



# Dreamcatchers

POPEJOY HALL SCHOOLTIME SERIES **TEACHING GUIDE**

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SCHOOLTIME SERIES  
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# MARIACHI CHRISTMAS

PRESENTED BY NOBERTA FRESQUEZ and FIESTAS UNLIMITED

PERFORMED BY MARIACHI AZTLÁN and BALLET FOLKLÓRICO PASO DEL NORTE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2014 • GRADES: 2-12

Dreamcatchers Teaching Guides align with the Common Core State Standards and New Mexico State Learning Standards.



**Music is a moral law.** It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything.”

-PLATO



## Introduction

<http://www.mexconnect.com>, <http://www.mariachi.org/history.html>

Mariachi is more than just music. It is the sum of a cultural revolution (expressed through a group of musicians) that encompasses the essence of Mexico and its people. Like the sarape, which often uses widely contrasting colors side by side - green and orange, yellow and blue - the Mariachi use sharply contrasting sounds: the sweet sounds of the violins against the brilliance of the trumpets, the deep sound of the guitarrón against the crisp, high voice of the vihuela; and the frequent shifting between syncopation and on-beat rhythm. The resulting sound is the heart and soul of Mexico.

During the Schoolttime Mariachi Christmas performance, students are invited to sing along, clap, and have a fun time with the artists. However, we do ask that, during solos, the audience wait to join in and appreciate the moment until the rest of the performers begin singing again.

We recognize that not all students celebrate Christmas. However, this show is based on the traditions and culture of Mexico during the Christmas celebration. Our lessons reflect this particular show. We encourage discussions of diversity in family traditions from home to home and culture to culture, particularly during this rich season.

**Standards  
Addressed By  
Attending the  
Performance**

### NMCCSS

English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening:  
Comprehension and Collaboration  
(CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL)

### New Mexico Content Standards:

**Fine Arts:** Theatre, Music & Dance-  
Content Standards 3, 5 & 6

## VOCABULARY

Sharing this vocabulary with your students will enhance their experience of the performance. Encourage them to watch for examples of these elements of music and dance during the performance!

**Bolero** (boh-LEH-ro) moderate dance/popular song type in 4/4 time

**Corrido** (coh-REE-doh) a ballad that usually includes facts about historical events

**Ensemble** (ON-sahm-bel) a small musical group of voices or instruments

**Guitarron** (ghee-tah-ROHN) large, portable acoustic bass instrument and member of the guitar family, with a V-shaped back, short neck, and six strings

**Mestizo** (mehs-TEE-soh) the mixture of Hispanic, Indian, and African cultural and musical elements in the New World

**Polka** (POL-kuh) a lively dance originally from Eastern Europe

**Ranchera** (rahn-CHEH-rah) a popular song type, with texts dealing with emotions such as love, or nostalgia for the land or people

**Son** a lively instrumental/vocal/dance piece, characterized by the alteration of fast and slow rhythms

**Sone** (SON-ay) the Spanish word for "sound"

**Vihuela** (vee-HWAY-la) a small member of the guitar family, with five strings, a V-shaped back, and short neck. The *vihuela* produces a high sound

**Waltz** (wawltz) a slow or moderate dance originally from Western Europe



## Interesting Facts for Students

**Mariachi songs speak about** machismo, love, betrayal, death, politics, revolutionary heroes, and even animals.

**The instruments originally used** by the mariachi were those introduced by the Spaniards – violins, guitars, *vihuelas*, harps, etc.

**Mariachi music was first passed down aurally**, meaning that songs were not written down but taught and learned by ear.

**Originally, the mariachi most often found employment at haciendas**, where they would earn more than the average laborer. With the revolution, this way of life ended and they began to wander from town to town, singing songs of

revolutionary heroes and enemies, and carrying news from one place to another.

**The Son, was the popular music** of the early period. It is a mixture of folk traditions from Spain, Mexico, and Africa. "La Negra" is the best-known example.

**Dancing accompanying Mariachi** music may include hard rhythmic heel stomping, straight-backed with gliding, shuffling footwork. It can also be waltzes, polkas, schottisches, or other regional dance forms.

**Mariachis often help celebrate** the great moments in people's lives — from birth to courting and marriage, to funerals.



**Mariachi music has been incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church's** most sacred ritual: the Mass. The “Misa Panamericana” is a Mariachi folk mass, sung in Spanish, which uses traditional instruments to create vivid new interpretations of the traditional elements of the service.

**With the advent of radio and television,** Mariachi popularity continued to grow. Due to the popularity of jazz and Cuban music, the trumpet was adopted, pushing the violins into second place and, in some cases, replacing the harp.

**The many variations of Mariachi music** are grouped into different rhythmic meters. The *jarabe* and *huapango* are typically in 6/8 time, while the *cumbia* and *bolero ranchero* are usually in 4/4.

**Perhaps most popular** are the Mariachi styles in 3/4, such as the *valses*, *Mexicanos* and *corrido*.

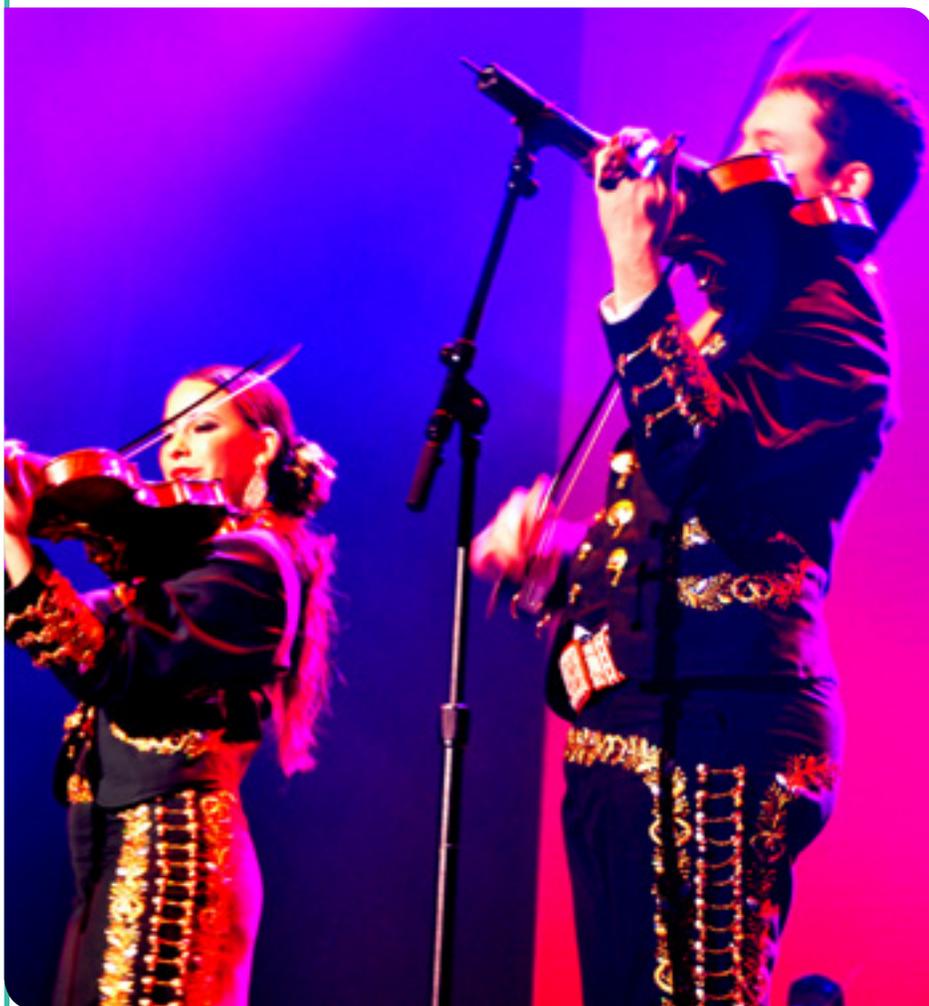
**The history of the charro suit** can be traced back to the peasants of Salamanca and Andalucía, Spain. Today, Mariachis of both sexes wear the *traje de charro* to perform, though women can choose a skirt made to echo the tight charro pants.

## History of Mariachi Music

Prior to the arrival of Hernán Cortés, the music of Mexico was an integral part of religious celebrations, and was played with rattles, drums, reed and clay flutes, and conch-shell horns. As Christianity spread, these instruments gave way to instruments imported by the Spanish: violins, guitars, harps, brass horns and woodwinds. The indigenous and mestizo musicians not only learned to play European instruments, but also to build their own, sometimes giving them shapes and tunings of their own invention.

Music and dance were important elements of Spanish theatrical productions, which were enormously popular throughout the Spanish-speaking world during the colonial period. The typical Spanish theatrical orchestra of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries was comprised of violins (usually two), a harp and guitars (or guitar variants). It was from this group that several of the most distinctive regional ensembles of Mexico developed, including the Mariachi.

According to the best scholarly opinion, the word Mariachi has native roots. One theory suggests the name comes from the wood used to make the platform on which the performers danced to the music of the village musicians. But whatever its true source, the word today has two meanings that are crystal clear: Mariachi is the music of the people, and it is one of the most exciting and enchanting musical ensembles found anywhere in the world.



## The Musical Instruments

Each instrument in the Mariachi serves a special function. The violins provide the melody, or the main song line. A second violin, if used, would play a harmony. Sometimes three violins play different notes to make a complete, harmonious chord. Trumpets add strength to the melody played by violins. The guitars, vihuela, and guitarron provide the rhythm.

**Violins** are played in the same manner for Mariachi music as they are played for any other type of music. Violins are often used to develop the total sound of Mariachi music, and blend with the sound of other instruments.

The **vihuela** is an instrument unique to Mariachi music. It was originally created by the Coca People of Jalisco. The vihuela has a bowed and swollen

V-shaped back and five strings. It looks like a small guitar that is slightly larger than a ukulele. Players strum a vihuela with a thumb pick. Vihuelas produce a crisp, clear sound that fades away quickly. It is the rhythmic and harmonic foundation of the distinctive Mariachi sound.

The **guitar** is played in Mariachi music as much as it is played in any popular music genre. It is played in collaboration with the vihuela, and is used to supplement the rhythm. Nearly all Mariachi bands include guitars.

A **guitarron** is another instrument unique to Mariachi music. It forms the bass foundation for the music and gives Mariachi music its special sound. The guitarron looks like a large version of the vihuela; it also originated in Jalisco. It has six strings which are plucked in pairs to create a big, deep sound. By many accounts, the guitarron is considered to be the single most essential element of Mariachi music.

The **trumpet** is also important in Mariachi music. It is played in much the same manner as in other popular music. However, in some instances, cup mutes are used to moderate or soften the sound of trumpets.

Other Instruments: Depending on the specific arrangement of Mariachi music, flutes, accordions, French horns, and even organs can be incorporated. They are usually played in the conventional manner, but are used to contribute to the distinctive Mariachi sound.

## The Dance

Mariachi music is created to be accompanied with dance and each of the regional variations of the **son** (see below) has its traditional style of dance. The technique associated with the son is the **zapateado**, a distinctive type of footwork that originated in Spain. The performers skillfully drive the heels of their shoes or boots into the dance floor, pounding out swift, often syncopated rhythms, which complement the different sounds of the musical instruments.

In the **huapango**, couples line up in opposing columns. The upper part of the body is held perfectly upright as the feet perform rapid, intricate, shuffling maneuvers. Today, it is sometimes performed with a glass of water on the dancer's head to show off the dancer's great muscular control.

Lyrics of the songs frequently describe country life, and form the inspiration for the dances' movements. These are referred to as **sones**, which often depict the plants, animals, and people of the region. In the dance, the movements of the performers often represent the farmyard courtship described in the verses of the **sones**.

Another dance is the **jarabe**, a medley of dance pieces, including **sones**, **danzas**, **jotas**, and **polkas**. No discussion of Mariachi music would be complete without mentioning the famous **Jarabe Tapatio** — the Mexican Hat Dance. Associated with Guadalajara, in the state of Jalisco, it has become the national dance of Mexico.

**NMCCSS:**

**English Language Arts: Reading Standards for Informational Texts** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI):  
• Craft and Structure  
• Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**Writing** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W): Production and Distribution of Writing

**Speaking & Listening** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL): Comprehension and Collaboration

**Language** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L): Knowledge of Language

**New Mexico Content Standards:**

**Fine Arts/Music & Dance:** Content Standards 2, 3, & 6

**Social Studies/ Geography:** Content Standard 2

# Activity 1

## Write a Mariachi Song

### Objectives

Students will:

- Create original lyrics inspired by Mariachi music.
- Use lyrics to reflect a specific occasion.
- Follow a rhyme scheme.

### Materials

A recording of “Las Mañanitas” (widely available – many versions can be found on iTunes or YouTube) • “Las Mañanitas” lyric sheet (see page 7) • Pen • Paper

### Procedure

1. Review the history of Mariachi music. Note that Mariachi groups are most often seen playing at important family celebrations (i.e. weddings, birthdays, or any other public festivities).
2. Distribute “Las Mañanitas” lyric sheet. Ask how many students are familiar with the song. If students are familiar, ask them to cite occasions on which they have heard the song performed. Who was singing it? To whom was it being sung? What was the occasion? If students have no familiarity with the song, explain that it is a traditional Mexican

song performed for people on their birthdays.

3. Play the song for the students. Have them read along with the lyrics.

4. Explain that the students will be writing their own lyrics for a Mariachi song. The song will be for a special occasion: birthday, anniversary, wedding, funeral, farewell party, etc. Ask students to choose an occasion to write about and to think of the type of sentiment s/he would want to convey for the occasion.

5. It might be helpful if students think of a specific

person they are addressing in their song. Instruct them to evoke imagery that would be meaningful, either to themselves or to the person for whom they are writing.

6. Be sure to note the rhyme scheme of the song. It may be helpful to read the Spanish lyrics out loud to identify the rhyme scheme used in “Las Mañanitas.” Students don’t have to repeat that exact rhyme scheme, but should follow some sort of rhyming pattern in their lyrics.

7. When the lyrics to their songs are complete, have the students share them in class.

### Extensions/Modifications

- If students are fluent enough, have them write the songs in Spanish, or help them to translate their songs into Spanish once they are written.
- Set the songs to music. Identify which Mariachi instruments would be featured prominently in the song.
- Younger students can do this assignment together as a group with teacher assistance.

### Assessment/Modifications

- Quality of participation.
- Students create lyrics that: 1) are specific to an occasion, 2) follow an identifiable rhyme scheme, and 3) make sense to others.

## Lyrics

# Las Mañanitas: A Birthday Song

### Spanish Lyrics

Estas son las mañanitas que cantaba el rey David  
A las muchachas bonitas, te las cantamos así.  
Despierta, mi bien, despierta, mira que almaneció,  
Ya los pajarillos cantan, la luna ya se metió.

Qué linda está la mañana, en que vengo a saludarte,  
Venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte,  
El día en que tú naciste, nacieron todas las flores,  
El la pila del bautismo, cantaron los ruiseñores,

Ya viene amaneciendo,  
Ya la luz el día nos dio, levántate de mañana,  
Mira que ya almaneció.

Quisiera ser solecito para entrar por tu ventana  
y darte los “Buenos Días” acostadita/o en tu cama,

Quisiera ser un San Juan, quisiera ser un San Pedro  
Para venirme a cantar con la música del cielo,

Con jasmínes y flores hoy te vengo a saludar  
Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te venimos a cantar.

### English Translation

This is “Las Mañanitas” that King David sang  
to the pretty girls; As we sing them to you.  
Wake up, my love, wake up. Look at what has dawned, Already  
the little birds are singing, the moon already went in.

How pretty is the morning in which I come to greet you.  
We all came with pleasure and joy to congratulate you.  
On the day you were born all the flowers were born.  
At the baptismal font the nightingales sang.

It is starting to be dawn,  
The day has given us light. Get up in the morning,  
Look at what has already dawned.

I would like to be a little sunlight to go in through your window  
and tell you “Good Morning” while you’re lying in your bed.

I would like to be Saint John, I would like to be Saint Peter,  
in order to come sing to you with music from heaven.

With jasmine and flowers today I come to greet you,  
Today being your saint’s day, we came to sing to you.

## Grades: 3-6

Adapted from an activity at [familyfun.go.com](http://familyfun.go.com)

### NMCCSS:

**English Language Arts: Reading Standards for Informational Texts** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI):

- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Comprehension and Collaboration

**Speaking and Listening** (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL):

- Comprehension and Collaboration

### New Mexico Content Standards:

**Social Studies/ Geography:** Content Standard II

# Activity 2

## Farolitos for Christmas

### Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the tradition of placing farolitos out on Christmas Eve.
- Learn the difference between a luminaria and farolito.
- Assemble their own farolitos.

### Materials

*Farolitos for Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya • Paper Bags • Candles • Sand

### Procedure

1. Discuss some of the Christmas traditions presented in the show *Mariachi Christmas*. What holiday traditions were familiar to students? What holiday traditions were unfamiliar? Tell students that they will be reading a story that features a New Mexican holiday tradition.

2. Read *Farolitos of Christmas* by Rudolfo Anaya.

3. Discuss the story with students. What does the book say is the reason that Abuelo would light luminarias on Christmas Eve? Why was he

unable to do so? What is the difference between a luminaria and farolito? You may bring up the fact that many people use the term luminaria to describe a farolito. Ask the class if they believe these words can be used interchangeably.

4. Ask the students about their own Christmas traditions. Do any of their families put out farolitos? Do any of them travel to see farolitos at select locations here in town or at some of the pueblos? What are their family traditions for Christmas Eve?

5. Have the class make their own farolitos.

a.) Open the paper bags and put a handful of sand into each one (approx. 1 cup).

b.) Place a candle in the bag. Try to center it as much as possible.

c.) Line one or more of the paths to the school with the farolitos. If your school has a winter holiday event, light the farolitos on the evening of that event.

### Extensions/Modifications

- Hold a class fundraiser where you sell assembled farolitos. Have the class collaborate to create a brief write up of the reasons and traditions behind the farolitos. Include the write up with all orders filled.

- Discuss other holidays or occasions where candles are lit. Why are candles important? What about the lighting of candles is the same? Are there any differences? Who lights the candles? Why? How do these actions make you feel?

### Assessment/Modifications

- Quality of participation.

# Bonus Explorations

## Extension Activities

What traditions did the students observe in the show? Discuss the Posadas. Have any of the students ever participated in one? If so, what role did they play? What was the experience like? Who did they do it with? Was it different from what they saw on stage? How? What was the same? **Watch a video on La Posadas**

### Younger students can learn to do the Mexican Hat Dance or Jarabe Tapatío.

There are many other versions online and some have videos.

## Outreach Activities

### Mariachi Spectacular

Workshops and instruction from Mariachi music's finest instructors in the world. Classes at UNM for all ages. Showcase in Civic Plaza, Downtown Albuquerque. The 2014 event was July 9-12 so expect it again around that time of year in 2015.

### The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History

A great source of Hispanic history, art, and culture that might be important to the traditions and families of the students. There are always new exhibits in addition to the classic permanent collection.

### Mariachi Tenampa

A local *Mariachi* group that has been making music for over 40 years. They perform at both private functions as well as for public festivals. Watching *Mariachi Tenampa* perform is the perfect opportunity to see traditional *Mariachi* musicians with roots in the community.

## Resources

Anaya, Rudolfo A., and Edward Gonzales. *The Farolitos of Christmas*. New York: Hyperion for Children, 1995. Print.

## WEBSITES

How to make songs for the Mariachis [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5625755\\_make-songs-mariachis.html#tzzlvibJ74ys](http://www.ehow.com/how_5625755_make-songs-mariachis.html#tzzlvibJ74ys)

How to make paper sombreros [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_4857239\\_make-paper-sombrero.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4857239_make-paper-sombrero.html)

The first and largest mariachi website on the Internet <http://www.mariachi.org>

The involvement of women in mariachi music <http://www.mujiresenelmariachi.com/>

The official site of the famous mariachi festival <http://www.mariachiusa.com/>

A great source of mariachi information <http://www.mariachipublishing.com>

Samples of mariachi mp3's and lyrics <http://www.elmariachi.com>

## About the Companies

### Mariachi Aztlán

Founded to promote Mexican folk music, Mariachi Aztlán highlights the culture of the Hispanic people for the benefit of the students and community of south Texas. The group travels extensively to create a bridge of cultural understanding between countries and peoples with their music. Since 1989, Mariachi Aztlán has traveled throughout the United States, Mexico, and Canada as ambassadors representing the beauty of Hispanic music and cultural traditions.

The group's other accolades include performances with the Chicago Lyric Opera and winning Grand Champions at the Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque national competition. The mariachi also performed with the Houston Grand Opera, at the Hollywood Bowl, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington D.C.

### Ballet Folkórico Paso del Norte

Founded in 1978 as an affiliate of El Paso Community College, the troupe is now an independent non-profit. Ballet Folkórico Paso del Norte performed at many notable events including the Texas Sesquicentennial Celebration and the inauguration of the Texas Games. The company also performed at the Las Cruces International Mariachi Conference and shared the stage with artists

## Cogitations

After seeing the show, ask your students to answer these questions:

Before seeing this show, I didn't know that ...

This show made me think about ...

The part that most grabbed my attention was ...

While watching the show, the strongest feeling I had was ...

Overall, the show made me feel ...

The question I have about the show is ...

One change I would make in the show is ...

If I could talk to the creative team or actors, I would say ...

After seeing the show, my friends and I talked about ...

Something I want to share with my family about the experience is ...

like Linda Ronstadt, Mariachi Los Comperos de Nati Cano, Mariachi Cobre and Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles.

A unique honor for an American company, the group performed for various Mexican governors and was the first non-Mexican company invited to the Instituto Mexicano Norteamericano de Relaciones Culturales in Mexico City, an educational institution that promotes relationships with English-speaking countries.

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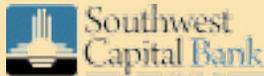


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Dreamcatchers are teaching guides produced by the Education Department of Popejoy Hall, New Mexico's premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment located in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Selected Dreamcatchers Teaching Guide materials provided by The Kennedy Center's Artsedge Cue Sheet, The Milwaukee Ballet, and other resources noted within this guide.

**Popejoy Hall's Mission: To provide access to the performing arts for all New Mexicans.**

The Popejoy Schooltime Series is a program of The University of New Mexico.



**Popejoy Hall,** New Mexico's premier nonprofit venue for the performing arts and entertainment.

## About the Popejoy Hall Schooltime Series

We present national and international touring companies and performers that you will not see anywhere else in or around Albuquerque.

These companies are selected with youth and family audiences in mind, from titles and materials that reflect the cultural diversity of our global community. These professional performing artists create educational experiences designed to encourage **literacy, creativity, communication** and **imagination**.

## Etiquette

The performing arts - theater, music and dance - are all collaborative endeavors. They require the cooperation of many skilled people: playwrights, directors, performers, designers, technicians, lyricists, choreographers, musicians and the audience. Live performances can transport you to other times and places but to do so, they require you, the audience, to listen, observe, discover, and imagine.

The inside of a theatre is called a "house." There are rules inside the house to make the experience smooth and enjoyable for everyone. A poster of **Theatre Etiquette** is available on our website. Please post it and discuss it with your students before attending this show.

## House Policies

Please visit our website for detailed information about **House Policies**, safety, special needs, food and drink, backpacks, cell phones, photography, recordings, and more.

Find us at: [schooltimeseries.com](http://schooltimeseries.com)  
[schoolttime@popejoypresents.com](mailto:schoolttime@popejoypresents.com)

Join our community and sign-up for our monthly newsletter at: [facebook.com/schooltimeseries](https://facebook.com/schooltimeseries) — click on "Join My List" or send an e-mail with your name and e-mail address to [schoolttime@popejoypresents.com](mailto:schoolttime@popejoypresents.com) requesting to be added to the newsletter list.