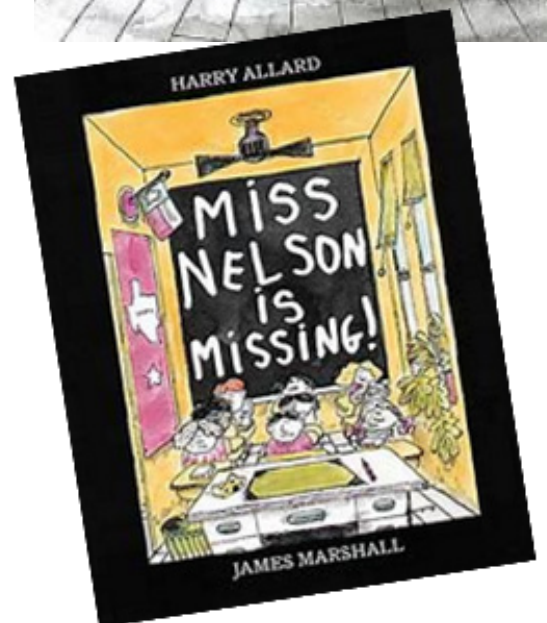
The students in Room 207 are notorious for misbehaving. They just don't seem capable of following the rules and being respectful to their kind and gentle teacher, Miss Nelson. One morning Miss Nelson is mysteriously missing from school and the students have a moment of satisfaction, thinking that they have succeeded in driving her away. Their celebration turns quickly to dread when the substitute teacher, the strict and formidable Miss Viola Swamp, descends upon the classroom. Soon the children are inundated with homework in a military-style classroom and even have their story time taken away! Ultimately, the students realize how terribly they miss Miss Nelson and decide to take matters into their own hands. After an unsuccessful attempt to enlist the assistance of a police detective, the children decide that it was their own behavior that drove her away and set about to right their wrongs. To the students' delight, the clever Miss Nelson returns to room 207 the very next day and is somehow knowingly pleased to find a newly appreciative and much more respectful version of her class!



Information courtesy of Playscripts.

SETTING

Time: 1950 - Today
Place: Texas, USA, and various cities in the U.S.
Set: A school room, an office, and a street



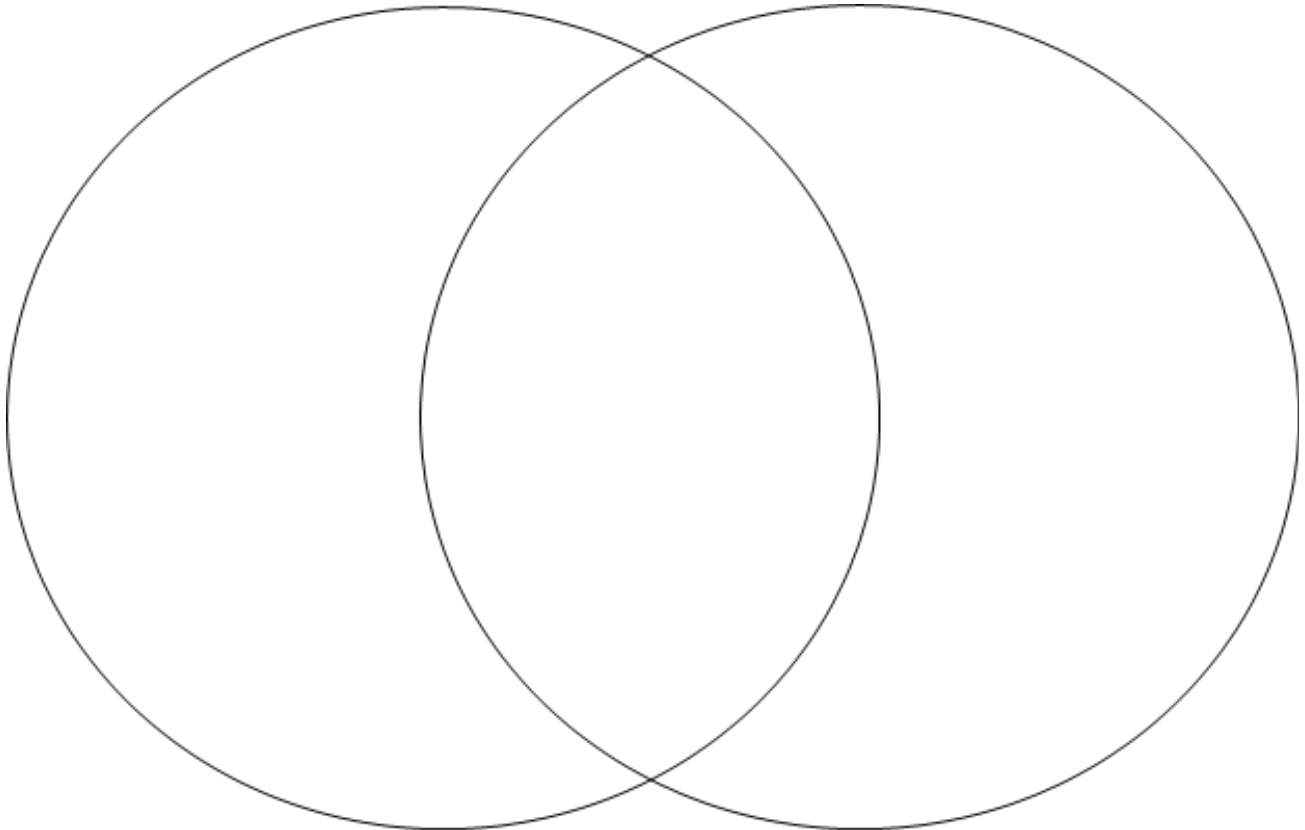
STORY COMPARISON

1. Read Miss Nelson is Missing! aloud in class. Discuss the book together.
2. Have students compare the story of Miss Nelson is Missing! to that of the play using the Venn diagram below.
3. Compare your diagram to other students.

JUST ABOUT THE BOOK

ABOUT BOTH

JUST ABOUT THE PLAY



Sequencing - Miss Nelson is Missing

Name: _____

First	Second	Next	Then	Last
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Miss Viola Swamp met the class.

Miss Nelson did not come to school.



Miss Viola Swamp gave lots of homework.



Miss Nelson came back to school.



The kids in Room 207 are being bad.



PERFORMANCE DISCUSSION GUIDE

- **USE** the following pattern in asking questions:
 - Ask **OPEN** questions to encourage and engage children.
 - Ask **FOCUSED** questions to elicit and organize specific information.
 - Ask **CONNECTING** questions to help children learn to see the relationships between events, characters, and ideas.
 - Ask broad questions to help children **GENERALIZE**/learn to draw conclusions.
 - Accept, record, and read all responses on the board, chart or overhead for all to see.
- **OPEN** question examples:
 - What did you notice at the play today...What did you see?
 - What about the play was different from the book/story?
 - What surprised you?
 - What impressed you?
- **FOCUSED** questions:
 - What was Miss Nelson struggling with?
 - How did she handle that struggle?
- **ANALYZING/CONNECTING** questions:
 - What **LESSON DID** Miss Nelson's students learn?
 - What lesson did Miss Nelson learn?

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. How do the children of Room 207 treat Miss Nelson? Why do you think they behave this way?
2. What is respect? How do obedience and being unselfish relate to respecting others? How does Room 207 learn to respect Miss Nelson?
3. What is the true identity of Viola Swamp? What are some other ways Miss Nelson could have gained the respect of her students besides tricking them?
4. Observe the students' behavior as the story progresses. In what ways does their behavior change the longer they are without Miss Nelson?
5. Make two columns on the board and use them to compare and contrast Miss Nelson's and Viola Swamp's classroom management techniques. Which teacher's methods are more effective?

LITERATURE

1. Read *Miss Nelson is Missing!* by Harry Allard and James Marshall to familiarize students with the story. Talk about what they expect from a theatrical performance of the story.

CREATIVE WRITING

1. A journal or diary is often a daily record of personal activities, reflections, feelings, events, and/or observations. If Miss Nelson, the students of Room 207 kept a journal, what do you think he or she might have written? Choose a character from the play and write a journal or diary entry from his/her perspective.

2. What if the kids discovered that Miss Nelson was pretending to be Viola Swamp? Write an alternative ending to the story.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Interview a person older than you (for example, a teacher, cousin, uncle or aunt, neighbor, parent, or grandparent) about what school was like when they were your age. How was school different back then? How was it the same?
2. Draw a map of the town Miss Nelson lives in. Include Horace B. Smedley Elementary School, Miss Nelson's house, the Police Station, and Lulu's Ice Cream Parlor.
3. Research and discuss the methods that real-life law enforcement officers use to solve cases.

STATE CAPITALS



WRITING PROMPTS

IF YOU WERE A TEACHER...

In the play, Miss Nelson had students who did not want to learn and work hard. What would you do to get your students to participate in class and want to learn? What would you tell them? How would you speak to them? What is their reward? How does learning make them better students? What kind of teacher would you be?

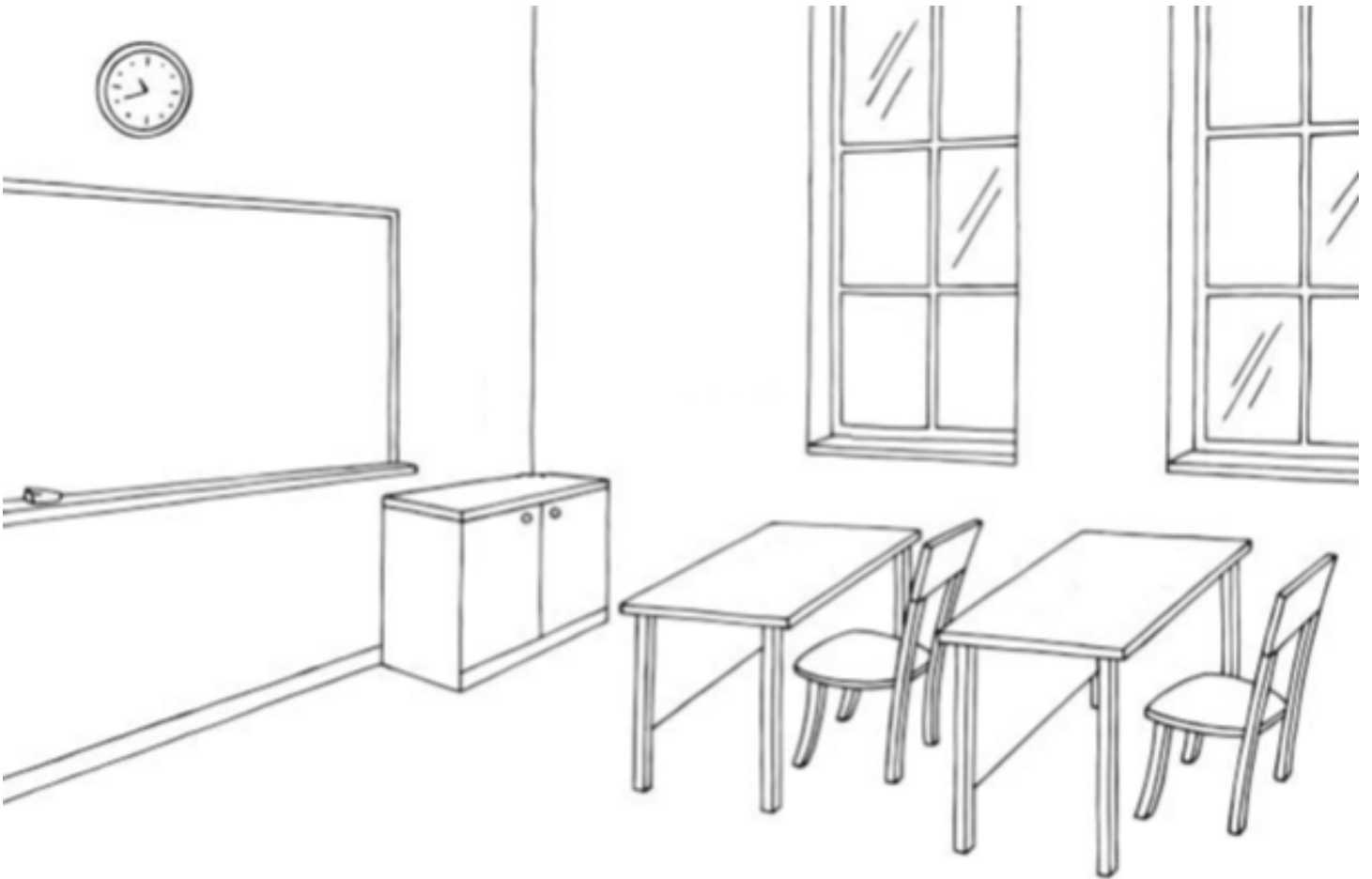
If I were a teacher I would:

DRAW A PICTURE

ART PROMPT

DESIGN YOUR CLASSROOM!

In *Miss Nelson is Missing!*, Miss Nelson must design her classroom to help her students learn and not to misbehave. Add decorations to the image below. How would your classroom look?



STUDENT REVIEW OF MISS MELSON IS MISSING!

By: _____

I give this play a (circle the number of stars): ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My favorite part of the play was _____

because _____

My favorite character was _____

because _____

If I had to choose what I liked best, I would choose (circle one)

the story the characters the music the costumes the scenery

because _____

Teachers – We would love to hear from your students! Please mail in your student review of Miss Nelson is Missing to: Parker Arts, c/o Education Department, 20000 Pikes Peak Avenue, Parker, Colorado, 80138.

Print Name

School Street Address

City State Zip

Parker Arts
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Parker, CO 80138

