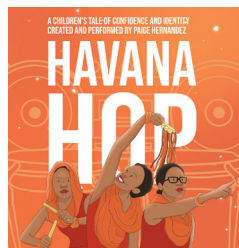


MTC STUDY GUIDE
Havana Hop
About the Show

"Havana Hop" is a dynamic play created, written, and performed by Paige Hernandez, with original music by Nick "Nick tha 1da" Hernandez. The story follows Yeila, a young girl struggling with stage fright on her quest to become a superstar. With support from her mother and mentors, she embarks on a journey to find her roots and confidence, blending her hip-hop style with her Cuban heritage. The interactive performance invites the audience to dance along as Yeila discovers the importance of embracing her multicultural identity and accepting differences to become a more well-rounded individual, emphasizing the significance of culture, family, and open-mindedness in achieving her dreams.


Questions Before the Show

- ➔ Have you ever dreamed of being a superstar or performing on stage? What do you think it takes to be confident in front of an audience?
- ➔ How do you feel about exploring different cultures and learning about your own family's history? Can you share any stories about your family's background?
- ➔ Have you ever experienced stage fright or nervousness about trying something new? How did you overcome those feelings?
- ➔ Do you enjoy dancing and listening to different types of music? What kind of music makes you want to dance and have fun?
- ➔ What do you think it means to accept and embrace our differences? How can learning about other cultures make us more open-minded and well-rounded individuals?

About the Artist


Paige Hernandez, a Baltimore native, is a highly acclaimed multidisciplinary artist known for her exceptional fusion of theatre, hip-hop, dance, and education. With nearly two decades of experience, she has made

a significant impact as a performer, director, choreographer, and playwright. Through her company, B-Fly Entertainment, Paige tours internationally with original works catering to multicultural and multigenerational hip-hop audiences, reaching over 10,000 students globally through residencies, workshops, and performances. She is recognized as a "classroom hero" for her outstanding arts integration work in STEM initiatives, and her talent has earned her numerous accolades, including being named a "Top Theatre Worker You Should Know" by *American Theatre Magazine* and a "Citizen Artist" by the Kennedy Center.

KEYWORD

Heritage (Spanish *herencia*) is a unique and inherited sense of family identity; the values, tradition, cultures, and artifacts handed down by previous generations.

THEATER ACTIVITY:

“Cultural Fusion Dance-Off”

Objective: This activity combines dance and theater and is inspired by the show *Havana Hop* your students saw at MTC. It aims to encourage creativity, promote cultural appreciation, and boost self-confidence in young participants.

1. Gather your students in a large open space, like a dance studio or stage, or move your classroom chairs and tables to the side, and explain the game’s concept, drawing connections to the themes of “Havana Hop” – embracing multicultural heritage, exploring different dance styles, and building self-confidence.
2. Divide them into small groups and assign each group a specific cultural dance style, such as hip-hop, salsa, tango, Bollywood, or African dance. Each group can represent a different culture.
3. Give each group time to research and learn basic dance moves from their assigned dance style. Encourage them to use online resources and find 2-4 dance movements/steps from each style to learn. Also, ask them to select a song or piece of music from that genre to play while they rehearse.
4. Once the groups have practiced their dance styles, come together for the “Cultural Fusion Dance-Off” performance. Each group takes turns showcasing their cultural dance routine, incorporating elements from the assigned dance style.
5. After each performance, encourage the other groups and the audience to cheer and applaud to boost everyone’s confidence.
6. Now comes the fun part - the cultural fusion! Ask your students to form new groups by mixing members from different initial groups. Each new group will create a dance routine that fuses elements from the various cultural dance styles they learned.
7. Allow some time for the new groups to rehearse and prepare their fusion dance routines, will they stick with the same music or find new music to perform to?
8. Finally, have each new group perform their unique cultural fusion dance in front of the entire class and encourage them to use music to enhance their performances.
9. After all the performances, take a moment to discuss the experience with the children. Ask them how they felt dancing different cultural styles, what they learned about the various dances and cultures, and how embracing diversity can lead to exciting and unique creations.
10. Conclude the activity by reminding your class of the importance of cultural appreciation, creativity, and self-confidence, just like the themes explored in “Havana Hop.”

FUN FACT

Hip-hop is a cultural movement that exploded in the early 1970s in the Bronx, New York. It draws upon the dance, poetry, visual art, and social and political legacy of African, African American, Caribbean, and Latino immigrant communities in the United States.



Reflection Questions:

- What was your favorite part of the “Cultural Fusion Dance-Off” activity, and why?
- How did it feel to learn and perform different cultural dance styles? Did you discover any new dance moves or styles that you enjoyed?
- When you were part of a new group for the fusion dance routine, what was the most challenging part, and how did your group overcome it?
- Did you notice any similarities or connections between the different cultural dance styles you learned? Were there any surprising elements that you found in common?
- What did you learn about the importance of cultural appreciation and diversity through this activity? How can embracing different cultures enrich our lives and creative experiences?

Suggested Educational Resources:

READING

Grandma’s Records by Eric Velasquez. Martina,
Martina, the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale by Carmen Agra Deedy, illustrated by Michael Austin.
The Family Book by Todd Parr.

CHILDREN’S BOOKS ON CUBA

All Around the World: Cuba, by Joanne Mattern (grades 2-5)
If You Were Me and Lived in... Cuba: A Child’s Introduction to Culture Around the World by Carole P. Roman, illustrated by Kelsea Wierenga (grades K-3)
Let’s Explore Cuba by Walt K. Moon (grades PreK-2)
Vámonos: Havana by Patty Rodriguez & Ariana Stein, illustrated by Ana Godinez (grades PreK-K)

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