The background features a vibrant rainbow with vertical stripes. Several thick, curved lines of rainbow colors (blue, green, yellow, orange, red) sweep across the scene from the top. In the foreground, there are rolling green hills. On these hills, there are small, dark silhouettes of houses and trees. A tiny figure of a person is walking on one of the hills. The overall style is whimsical and colorful.

# FINIAN'S RAINBOW

## EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

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[FINIANSONBROADWAY.COM](http://FINIANSONBROADWAY.COM)

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# FINIAN'S RAINBOW

MUSIC BY BURTON LANE  
BOOK & LYRICS BY YIP HARBURG  
BOOK BY FRED SAIDY

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## EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

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© Joan Marcus

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# INTRODUCTION

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

### Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the *Finian's Rainbow* Educational Guide. These materials can serve as a catalyst for educational enrichment beyond the performance.

Inside this resource you'll find a variety of activities that may either stand alone or work in sequence as a unit of study. Feel free to photocopy pages from this guide to distribute to your students. We have structured the guide into three sections: Before the Show, After the Show, and Resources.

The first section, **Before the Show**, provides information about the production, some historical background, and other show-related information. The second section, **After the Show**, features activities and discussion topics to explore *Finian's Rainbow's* content in your classroom. Finally, the **Resources** section provides information for delving deeper into the world of *Finian's Rainbow* with websites, videos, and more.

We hope this guide will inspire your students to further explore issues of community, segregation, and cultural celebration. Enjoy the Show!





# BEFORE THE SHOW

## ABOUT THE SHOW



# BASIC PLOT SYNOPSIS

**Before attending the show, read the plot synopsis aloud to your students. Have your students brainstorm ideas about how the story will be enacted live onstage including the “magic” moments. Have them then create a list of predictions and hold onto them. After the show, revisit these lists and see what comparisons emerge.**

This whimsical magical fable-with-a-social-conscience takes place in the mythical state of Missitucky, USA, in a community called Rainbow Valley. Rainbow Valley is special because the owners, Woody Mahoney and his mute sister, Susan, who “talks” with her feet by dancing, share the work and the land with an interracial, tight-knit community of sharecroppers.

As the tale begins we learn that a spirited Irishman, Finian McLonergan, along with his daughter, Sharon, (and followed by a leprechaun named Og) have traveled from Glocca Morra, Ireland to Rainbow Valley. Finian, it turns out, has “borrowed” Og’s crock of gold to plant in the soil near Fort Knox so it will grow and make him rich. But Og wants it back, for without it, all the Glocca Morra leprechauns will lose their magic powers and the crock of gold, which grants wishes, will turn to dross. The McLonergans arrive just as Buzz, a stooge for racist Senator Rawkins, is trying to take the sharecroppers’ land away for inability to pay back taxes. Luckily, Woody gets home from the city with money to pay the taxes. Unluckily, he is sixty-five dollars short! Sharon, who is hiding in a tree, is touched by the community’s plight and throws down a shower of bills to save the day.

A highly original story unfolds, at once sentimental, magical and satirical. Woody and Sharon fall in love as Finian secretly buries the crock. The Senator is about to throw all the citizens of Rainbow Valley off their land for violating his “law of the south,” namely: whites and blacks cannot work or live side by side. Sharon is outraged, and wishes that the Senator could be black and feel the terrible pain of racism. Because – without knowing it – she is standing over the buried crock, it happens! The Senator turns black – the crowd is stunned – he is horrified, and runs off into the forest to hide.

The sharecroppers learn there is gold in Rainbow Valley – though no one except Finian knows where it is. Assuming they will all be rich, they crazily order everything they’ve ever wanted with their newly-available line of credit. Susan the Silent enters, alone. As she dances in the forest, magic seems to draw her to the place where Finian has buried the gold. She digs it up. Amazed and enchanted, she dances away, taking the crock with her. As she dances off, Og enters, and soon after, a hungry, lonely, frightened black Senator stumbles onstage. Og casts a spell to cure the Senator of his bigotry!

At Sharon and Woody’s wedding, the Sheriff arrives and takes them to jail for the crime of changing the senator from a white man to a black one. Finian knows that he can, by making a wish over the crock, turn the senator white again, and believes that all will soon be right with the world. But when he goes to dig up the crock, he discovers that it is missing – carried off by Susan in her mad dance.

Just before dawn the next morning, Og discovers Susan sitting over the crock. He falls madly in love with her and sings, “When I’m Not Near the Girl I Love.” Meanwhile, Sharon, accused of witchcraft for turning Rawkins black, is about to face execution. But at the last minute, there are happy endings for all: Og discovers the crock and uses it to set things right; Sharon and Woody marry; the Senator discovers his humanity; Susan gains the power to speak; she and

Og are a happy couple and Finian goes on his way, taking his rainbow of hope to others who need it.

Classic songs from *Finian’s Rainbow* include: “How Are Things in Glocca Morra?,” “Old Devil Moon,” “When the Idle Poor Become the Idle Rich,” “When I’m Not Near the Girl I Love,” “Look to the Rainbow,” “Necessity,” “Something Sort of Grandish,” “That Great Come-and-Get-It Day,” “If This Isn’t Love” and “The Begat.”

**In preparation for your visit to see *Finian’s Rainbow*, have your students use the internet to visit the official website for the Broadway production and peruse production pictures, videos and more at [www.finiansonbroadway.com](http://www.finiansonbroadway.com).**





# CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

**FINIAN McLONERGAN** – A wily dreamer and fanciful philosopher from Ireland

**SHARON McLONERGAN** – Finian’s loving and long-suffering daughter

**WOODY MAHONEY** – Idealistic and charismatic Rainbow Valley landowner

**SUSAN MAHONEY** – Woody’s sister who speaks through dance or “foot talk”

**OG** – A leprechaun who is turning mortal

**SENATOR RAWKINS** – The man who is trying to take control of the land in Rainbow Valley; he knows how to play the game because he wrote the rules

**BILL** – Senator Rawkins, once he is turned black by Sharon’s wish

**BUZZ COLLINS** – Stooze for Senator Rawkins

**SHERIFF** – The town’s sheriff who does everything he can to enforce Rawkins’ law

**SUNNY** – The harmonica-playing musical town crier

**DOTTIE** – The unofficial “mayor” of Rainbow Valley; mother of Henry

**HENRY** – Dottie’s ten-year-old son who interprets Susan’s “foot talk”

**DIANA** – A ten-year-old girl, Henry’s best friend; she believes in make-believe

**HOWARD** – A determined, young black man who has worked his way through three years of college but needs the money to finish

## ADDITIONAL TOWNSFOLK AND SHARECROPPERS

# ABOUT THE WRITERS

## BURTON LANE

(Music) (1912–1997)

began his career in the late 1920s as a song plugger in Tin Pan Alley and, over the years, collaborated with a notable collection of lyricists (including Yip Harburg, Alan Jay Lerner, Ira Gershwin, and Frank Loesser) to become one of America's most distinguished composers of popular music. A good deal of his career was spent in Hollywood where he composed songs for over 45 films, including *Royal Wedding*, in which Fred Astaire famously danced on the ceiling to Lane's "You're All the World to Me." He is also credited with discovering the 11-year-old Frances Gumm, later better known as Judy Garland. In addition to *Finian's Rainbow*, his Broadway scores include *Three's a Crowd*, Earl Carroll's *Vanities* (1931), *Hold Onto Your Hats*, *Laffing Room Only*, *Carmelina*, and *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*.

## YIP HARBURG

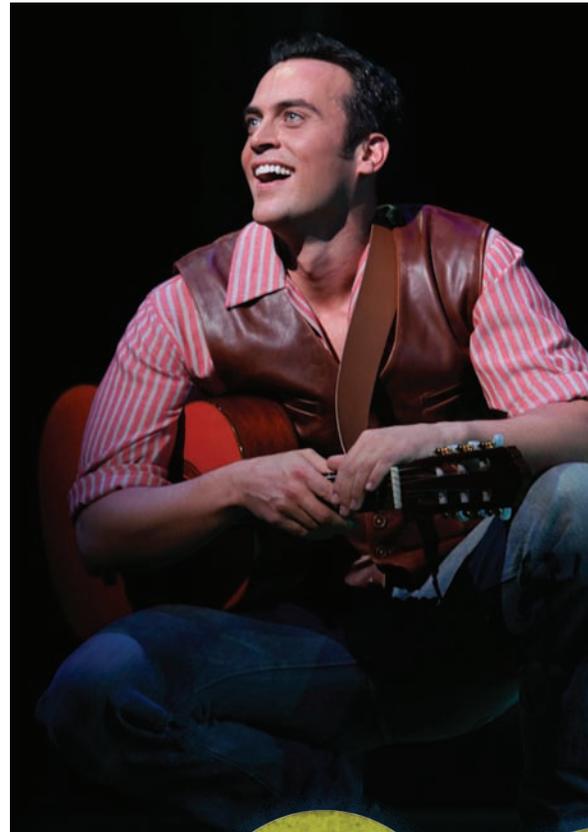
(Book & Lyrics) (1896–1981)

is one of America's greatest lyricists for stage and screen, Harburg was the son of poor Russian–Jewish immigrants and attended CCNY. Also a bookwriter (usually with Fred Saily), director and poet; Harburg wrote lyrics for over 550 songs, including "It's Only a Paper Moon" (with Harold Arlen), "April in Paris" (with Vernon Duke), and "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" (with Jay Gorney). His landmark musicals were *Bloomer Girl* (with Arlen) and *Finian's Rainbow* (with Burton Lane). Yip was final script editor and wrote lyrics and continuity for the universally beloved film, *The Wizard of Oz*.

## FRED SAIDY

(Book) (1907–1982)

was born in Los Angeles and educated in New York where he studied journalism at NYU. He began his theatrical career writing screenplays, including *Star Spangled Rhythm*, *Meet the People* and the Red Skelton comedy, *I Dood It*. With Yip Harburg, Mr. Saily also wrote the books for the Broadway musicals *Bloomer Girl*, *Flahooley*, *Jamaica* and *The Happiest Girl in the World*. In 1968 he wrote the screenplay for the film adaptation of *Finian's Rainbow*.



# PRODUCTION HISTORY OF THE SHOW



*Finian's Rainbow* first opened on Broadway January 10, 1947, and ran for a successful 725 performances. This award-winning production earned four Tony Awards including the first time ever awarded "Best Featured Actor in a Musical" (David Wayne for his portrayal of "Og"). Subsequently, two revivals of the show have been produced on Broadway in 1955 and 1960. A film version was produced in 1968 starring Fred Astaire, Tommy Steele and Petula Clark. Most recently, the Irish Repertory Theatre produced a notable production of the show Off-Broadway in 2004. However, it's been over forty years since the last Broadway revival of the show. This particular production began as a concert version, which was performed as part of the New York City Center's Encores! series.

## VOCABULARY FROM *FINIAN'S RAINBOW*

**BEGAT** – (past tense of "beget") To father; to cause; produce as an effect

**BOURGEOISIE** – The middle class as opposed to the aristocracy or the laboring class

**BROMO-SELTZER** – An antacid; used in preventing, neutralizing, or counteracting acidity of the stomach

**BUREAUCRATS** – An official who works by fixed routine often without exercising intelligent judgment

**FEDERAL RESERVE** – The central banking system of the United States

**FILIBUSTER** – Obstructionist tactics, such as a long speech, for the purpose of delaying or preventing legislative action

**FREE ENTERPRISE** – The freedom of private business to operate competitively with minimal government regulation

**JULEP** – A sweet drink, variously prepared and sometimes medicated

**LEPRECHAUN** – An "elf" of Irish folklore

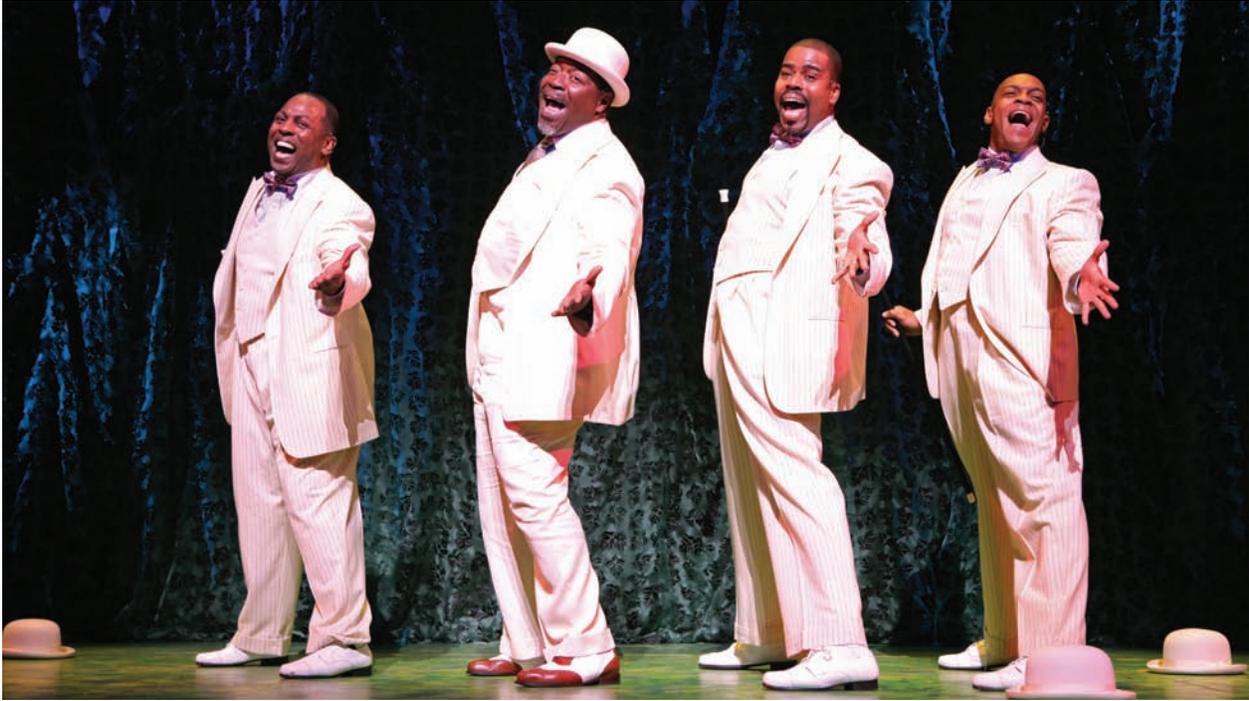
**POLL TAX** – A tax imposed as a requirement for voting

**SATIRE** – Irony, sarcasm, or caustic wit used to comment on, attack, or expose perceived vice or stupidity

**SHARECROPPER** – A tenant farmer who gives a share of his or her crop to the landlord as rent

**YANKEE** – A native or inhabitant of a Northern state

## IMPORTANT IDEAS IN THE SHOW



### SHARECROPPERS OF THE SOUTH

*Read the following article aloud to your class to provide your students with relevant historical background information.*

After the hard-fought victory of the Civil War (1864), blacks were free to leave the farms and plantations where they had been enslaved. However, for the most part, the ex-slaves had no education, and no prospect of attaining food, shelter or clothing. Because of this, farm owners were able to lure former slaves back onto the plantations under the guise of an alternative agreement: sharecropping.

Sharecropping, or tenant farming, was a deal between farmhands and plantation owners that allowed the farmhands to cultivate the land in exchange for sharing the income from the harvest, typically split 50-50. But the farmhands had no money to start with. Plantation owners supplied the sharecroppers with

seed, animals, equipment, food and shelter on credit, to be deducted at the end of the season when the crop was sold. But the sharecroppers were unsophisticated and easily cheated, and each year they were told that they were further and further in debt to the plantation owners. Unable to get out from under the yoke of this debt, the sharecroppers became, in effect, slaves to the plantation owners all over again, long after slavery itself had been outlawed.

Sharecropping became a common practice and there were over 775,000 sharecroppers at the height of its popularity. A decline in sharecropping began in the 1930s with The Great Depression and dropped steadily throughout World War II. Finally, the biggest decline of sharecropping was brought about by industrial developments, such as the production of the cotton gin, seeding machines and harvesting tractors, which could do the work of dozens of men. Machinery helped to increase productivity while it decreased the

need for farmhands. Simultaneously, the development of machinery created a need for factory labor in the North, and hundreds of thousands of former sharecroppers migrated to cities like Chicago, Pittsburgh and Detroit to become factory workers.

Today, a positive version of sharecropping can still be found throughout the United States in the form of “cooperative farming.” This involves small numbers of farmers and dairymen who work together in order to make group arrangements to manage sales of their crops. Cooperative farming provides a system for collective bargaining and the bulk purchasing of seeds, supplies and equipment. The sharecroppers of Rainbow Valley were early examples of this cooperative community.

## RAINBOWS

*Rainbow* - an arc of colored light caused by the sun's rays

A rainbow is essentially sunlight shining through water. Raindrops bend the sunlight creating an arc. While sunlight looks white to humans, it's actually made up of seven colors the human eye can see (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet). When rays of sunlight are bent the colors spread out and become visible.

To see a rainbow after a storm, remember the sun must be behind you; look in the direction where the sunlight is shining.

Rainbows are also considered symbols of hope and joy, and are for this reason often used by poets, songwriters, and storytellers to communicate the beauty of life.

## LEPRECHAUNS

Familiar in Irish folklore, a leprechaun or “Irish elf” is a small, male magical creature who is typically no larger than a small child and often clad in a green

coat. While they are thought to be shoemakers or cobblers by trade, today they are more known for being guardians of ancient treasures including pots of gold.

Rumor has it that if a leprechaun is ever caught by a human he will offer them riches if he is allowed to go free. But beware; these riches often turn to dust the moment the leprechaun has vanished.





# AFTER THE SHOW

# IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM EXPLORATION

After seeing *Finian's Rainbow*, use the following discussion prompts to debrief the themes, characters and context of the show. These prompts may also be used as essay topics.

## ARTS & SYMBOLISM

1. The original Broadway production of *Finian's Rainbow* opened in 1947, just after World War II. Over sixty years later, why do you think the musical is being revived? Is it still culturally relevant? Why, or why not?
2. At the end of the play, Finian follows his rainbow and leaves Rainbow Valley to continue his journey. Where do you think he goes? Who might he encounter? What do you think happens after the curtain falls?

## HOME & COMMUNITY

3. Rainbow Valley is a community with people of various backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. How do these diverse citizens get along? Thinking about your own school, what are some ways students and faculty members work together? What could be done to strengthen your school community?
4. Finian and Sharon emigrate from Ireland to Missitucky (USA) with hopes of a better future. How do they define home in a new country? What challenges do they face? How do they handle those challenges? What challenges are different for them than people immigrating to the United States today? How would you handle the challenges of today?

## COMMUNICATION

5. Susan the Silent uses dance, or "foot talk," to communicate. This is unusual, but it is not unusual to communicate nonverbally. What are some non-verbal ways you communicate each day? Do

you use signals in your classroom? Thinking about your daily routine, what other signals do you use?

## UTOPIA

6. *Finian's Rainbow* explores the idea of utopian dreams in a realistic world. If you had to create a utopian world (a perfect world), what would you change? Think about food, climate, money, government, people, clothes, etc. Is it possible to make some of these changes reality? Why, or why not?

## HOPES & DREAMS

7. The crock of gold possesses the power to grant mortals three wishes. If you had the crock, what would you wish for? Would your wishes be materialistic or otherwise? Why are these wishes important to you?
8. Finian stole the leprechauns' crock of gold and emigrated from Ireland with his daughter in hopes that he could find a way to multiply his gold. Did he go too far to pursue his dreams of a better life? Is there such a thing as an impractical dreamer? To what extent would you go to achieve your goal?
9. Dottie, one of the sharecroppers, says: "There's want to and got to. And you can want all you want but if you don't got the got, you gotta find a way t'git it. Git it?" What does all this mean? Does it relate to the wants and needs in your own life? How do they compare to that of the sharecroppers in the musical?





## POWER

10. By stealing the leprechauns' crock of gold, Finian has caused them (including Og) to lose their magical powers, transforming them into mere mortals. Additionally, Og claims he may have put Ireland in danger. Do you believe Finian's choice to take the gold and keep it away from Og was right? Why, or why not? Can it ever be moral to steal something for the greater good?

## RACIAL TOLERANCE

11. Sharon's wish turns the racist Senator Rawkins black. Do you think changing the color of his skin helped to change his perspective? If so, how? If not, what changed the Senator's feelings about race?
12. In the original Broadway production of *Finian's Rainbow* (1947), the performer playing the Senator

would continue the show in "blackface" after his transformation. In this Broadway revival, another performer who is of color replaces the actor onstage. Why do you think this production choice was made? What does this say about the time period the show initially debuted in versus today?

## LIVING BEYOND YOUR MEANS

13. When a credit line is opened up for the community, they buy more than they could ever afford in tools and resources. When the collectors come for their payment, they threaten to take everything back unless they can produce the necessary payment. Do you think they acted responsibly in buying all these items, even if it benefited the community? How does this relate to today? What are some responsible ways to handle your money (or credit)?

# HOW ARE THINGS IN GLOCCA MORRA? – COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

## A. BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF BIGOTRY

Finian and Sharon take a stand against the Senator in the name of equality. Ask your students to read the adjacent scene from *Finian's Rainbow*. After reading, open up a dialogue with your students by using the following discussion prompts:

1. What are your immediate reactions to the scene?
2. How do Howard and Sharon react to Senator Rawkins' comments? Do you agree or disagree?
3. What are some possible reasons the Senator would make those comments?
4. What is the Constitution and what does it actually say about equality?

Next, have your students research the Constitution, specifically the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments, and what the laws were in 1947 in the South.

Once they have this new information, have them re-read the scene and have another discussion.

1. What is the Constitution and what does it actually say about equality?
2. Rawkins was defending what principles?
3. Why do you feel these laws were challenged and eventually overturned?

Ask your students to write a letter to Howard, Sharon or the Senator addressing this conflict. This can be a letter of support, encouragement or guidance. Students should illuminate their perspectives and provide constructive ideas for how to positively move forward.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

NL-ENG.K-12.1: Reading for Perspective

NL-ENG.K-12.2: Understanding the Human Experience

NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills

NA-T.9-12.7: Analyzing, Critiquing, and Constructing Meaning

## (Excerpt from *Finian's Rainbow*)

### SENATOR RAWKINS

You've been violatin' the law here.

### FINIAN

What law is that?

### SENATOR RAWKINS

The law of the South, forbiddin' certain kinds of people, namely them...

*(Points to the BLACKS.)*

... from buildin' homes next to certain other kinds of people, namely us.

Depreciates property values.

### HOWARD

Depreciates, huh?

*(HOWARD moves toward SENATOR RAWKINS but DOTTIE holds him back.)*

### SHARON

At Immigration, they gave me a wee book: The United States Constitution. Haven't you ever read it?

### SENATOR RAWKINS

I haven't got time to read it! I'm too busy defendin' it! I wish I could make you people understand our culture!

### SHARON

Do you mean to say you're taking this land from these people merely because they're black?

### SENATOR RAWKINS

It's not my fault they're the wrong color.

## B. I AM FROM... POEMS

Although the residents of Rainbow Valley all come from unique backgrounds, they have found a way to become a community despite their differences. Create this sense of community in your classroom by having students write poems about themselves that they can share with their classmates. Have your students take out a pen or pencil, a sheet of paper and answer the following questions:

1. What is your heritage?
2. What is your family like?
3. Who is your favorite relative?
4. What traditions do you like to share?
5. What is your biggest dream?
6. What is your biggest achievement?
7. How are you and your classmates similar?
8. What activities do you like to do with your classmates?
9. What qualities in your classmates inspire you?

Now ask students to craft their answers together in any order and way they choose to form a poem. Have them begin each stanza with "I am..." or "We are..." Give students time to mold and refine their poems. Once completed, have volunteers read their poems aloud for the rest of the class.

### EXAMPLE

*I am Dominican. A proud Dominican man  
I am a big brother to a Presilah  
I am the one to watch her grow  
I am filling her needs to keep her healthy.  
I am strong enough to do it for everyone.*

*We will continue to strive and push each other to learn.  
We will laugh as we work together  
We will all help the world together in my hospital.  
We will.*

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies  
NL-ENG.K-12.6: Applying Knowledge  
NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills  
NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing*



# THE BEGAT – MAKING SENSE OF SATIRE

**Satire - Irony, sarcasm, or caustic wit used to comment on, attack, or expose perceived vice or stupidity.**

## A. WHAT ARE THEY REALLY SAYING?

Throughout *Finian's Rainbow*, satire is used to make political statements, which are blanketed by comedy. But what are the historical connections to the jokes? Have different volunteers from your class read the following quotes from the show. After each quote, use the prompt questions to help your students decode the humor.

### FINIAN

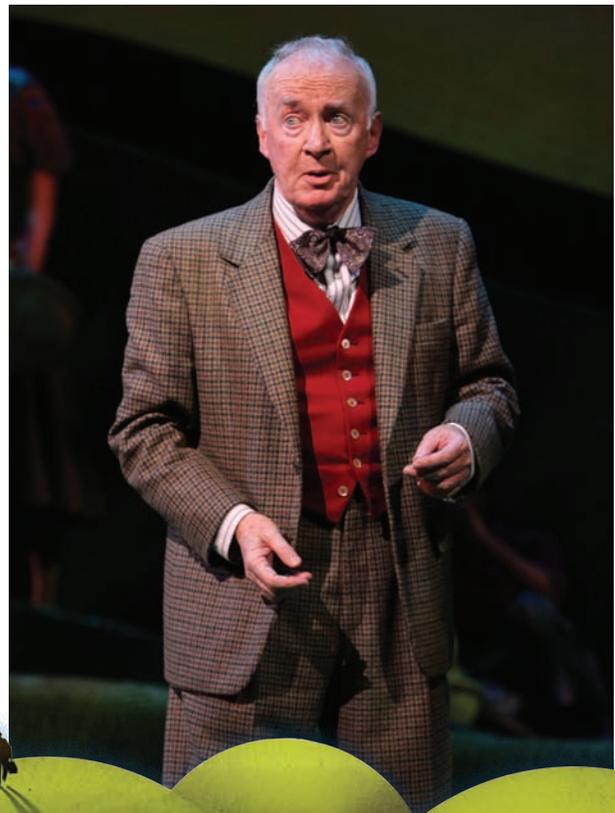
“The peculiar nature of the soil in and about Fort Knox brings a magical quality to the gold, causing the gold to radiate a powerful influence throughout America. It fertilizes the oranges in Florida, activates the assembly lines in Detroit, causes skyscrapers to sprout from the gutters of New York – and produces a bumper crop of millionaires.”

1. What is Finian saying here? How does he use metaphor and imagery? What makes the use of these images so powerful?
2. What makes all those things happen in reality? What is Finian missing? (Answer – hard work!)
3. Let your students know that Fort Knox had another name... the United States Bullion Depository. It stored the United States official gold reserves and other valuable items for the federal government. For more information visit: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/fort-knox-depository.htm>
4. Now knowing that piece of information, does the quote's meaning change? What's the joke?

### SENATOR RAWKINS

“Gentlemen, the festering tides of radicalism are upon us! [...] Back, you crackpots and forward, America! Forward to the hallowed principles of our forefathers! Forward to the sweet tranquility of the status quo! Forward to yesterday!”

1. What is the Senator saying? (If you are having trouble figuring it out, try rereading the last two lines.)
2. Where does the Senator think the “festering tides of radicalism” are coming from?
3. What does this tell us about Senator Rawkins' perception of the world?
4. Why would this be considered satire?
5. How does the Senator use opposites? Can you think of other opposites? (“shrink as you grow” or “starve while you eat”) Can these opposites ever make sense? When? How?



## B. SENSATIONAL SATIRE

What do Saturday Night Live, The Daily Show, The Simpsons, and Mad Magazine all have in common? They're all rooted in satire!

Satire often can make a stronger point than a straightforward argument. If a person states one thing while meaning another, they are making an argument by exaggerating the opposite.

The newspaper, The Onion, does this exact thing with both humorous and thought-provoking results. Visit [www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com) and print a few satirical news stories that are age-appropriate and topically interesting to your students. Have them read and discuss them to gain a more complete understanding of the use of satire.

Then, with you in-role as a magazine editor and your students in-role as writers, have your students form a writing team to put together a publication of the most sensational satire. Here's all you need to do:

1. Discuss and list examples of various satirical techniques (i.e. exaggeration, irony, sarcasm, etc.).
2. Assign pairs of writers a topic for their article (i.e. global warming, pollution, poverty, bullying, etc.).
3. Have them brainstorm ideas on how to use the satirical techniques to slant the writing of their story.
4. Have them identify the audience for their story (i.e. fellow students, teachers, parents, etc.).
5. Have them write the story and turn it into the editor (you).
6. After you have had a chance to read the stories to make sure they are suitable for publication, put them all in a collection and distribute them as a newspaper or magazine.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.3: Evaluation Strategies*

*NL-ENG.K-12.8: Developing Research Skills*

*NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skill*

*NSS-USH.9-12.10: Era 10: Contemporary United States*

*NA-T.9-12.5: Researching by Finding Information*

## TAKING IT FURTHER – POLITICAL CARTOONING

Encourage some of your students to master the art of satire through the creation of their own political cartoon to add to your newspaper or magazine. Bring in an example of a political cartoon taken from your local newspaper (be sure that it is developmentally appropriate for your students). Ask students to identify what they see. Next, ask them to identify the message of the cartoon.

Now have your students try their hand at political cartooning by creating a cartoon that connects to their story (from Sensational Satire) or a new topic of their choice. Remind them to decide on what type of character(s) will help them make a persuasive argument. These could be human, animals or otherwise.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies*

*NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills*

*NSS-USH.9-12.10: Era 10: Contemporary United States*

*NA-VA.9-12.4: Understanding the Visual Arts in Relation to History and Culture*



# LOOK TO THE RAINBOW – DREAMS OF HOPE, HOME AND THE HEART

## A. WHERE'S YOUR RAINBOW?

Rainbows are considered symbols of hope and joy, and are for this reason often used by poets, song-writers, and storytellers to communicate the beauty of life.

In *Finian's Rainbow*, the rainbow represents a variety of meanings such as a touchstone (personal item of significance), a place of comfort, or a warm memory. Using magazines, newspapers and pictures, have students create a collage of the pictures that represent their rainbow (i.e. touchstones, families, or comforting memories). Be sure they include a description on the back of the collage indicating the rationale for their choices. (Collages are a great way to showcase your students' work on a class bulletin board!)

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.9: Multicultural Understanding*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills*  
*NA-VA.9-12.6: Making Connections between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines*

## B. LOVE IS ALL AROUND

Love is abundant in Rainbow Valley! Woody and Sharon's connection, Og's romantic encounters, and Finian's affection for his daughter all illuminate different types of love. Ask your students what types of love they saw in the show. Are there other kinds?

Get a copy of the CD of *Finian's Rainbow* and play one of the love songs for the students. What makes it a love song? What instruments make up the orchestrations? What are the lyrics telling the listener? Why do individuals use songs, art, dance, or poems to express love?

Have your students write a poem or essay about

something or someone they love. Have them think about whom they are talking to and what it is they ultimately want to say. Once completed, see if any volunteers would like to share their poems.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.4: Communication Skills*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.6: Applying Knowledge*  
*NA-T.9-12.1: Script Writing*  
*NA-M.9-12.9: Understanding Music through History and Culture*

## C. LOOK TO THE RAINBOW PROJECT

There are rainbows everywhere, if you just take time to look at a soap bubble floating on the breeze, a brilliant sunset, a flower vendor's wares, or the rainbow that you "see in your own true love's eyes!"

Find the rainbows in your world, take pictures and upload them to Flickr ([www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)) with the tag "looktotherainbow." For some examples from fellow *Finian's Rainbow* fans, check out the website: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/looktotherainbow/>.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR LEARNING:

*NL-ENG.K-12.4: Communication Skills*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.5: Communication Strategies*  
*NL-ENG.K-12.12: Applying Language Skills*  
*NA-VA.9-12.6: Making Connections between Visual Arts and Other Disciplines*  
*NT.K-12.2: Social, Ethical and Human Issues*  
*NT.K-12.3: Technology Productivity Tools*  
*NT.K-12.4: Technology Communication Tools*

## PRODUCTION BASED WEBSITES

[www.finiansonbroadway.com](http://www.finiansonbroadway.com) – The official website for the Broadway production of *Finian's Rainbow*.

[www.flickr.com/photos/tags/looktotherainbow/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/looktotherainbow/) – The “Look to the Rainbow” Project link.

[www.itheatrics.com](http://www.itheatrics.com) – Official website for iTheatrics, music theatre education consultants.

## VIDEO / DVD

*Finian's Rainbow* (Warner Home Video, 2005)

## RECORDINGS

*Finian's Rainbow (Broadway Cast Recording)*. (2010). New York: PS Classics.

*Finian's Rainbow (1947 Original Broadway Cast) (Original Recording Remastered)* (Sony Records, 2000)

*Finian's Rainbow (Irish Repertory Theatre Cast)* (Sh-K Boom Records, 2004)

## TEXTS

*Cry from the Cotton: The Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the New Deal* by Donald H. Grubbs (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971)

*Reporting Civil Rights: American Journalism 1941-1963* edited by Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Bill Kovach, and Carol Polsgrove (Library of America, 2003)

*Rhymes for the Irreverent* by Yip Harburg (Harburg Foundation, 2006)

*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor (Puffin, 1991)

*The Economics of Life: From Baseball to Affirmative Action to Immigration, How Real World Issues Affect Our Everyday Lives* by Gary S. Becker and Guity Nashat Becker (McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997)

*There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights, 1945-1975* by Jason Sokol (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2006)

# RESOURCES

## **ITHEATRICS IS DEDICATED TO INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH FOUR DISTINCT AVENUES:**

### **DEVELOPING NEW MUSICAL THEATRE**

iTheatrics is committed to quality family musical theatre. Through its partnership with Work Light Productions, iTheatrics has served as the creative team on several national tours, including *The Musical Adventures of Flat Stanley*, *A Year With Frog and Toad* and *The Ant and The Elephant*. In collaboration with the Jim Henson Company, iTheatrics developed the stage version of *Emmet Otter*. Together with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Sheldon Harnick and Norton Juster, iTheatrics adapted the classic children's novel *The Phantom Tollbooth* for the stage. Future professional theatre projects include the adaptation of Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*.

### **CREATING TEACHER/STUDENT RESOURCES**

iTheatrics consults in the areas of family theatre with Music Theatre International (MTI) and Disney Theatrical Productions to adapt Broadway titles for elementary, middle and high school students, which includes the creation of shows for educational markets, as well as the design of theatre resources for teachers. At its New York City headquarters, the iTheatrics team has developed adaptations and educational materials for over 30 titles, including *RENT School Edition*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast JR.* and Roald Dahl's *Willy Wonka KIDS*.

iTheatrics also works closely with TypeA Marketing and other organizations to create quality Educational Guides and resources for Broadway and touring productions. These shows include: *Thurgood*; *Little House on the Prairie, the Musical*; *Memphis*; *Finian's Rainbow*; and *The Miracle Worker*.

### **BUILDING SUSTAINABLE MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAMS**

iTheatrics offers workshops that empower teachers and students to use their artistic sensibility to create arts-infused environments in their classroom and community. In association with MTI, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, New York City's Department of Education, The Shubert Foundation, and countless performing arts centers, iTheatrics is implementing programs which build sustainable arts programs in public schools across the country.

### **CELEBRATING YOUNG ARTISTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

Each year, in partnership with Theater of the Stars, iTheatrics presents the Junior Theater Festival, the world's largest festival dedicated to young people involved in musical theatre. Since 2003, this festival has inspired thousands of children, and continues to grow.

# **ABOUT iTHEATRICS**





# **FINIAN'S RAINBOW**

## **EDUCATIONAL GUIDE**

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**FINIANSONBROADWAY.COM**

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