

# WU?<sup>@</sup>therep

## YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman Directed by Steven Woolf

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# the 11

At The Rep, we know that life moves fast—okay, really fast. But we also know that some things are worth slowing down

for. We believe that live theatre is one of those pit stops worth making and are excited that you are going to stop by for a show. To help you get the most bang for your buck, we have put together **WU? @ THE REP**—an IM guide that will give you everything you need to know to get at the top of your theatergoing game—fast. You'll find character descriptions (**A/S/L**), a plot summary (**FYI**), biographical information (**F2F**), historical context (**B4U**), and other bits and pieces (**HTH**). Most importantly, we'll have some ideas about what this all means **IRL**, anyway.

## CU@therep!



### The Teacher's Lounge

In an effort to make our educational materials more accessible to students and easier for educators to incorporate into the classroom, our study guide is written in a student-oriented format. We hope that you will circulate this guide among your students in the weeks preceding your visit to The Rep, encouraging them to browse it before and after class and as time allows, using it as a launch point for both pre- and post-performance discussions. You may also want to visit our website, [www.repstl.org](http://www.repstl.org), for additional information including educational games, activity suggestions and behind-the-scenes information. Any materials, either from this guide or from our website may be reproduced for use in the classroom. As always, we appreciate your making live theatre a part of your classroom experience and welcome your feedback and questions.

**NEATO!**

Show Me Standards: CA 2, 3, 5, 7; FA 2, 3, 4, 5; SS 2, 6  
and Illinois Learning Standards: 1, 2, 5, 15, 16, 18, 25, 27.

## WELCOME!

The desire to learn, insatiable when awakened, can sometimes lie dormant until touched by the right teacher or the right experience. We at The Rep are grateful to have the opportunity to play a role supporting you as you awaken the desire for learning in your students.

Hart and Kaufman's *You Can't Take It With You* immediately immerses the audience in a crazed world of eccentric characters who are out of step with those around them. What high school student can't identify with that? At an age when they are realizing you can't march to your own drummer until you know what the drummer is playing, this play lets your students explore how important or tragic being different really is. In the B4U feature in this study guide, we learn that in comedy, everybody can end up together with a new awareness of those around them. Tony Kushner has said that we are most open to seeing new ideas when we are laughing. This play will certainly bring those new ideas and give your students plenty of opportunities to open themselves to awareness through laughter.

It would be a good idea to take a minute on the bus to give your students these quick theatre etiquette reminders:

- This show has an intermission; there will be time for bathroom breaks before the show and partway through.
- The actors can hear the audience and appreciate the laughter, gasps and quiet attention to action. However, talking, moving around and eating is very distracting to others and can dampen the energy of what is happening on stage.
- Pictures, phone calls and texting are not allowed at any time during the performance.

Live theatre won't allow your students to take a passive role—they must work with us to create the experience which takes the learning deeper. Our unique ability to fuse words and images onstage allows your students to explore new ideas as well as excites their imaginations. We will do our part so your students will be stirred to understandings and self-awareness while delving into new and familiar worlds. You are doing your part by using The Rep to extend your intellectual and aesthetic curriculum. Thank you!

*Marsha*

Marsha Coplon, Director of Education

# A/S/L

The head of an eccentric household, GRANDPA MARTIN VANDERHOF can explain all of the idiosyncrasies of his family by revealing his simple core philosophy—do only what you enjoy in life and nothing else.

Resident playwright and painter PENELOPE SYCAMORE (aka PENNY) is the daughter of Grandpa and mother to Essie and Alice. While Penny's intentions are always good, she can be a bit overbearing and meddling at times.

Penny's husband PAUL SYCAMORE is a little more hands-off when it comes to meddling in the affairs of others, but watch out for his tinkering with fireworks in the basement!

ESSIE CARMICHAEL enjoys dancing and making candy. Her husband ED CARMICHAEL accompanies her on his xylophone and prints quotes for her candy boxes.

The only member of the family with a "real" job, ALICE SYCAMORE may be the closest thing to "normal" in the household. While she is sometimes a little embarrassed by all of her family's oddities, she loves them dearly and wouldn't trade them for the world.

ANTHONY KIRBY, JR., or TONY, is Alice's fiancé. He is the vice president of Kirby and Co. and comes from a very prim and proper background. Though this could lead him to find Alice's family very strange, he can't seem to get enough of them.

Do you find yourself wondering how BORIS KOLENKHOV feels? Probably not—this loud and proud Russian dance instructor doesn't mind sharing his opinions on art, world politics and whatever else strikes his fancy!

Though they may be wily, DONALD and RHEBA help keep the household in line and on track.

An ice delivery man who visited once and never left, MR. DE PINNA has become a permanent fixture in the household, helping to build fireworks and posing for paintings when necessary.

MR. and MRS. KIRBY would seem to be the model for a normal, happy family. However, there seems to be more than meets the eye with these two.

No one is quite sure what to expect when HENDERSON and the other GOVERNMENT AGENTS show up.

# SWDYT?

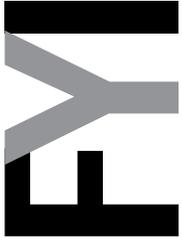
*"How many of us would be willing to settle when we're young for what we eventually get? All those plans we make ... what happens to them? It's only a handful of the lucky ones that can look back and say they even came close."*

- \* As the play draws to a close, what do you think Grandpa is attempting to express to Mr. Kirby? What is Grandpa's larger life lesson for us? Do you agree with him? What's your reasoning behind how you feel?

**ALICE:** "I love you, Tony, but I love them too! And it's no use, Tony! It's no use!"

**TONY:** "There's only one thing you've said that matters, that makes any sense at all. You love me."

- \* In this passage, Alice expresses her concern over the eccentricities of her family while Tony insists that the love he and Alice share means more than their differences. Who's right and who's wrong here? Are there valid points on either side of the argument? Who would you be in this situation, Alice or Tony?



## \*SPOILER ALERT\*

WHAT DO YOU GET when you take a living room and add a printing press, xylophone, snake case (complete with snakes), ballet studio, typewriter and firecrackers? You get an every-man-for-himself room, or the eccentric home and creative haven of Grandpa Vanderhof and his family.

AS PENNY POUNDS AWAY on her latest play, Essie is whipping up some tasty treats and the boys (Paul and Mr. De Pinna) are downstairs playing with fireworks. Ed is busy noting catchy phrases to print inside Essie's candy boxes while he taps out a Beethoven tune on the xylophone, and when Alice returns home she shares news of a visit from her fiancé, Tony Kirby.

AS ALICE DISAPPEARS upstairs to change for her date, there is a knock on the door. While everyone anticipates meeting Tony for the first time, the visitor actually ends up being an agent from the United States government. It would seem that Grandpa hasn't been paying his taxes for the last 24 years, and he insists that he won't pay them ever, as he simply doesn't believe in taxes. Before things get too unruly with the agent, he is scared away by the snakes. The agent promises, however, that this isn't the last of him or the owed taxes.

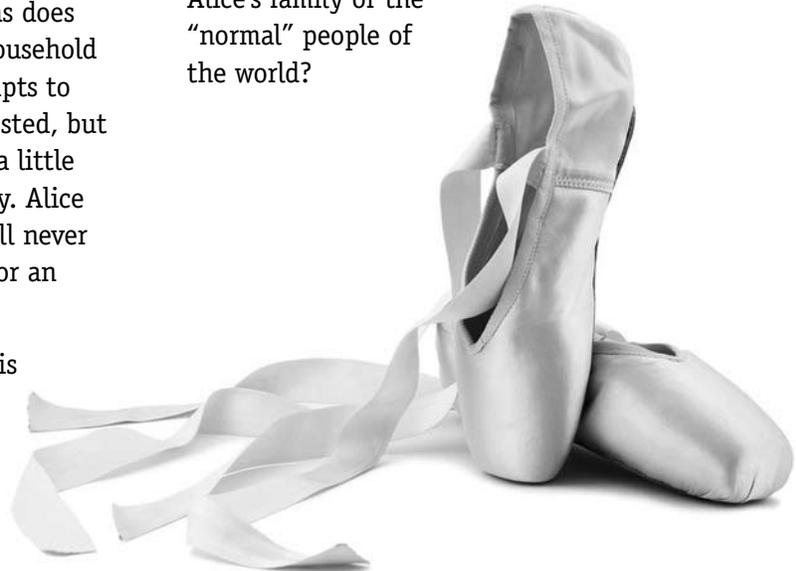
MOMENTS LATER Tony arrives (as does Boris Kolenkhov, completing the household cast of zany craziness). Alice attempts to rush back down before Tony is accosted, but they aren't able to escape without a little friendly harassment from the family. Alice is convinced that their marriage will never work, but Tony won't accept "no" for an answer.

A FEW DAYS LATER, everything is arranged for Tony's parents to visit Grandpa's house. After Alice has laid out explicit instructions for the dinner party to take place

tomorrow night, she once again disappears upstairs. As the family resumes their usual unique sets of activities (including Penny's attempt at a play reading with a drunken actor, Kolenkhov and Essie's ballet lesson with Ed's accompaniment on xylophone, Grandpa feeding snakes, and Rheba ducking in and out cleaning), Tony and his parents arrive. Apparently Tony got the date wrong and is arriving a day early!

AFTER SOME awkward chitchat and a disastrous parlor game, Mr. and Mrs. Kirby decide to go home while Tony insists on staying. Before much of an argument can ensue, federal agents burst in and arrest everyone. Apparently Ed's printings in candy boxes and the enormous amounts of gunpowder in the basement (for the fireworks Paul and De Pinna make) led the government to believe that the family is planning a terrorist attack on Washington.

THE NEXT DAY, Alice has decided she is going to leave forever as her family has finally gone too far. They have ruined her chance at true love. Despite everyone's protests (including Tony's), she cannot stay. As the Grand Duchess Olga Katrina cooks dinner for the family, Mr. Kirby comes to give Grandpa a piece of his mind. In the end, however, Grandpa reveals Mr. Kirby's unhappiness and poses the true question of the play—who are the crazy ones, Alice's family or the "normal" people of the world?





**MONASTERY:** a house for persons, especially monks or nuns, living under religious vows

**BROTHEL:** a place where men can visit prostitutes

**CALLING CARD:** a card bearing a person's name and address, sent or left in lieu of a formal social or business visit

**TROTSKY:** Leon Trotsky, a Russian revolutionary and writer

**RUSSIAN REVOLUTION:** the 1917 uprising and eventual overthrow of the government which put the Bolsheviks (or Communists) into power

**CZAR:** emperor or king; former leadership of Russia

**PESETOS:** the former basic monetary unit of Spain (replaced by the euro)

**INDICTED:** formally accused or charged with a serious crime

**SECURITIES COMMISSION:** government agency responsible for financial regulation of securities products like stocks, bonds and other notes representing financial value

**SPIRITUALISM:** a system of belief or religious practice based on supposed communication with the spirits of the dead, especially through mediums

**GAIETY:** the state of being merry or cheerful

**Dictate:** to say or read aloud for another person to type, write down or record on tape

**HELEN OF TROY:** in Greek Mythology, the beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda and wife of Menelaus; abducted by Paris, which caused the Trojan War

**MRS. ROOSEVELT:** (Anna) Eleanor Roosevelt; a US diplomat, author, lecturer and wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

**STALIN:** Joseph Stalin; the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1922-53, perhaps best known for his ruthless leadership

**FRANKFURTERS:** seasoned smoked sausages typically made of beef and pork

**SOLACE:** comfort or consolation in a time of distress or sadness

**BURLESQUE:** a variety show, typically including striptease

**COMMUNISM:** a political doctrine based on Marxian Socialism that was the official ideology of the USSR

**TRAPEZE:** a short horizontal bar hung by ropes or metal straps from a support, commonly found in circus performances





## MOSS HART

ONE OF THE best things about the theatre is the opportunity it offers to become somebody else on stage. For a man like Moss Hart, saddled by a series of hard knocks throughout his life, there was simply no career option other than being in the theater and being somebody else.

FROM THE BEGINNING, Hart had a rough way to go. In 1904, he was born into an impoverished area of New York. When his father lost his job, Hart was forced to drop out of school (when he was in 7th grade) and find work to help the family out. This harsh reality could have easily crushed Hart's spirit, but thanks to his Aunt Kate and her passion for the theatre, it didn't. She took him to performances often and exposed him to a more eccentric, creative perspective. He took his love for the theatre and hope for something better from his Aunt.

HART PATIENTLY WORKED the amateur circuit of theatre groups, directing and writing his own pieces. He finally landed his first Broadway hit in 1930 with *Once in a Lifetime* with George S. Kaufman. The pair would go on to write a number of hits over the next decade, including some of the more notable (and award-winning) plays and screenplays that either man had written.

WHILE HART CONTINUED to write plays and musicals after he and Kaufman parted in 1940, he would begin to find another calling in the theatre during the '40s—directing. His series of Broadway hits (including *Junior Miss*, *Dear Ruth* and *Anniversary Waltz*) was capped by his staging of *My Fair Lady*, which ran over seven years and earned Hart a Tony Award for Best Director. Hart is also known for his best-selling book *Act One: An Autobiography*.

THOUGH HE SPENT much of his life attempting to become somebody else, ironically he found the most success embracing who he truly was. Throughout his life, Hart battled bi-polar disorder, mania and depression. While this often created violent mood swings, it also led to some of Hart's best work as an artist. He drew from his experience with mental illness while writing the script for the musical *Lady in the Dark*. He also credited a manic high with the brilliant inspiration for his staging of *My Fair Lady*.

THROUGH HIS nine plays, four screenplays and countless directorial successes, Moss Hart was a man drawn to the theatrical allure of becoming somebody else. What he found in his success, however, was that all he ever needed to be was himself.

### In his own witty words:

"So far as I know, anything worth hearing is not usually uttered at seven o'clock in the morning; and if it is, it will generally be repeated at a more reasonable hour for a larger and more wakeful audience."

"All the mistakes I ever made were when I wanted to say 'No' and said 'Yes.'"

"Can [success] make one feel taller, more alive, handsomer, uncommonly gifted and indomitably secure...? It can and it does!"





## GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

**QUICK**—name the most influential comic American playwright of the 20th century! I'll give you some hints—he was known by all as an unmatched wit, some knew him as a critic and still others simply called him a god. His name is George S. Kaufman.

**WHILE KAUFMAN** was destined for greatness in the American theatre and cinema, his career path wasn't always clear. After graduating from high school in 1907, he took a series of odd jobs, including a failed pursuit of legal studies. He eventually settled into a career in journalism, working his way to drama editor for *The New York Times*.

**THOUGH KAUFMAN** seemed to have finally settled into a job, he still hadn't found his calling. His first foray into the theatre didn't seem too promising, as his Broadway debut, *Some One in the House*, flopped terribly. Early on, it seemed as though it might have been a good thing for him to keep his day job as an editor while moonlighting as a playwright.

**KAUFMAN FINALLY FOUND** sustained success as an artist in 1921, and once he got the ball rolling, he couldn't seem to stop. In fact, from 1921 to 1958 Broadway consistently featured a show he either wrote or directed. That's a 37-year streak! Along the way, he collected two Pulitzer Prizes (one for *You Can't Take It With You*) and a Tony Award.

**WHILE MANY WOULD** have been satisfied to dominate the American theatre, Kaufman's unyielding work ethic also brought him success in the world of film. A good portion of his work for the stage was adapted for the screen, including such hits as *Dinner at Eight*, *Stage Door* and *You Can't Take It With You*,

which won an Oscar in 1938. He also wrote scripts solely for film, most notably *A Night at the Opera*.

**HOW DID HE** achieve such success? First and foremost, he was known as one of the wittiest writers in the theatre. His razor sharp dialogue was fast and furiously funny, and the characters he painted were real and interesting. He wasn't merely a funny man with a few tricky characters, however, he was known as a master of dramatic structure—turning his (and his collaborators') visions into flawlessly executed pieces of theatre.

**WHILE HIS** work ethic and talent are intriguing, perhaps what's most interesting is that Kaufman rarely worked alone. In fact, throughout his lifetime, he had more than half a dozen different collaborators spawning over two-dozen pieces.

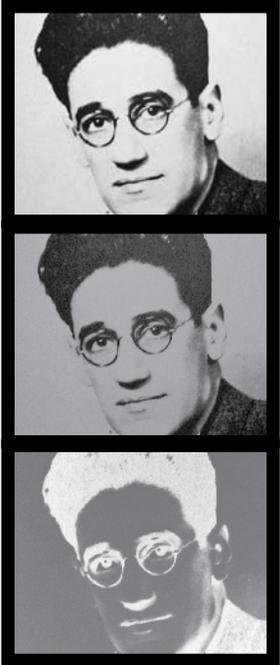
### In his own witty words:

"Office hours are from 12 to 1 with an hour off for lunch."

When hounded once by a producer for a script who insisted upon imposing a deadline of Wednesday that same week, Kaufman simply tugged at his earlobe and answered, "Do you want it Wednesday or do you want it good?"

"At dramatic rehearsals, the only author that's better than an absent one is a dead one."

Despite his sense of humor, Kaufman took his work very seriously. While he was a drama critic he was once asked by a press agent, "How do I get our leading lady's name in the *Times*?" To this Kaufman replied, "Shoot her."



## MAKE 'EM LAUGH

WITH ITS TALE of an eccentric but identifiable family featuring quirky characters, chaotic action, witty dialogue and physical humor, you might say *You Can't Take It With You* is a precursor to today's more modern television genre—the situation comedy (or sitcom). While Kaufman and Hart did indeed help to establish and move the form of the sitcom forward (television as we know it wouldn't catch on until around a decade or so after the play opened), their work is a piece of the larger and more intricate history of the sitcom—a history that spans thousands of years and continues to grow every day.

IF YOU REALLY WANT to trace the lineage of the sitcom all the way back to its roots, you need to go Ancient Greek on the subject. I know what you're thinking—How tragic! There weren't even televisions back then, much less sitcoms. And didn't the Ancient Greeks favor the real boring and long stuff—like *Oedipus* and *Antigone*?

WELL, THE ANCIENT GREEKS did love tragedy (which isn't as long and boring as you might think). For the Ancient Greeks, tragedy presented a story and lesson for the individual and how he or she related with others, the world and the gods. It's one hero (or an individual) versus the world, and unfortunately in Ancient Greek tragedy that individual always loses. The hero's tragic (and

often violent) quest teaches the audience about themselves and the world around them.

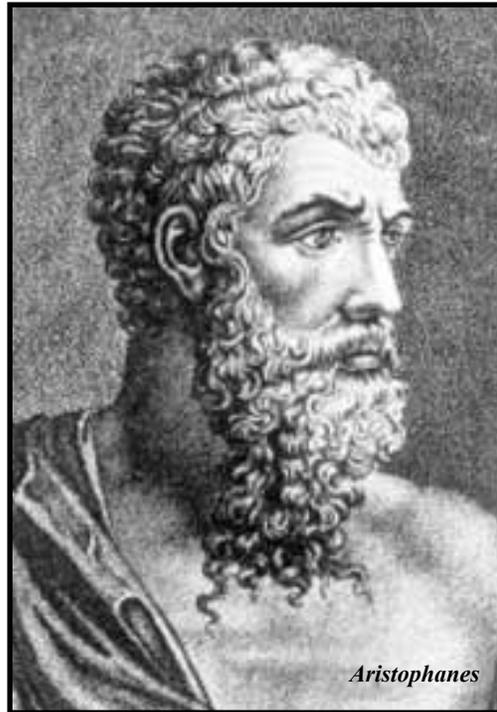
ON THE OTHER HAND, comedies offered an alternative to the darker tragic tale. Comedies tended to focus on a group of people, usually without all the bloodshed and tragic downfalls. In fact, for the Ancient Greeks comedies were a form not about individual development but instead about the

building of a community. Despite all the zany twists and turns, everybody could end up together and with a new awareness of those around them.

ARISTOPHANES, THE GREATEST of Greek comic playwrights, was really the man who launched and propelled comic drama as an important art form. His specific form of comedy was called Old Comedy, and it featured topical action and a lot of satire. That is, Aristophanes used real world events, people and places in his work,

and then took every opportunity to poke fun at his subjects. He wasn't afraid to ham it up with hilarious physical action, either. Sometimes he'd go a little too far with things, so watch out for PG-13 or even rated R kinds of language and physical humor in his plays. These pieces can be kind of tough for modern audiences because if you don't know the topics covered, you probably won't get the jokes.

IN CONTRAST, Roman playwrights like Terence and Plautus would perfect New Comedy. This sort of comedy centered on



highly relatable family, home and social situations. New Comedy featured a lot of clever word play, jokes and one-liners. Stock characters made up the action, featuring slaves, soldiers, concubines and old men. These characters were easily recognizable to an audience, each with his own specific set of character traits. For example, the soldier was typically arrogant and macho, while the slaves might be wily and clever. Plautus was particularly noted for his clever slave character, a strong presence that often drives the show instead of more noble characters.

COMIC STORYTELLING during the Renaissance would continue to build upon both Old and New traditions with *Commedia dell'Arte* (literally translated as "Comedy of art"). Like Old Comedy, *Commedia dell'Arte* utilized physical action while also borrowing from New Comedy's clever word play and stock characters. *Commedia* innovated, however, by doing it all within improvised sketches as opposed to fully scripted plays (think of shows like *Whose Line is it Anyway?*). *Commedia* incorporated more intricate sorts of design and performance elements by utilizing masks, music and dance during the show. And here's a little fun fact to impress your friends—*Commedia*'s brand of physical comedy is known as slapstick, which is named after the actual prop used in sketches for—you guessed it—slapping other characters on stage!

WHEW! Are we ready to fast-forward to the late 1800s? Of course, it goes without saying that all the greats were using Old Comedy, New Comedy and *Commedia dell'Arte* in their work. Just look at folks like Shakespeare, Molière and Wilde—all the cool kids know their comedic elements and how to use them. But

how are these things used today? And to what end?

ONCE WE BLAST into the late 19th century, vaudeville carries the torch of comedy to the masses. These popular variety shows were a lot like today's *America's Got Talent*, only vaudeville came on the scene just before the television. You could see almost anything in a vaudeville show—singers, dancers, magicians, jugglers and more! Often these shows included comedic sketches.

STEMMING FROM VAUDEVILLE, the first sitcom aired on January 12, 1926 and was called *Sam 'n' Henry*. This 15-minute daily program wasn't on television though, it was on the radio. When it switched stations in 1928 it also changed its name to *Amos 'n' Andy*, the name it would be known as for years to come. The show was essentially a series of sketches using stock characters, set in the African-American community.



Lucille Ball

# BU

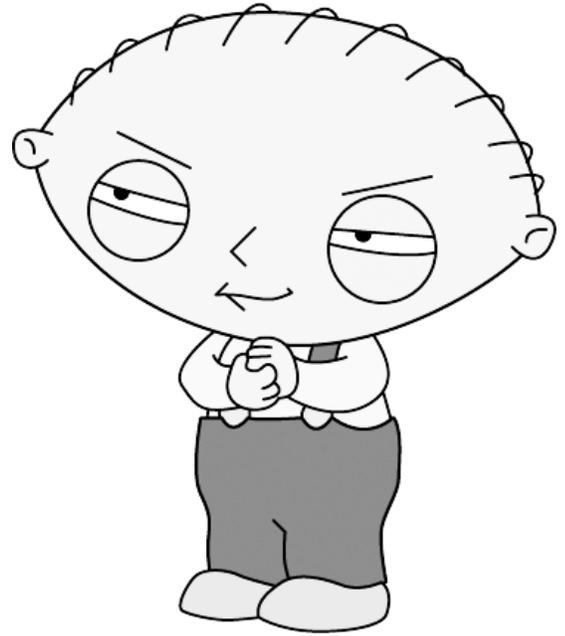
TELEVISION WOULD change forever in 1951 when Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz, Vivian Vance and William Frawley starred in *I Love Lucy*. While other sitcoms like *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and *The Honeymooners* found success on television, *I Love Lucy* changed the way television was produced (utilizing a multiple camera setup, all filming at once) and introduced the world to the re-run, as the show lived long after it was over in 1957. Clowning was a trademark of the show—specifically Lucille Ball’s brand of physical comedy and witty jokes, re-upping ancient principles of comedy.

IN THE 1960S, sitcoms explored new subject matter, continuing to show how television and comedy could have social relevance. Shows like *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Brady Bunch* would show that families weren’t always entirely conventional. Meanwhile, *The Addams Family*, *I Dream of Jeannie* and *Bewitched* explored the truly fantastical.

SITCOMS CONTINUED to change in the 1970s with the growing prominence of women and minorities on TV. *The Jeffersons*, *Good Times* and *Sanford and Son* all featured racially diverse casts, while *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* was a female-led sitcom. Social issues also became fair game for sitcoms like *M\*A\*S\*H*, which dealt with war.

WITH THE '80S, sitcoms saw a return to the family with shows like *Full House*, *Who’s the Boss?* and *Growing Pains*. Comedians began to cross over their acts from comedy clubs to the small screen (a movement that actually has roots in the 1970s with Bob Newhart and *The Bob Newhart Show*), with hits like Bill Cosby’s *The Cosby Show* and Roseanne Barr’s *Roseanne*.

WHILE THEY HAD existed prior to 1990, animated sitcoms really came into prominence during the '90s. Shows like *The Simpsons* (the longest running sitcom **ever**), *South Park* and *Family Guy* were all born



Stewie, *Family Guy*

within the decade and continue to thrive today. Shows like *Friends* paved the way for ongoing story lines between episodes and focused intensely on character development.

TODAY, SITCOMS ARE trending towards pseudo-documentary types like *The Office* and *Modern Family*. More traditionally dramatic sitcoms like *How I Met Your Mother* and *Two and a Half Men* still exist, but seem to be the exception rather than the rule.

WHERE WILL COMEDY and the sitcom go next? Who knows! But one thing is for certain—wherever it ends up, chances are it won’t stray too far from its roots. Even though they originated thousands of years ago, the basic building blocks of comedy—clever word play, physical humor, stock characters and improvisation—will always be funny and relevant.



## GET CREATIVE!

### WHAT IS CREATIVITY?

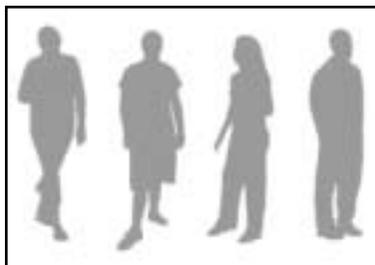
The dictionary defines it as—

**creativity** (noun): the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of an artistic work.

UM ... OKAY, so that sounds like a good smarty-pants textbook answer, but what is that? And how do I get some? I mean, we all can tell creativity when we see it, can't we? Like, you know ... art and stuff ... right?

FOR CENTURIES people have grappled with what creativity is, how to acquire it and how to apply it. When you break it all down, creativity at its barest root is "to create," so it has something to do with making things. Maybe that's why creativity is always shrouded in a kind of mystery and confusion, as historically creation is associated with gods and high powers. It's like a forbidden fruit dropping out of nowhere that we all seem to get passing nibbles of but only a few get a whole big bite.

TO CONFUSE MATTERS further, it would seem that the few who do get a big bite of creativity are artists who use it to paint a canvas or musicians who feed off inspiration to record a hit song. It's not like it's something that normal, real human beings like you and me ever use. While it might be fun for a hobby, creativity really has no place in the real world ... or does it?



LET'S GO BACK to the barest root of creativity—the "to create" part. Sure, that can describe a deity creating the world or an artist painting a picture, but is that where creation starts and stops? Don't imaginative, original creations spring up every day outside of the arts? From coming up with a new route to the bus stop to inventing the next iPhone, people of all walks of life are always creating something. Creativity doesn't necessarily have to be dumb luck or coaxed from divinity, it can stem from being informed and actively exercising your creative potential.

I KNOW WHAT you're thinking—"How do I exercise my creative potential? I'm not even sure I totally get what it is. I'll never be able to do it right." First, take a breath and relax. Part of tapping into your inner creativity is not worrying about being wrong. If scientists worried about being wrong, nothing would ever get done, would it? After all, science is a series of creative guesses (hypotheses) followed by experimentation that either proves the guess right or wrong. If it's wrong, they simply re-think, reload with a new hypothesis and take another shot at experimentation.

AND THAT'S HOW you can begin to exercise your creative potential—make your life your own laboratory. While you probably don't want to experiment on your math test, try and make informed, original and bold guesses at some of the problems you come across without fear of being wrong. If you don't get it on the first go, you can always re-think, reload and give it another shot. You never know what you might create!

- \* Are you creative? In what way?
- \* Do you think creativity is valuable? What should we be doing to nurture our creativity?

## DIVERSITY

Throughout various points in the play, people are at odds with those who are different from them. For example, Alice is embarrassed because her family is eccentric and doesn't adhere to the usual perceived norms. Mr. and Mrs. Kirby find the Sycamore family to be distasteful in their oddities. What do you think about people who are different from you? Should the differences between you be a source for judgment? What does diversity mean to you?

## CREATIVITY & ECCENTRICITY

From the opening moments of the play, we are immersed in a world that is sometimes a little strange. The people of the Sycamore household all seem to possess certain quirks, but does that make them creative? What do you make of the family's eccentricities? Do you think eccentricity relates to creativity? If so, how?

## POLITICS

Throughout the play, there are various moments in which Boris talks about Russian politics and Grandpa talks about paying taxes (or not paying taxes). At what period in time is the play set? What relevance could the time period have to bear on some of the more serious issues characters like Boris and Grandpa bring up? How do you feel about politics and issues relating to the government? Should you be aware of these kinds of things?

## ESCAPISM

*You Can't Take It With You* is sometimes called a purely escapist play—or a play that's all about entertainment and not necessarily containing any deeper meaning than what's on the surface. What do you think—is this play escapist in nature? Is there a place for escapist art, or do you think that all art should have some deeper, more profound meaning?

## READ MORE ABOUT IT

We encourage you to explore the following books, movies and websites for more information.



Hart, Moss. *Act One: An Autobiography*.

St. Martin's Griffin.

1989. Want to know more about the team that brought you the play? Check out this autobiography for scoop!

Cameron, Julia. *The Complete Artist's Way: Creativity as a Spiritual Practice*. Tarcher/Penguin. 2007. Intrigued by the prospect of creativity and how it can serve you? This complete

guide offers an extensive program designed to help you achieve your peak creativity.

*You Can't Take It With You*, 126 minutes, Sony Pictures, 2003. Check out the Oscar winning 1938 adaptation of the play. This Frank Capra classic is a timeless hit that stars Jean Arthur and James Stewart.

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/>  
Feel like you have the creativity but no talent to draw from? Try checking out this site for quick tutorials on how to sketch out whatever your imagination may hold.

<http://www.jpb.com/creative/index.php>  
Need a quick fix to boost your creativity? Check out lots of free articles on the subject and what you can be doing to be more creative!