



2025-2026

Educator Guide

Theatrical Outfit's

Young John Lewis



Dear Educators,

Welcome to ArtsBridge's 2025-2026 Field Trip Season!

We are thrilled to present **Young John Lewis** to you and your students.

Thank you for sharing this special experience with your students. We hope this field trip guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will see guidelines regarding your field trip, contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of pre and post discussion questions and assessment activities. Please "pick and choose" materials and ideas from the guide to meet the unique needs of your class.

We look forward to inspiring and educating your students through the arts on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at the world- class Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre!

See you at the theatre,

**The
ArtsBridge
Team**

Guide Contents

About Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre	3
Field Trip Guidelines	4
Transportation Information.	5
Directional Map	6
Local Dining	7
Theatre Etiquette	8
Pre-Show Activities	9
Theatrical Vocabulary	10
Study Guide Introduction.	11
About John Lewis	13
About the Musical	14
Exploratory Questions & Activities	15
Standards	16

About Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre

The landmark Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is a cultural, entertainment and special events venue of a national significance. Atlanta's first major performing arts facility in four decades, Cobb Energy Centre boasts state-of-the-art systems, amenities and design features that allow the expression of any artistic idea and captivate performers, patrons and event planners. The Centre's strong suit is versatility. It can accommodate events as diverse as Broadway, concerts, corporate functions, private parties and family entertainment. The Centre's distinctive façade and three-story lobby – highlighted by a 65-foot, floor-to-ceiling glass curtain wall – offer visitors a grand welcome and stunning introduction to a venue of great warmth, elegance and possibilities. Nothing speaks "special occasion" like the majestic lobby – a gathering space and promenade with two grand staircases, specially designed, colored-glass chandeliers and walls of Venetian plaster. The Centre's 2,750-seat John A. Williams Theatre captures the richness and intimacy of vintage theatres. Yet, it incorporates modern touches and technology – including advanced sound, lighting and acoustical elements – that allow fine-tuning for each performance. With equal poise, the Theatre can host concerts, opera, drama, comedy, lectures, dance and spoken word. The Cobb Energy Centre is a premier location for black-tie balls, galas, wedding receptions, corporate meetings, banquets, bar and bat mitzvahs, and parties.

- 10,000-square-foot ballroom, divisible into 3 sections, holds up to 630 for a seated meal, 800 in theatre setting and up to 650 for a reception.
- 2,750-seat theater ideal for graduations or general sessions.
- Unique special event spaces on theater stage, 3-level lobby, and outdoor terrace.

The Centre is equipped to ensure ArtsBridge's vision of making sure everyone has access to arts experiences. Designated seats in various locations are available at every event for guests with disabilities and those needing special assistance. The venue is equipped with wheelchair accessible restrooms, elevators, plaza ramps, wheelchair accessible ticket windows, phonic ear devices, wheelchair accessible drinking fountains, and handicapped parking. Visit www.cobbenergycentre.com to learn more about accessibility, including the new WaveCast app that is available to download to mobile devices and sign-language interpreted performance. For safety purposes, ArtsBridge follows the **Safety-First Guidelines of the Centre.**

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 250,000 patrons visit the Cobb Energy Centre each year.
- The Cobb Energy Centre opened in 2007.
- The Cobb Energy Centre has two main spaces:
 - John A. Williams Theatre, 2,750 seats
 - Kessel D. Stelling Ballroom, 10,000 square feet
- No seat is more than 160 feet from center stage in the John A. Williams Theatre.
- There are 1,000 parking spaces on site.
- The Centre is located one mile from the new Braves stadium and only 15 minutes from downtown Atlanta.
- ArtsBridge programs began in 2007 and reach 20,000 students each year.



Field Trip Guidelines

Below are simple guidelines for ArtsBridge Field Trips to Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. Please read carefully and contact us at (770) 916-2805 if you have questions.



Reservations: All field trip admissions are to be made in advance. Please do not bring more than the number of seats reserved. Performances are expected to sell out and we will not be able to accommodate an increase in numbers at the last minute. All patrons, including teachers and chaperones, must have a reservation in order to attend these performances. Children under the age of three are not permitted to attend.



Payment: Payments must be made in full, 4 weeks prior to the day of show, or we will not be able to accommodate your reservation. An invoice will be given to you at the time your reservation is made. Once you have paid in full, we will send a confirmation, which will serve as your school's ticket into the performance. ArtsBridge reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.



Transportation: The Centre can accommodate school buses, vans and cars, free of charge. All buses, vans and cars must comply with directions provided by on-site staff.



Arrival: All vehicles should approach the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre from AKERS MILL ROAD (map enclosed). Upon entering the driveway, buses will be directed to the circular drive where they will temporarily pull up to the curb for unloading. A Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre representative will board the bus and check-in your school. Students will be immediately unloaded and buses will be directed to their designated parking areas.



Seating: Students are seated as they arrive, starting with the floor level, first row. The exception to this is for programs with older and younger students in attendance at the same time. In this case, students in kindergarten and first-grade will be seated in the first few rows of the theatre. There are three levels of seating, with the back row of the top level no more than 160 feet from the stage.



Restrooms: Please seat your entire group, before taking restroom breaks, so that you can be easily found. Students MUST be accompanied by adult chaperones when going to the restroom. We encourage that you take groups so there are fewer trips.



Chaperones: Chaperones have a job to perform while at the Centre. Please make sure that your chaperones are interspersed among students, and that they are prepared for the day's responsibilities. Please discuss restroom visits, emergencies, behavior, etc. with your chaperones prior to arrival.



Behavior: Students and teachers are encouraged to enjoy performances, applaud and express enthusiasm in a manner that is appropriate for the performance, yet not disruptive for others. We request that all phones, tablets and any other electronic devices be completely turned off or on silent mode during the performance. We ask that chaperones on upper levels watch for students tossing or throwing items to lower levels and prevent students from climbing or leaning on railings. No student can leave the audience chamber without an accompanying chaperone. Students/classes that are disruptive may be asked to leave the performance with no refund. (See *Theatre Etiquette* on Page 8)



Departure: Performances last approximately one hour. Upon conclusion of the performance, classes will be dismissed to the designated parking area to board their buses and return to school.



Lunch: There is no facility for students to eat lunch in the Cobb Energy Centre. We recommend students eat lunch at the Cumberland Mall, or at a park on the route to/from the venue or on their bus. Check Page 7 for some of ArtsBridge's favorite restaurants to eat at around the theatre! Snack Packs will be provided for students, teachers and chaperones attending a field trip. For more information, visit www.ArtsBridgeGA.org/snack-pack-program.

Transportation Information



Buses: All school buses must approach the building from AKERS MILL ROAD on the North side of the building. This will be crucial in assuring a fairly smooth flow of traffic. There will be Centre representatives guiding you. Buses will pull onto the site from behind the building and then drive to the front. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR DRIVERS USE THE MAP BELOW. There is no charge to park school buses, cars, and vans on-site.



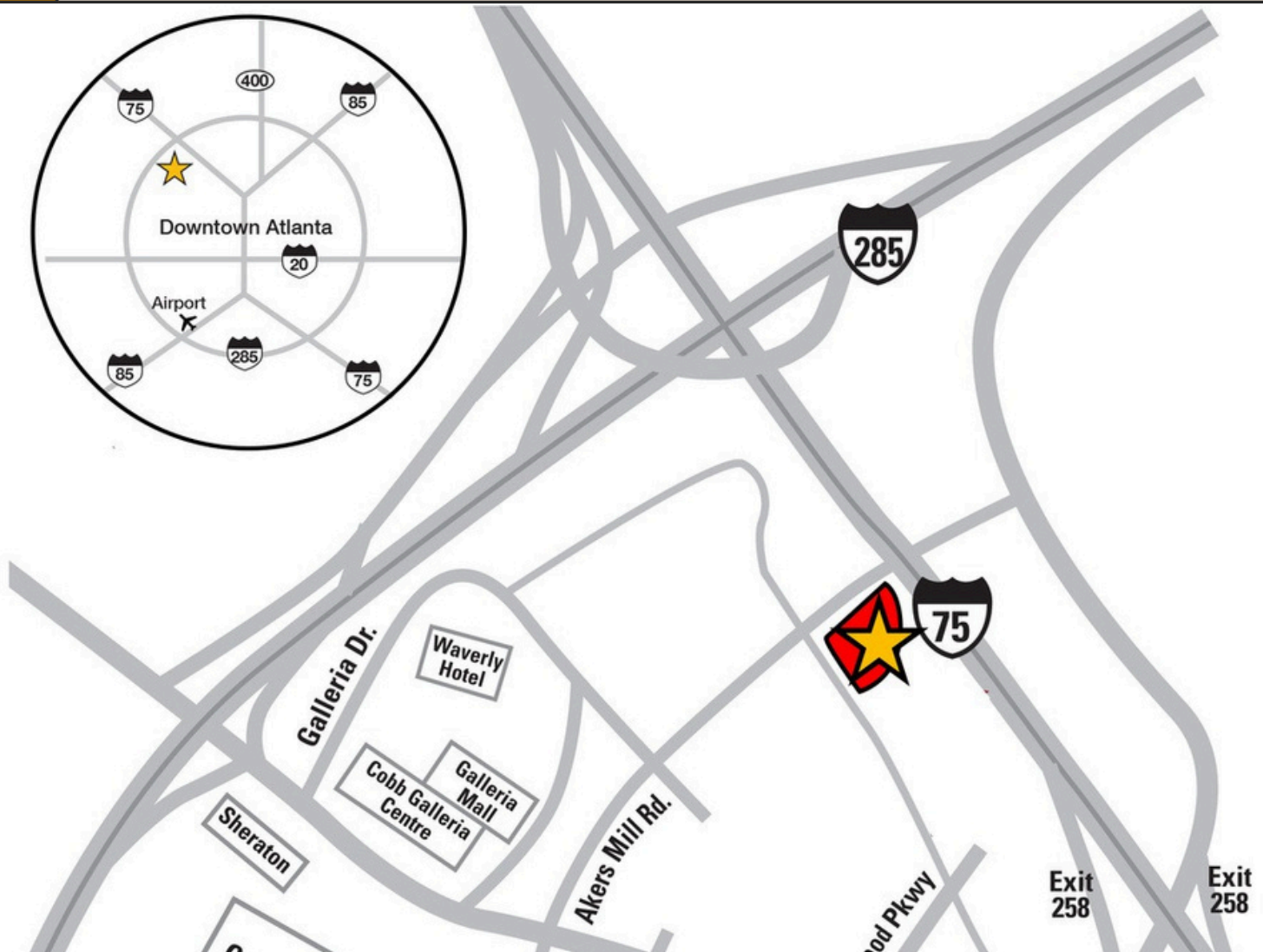
Checking In: When you arrive at the front of the building, a representative from the Centre will board your bus to check-in your school. You and your bus driver will be given a large number that will be taped to the bus windows. Please remember your number, as it will help you find your bus after the performance.



After the Show: After the performance, buses will be parked in the Centre's surface lot in numerical order and representatives will assist you in locating your bus(es). We encourage everyone to board their buses as quickly and safely as possible. For safety reasons, we hold all buses until everyone has boarded, so please make your way directly to the surface parking lot following the performance (see map below).



Cars/Vans/SUVs: You will approach the building in the same manner, but will park in our parking deck. After you have parked, make your way to level 2 of the deck and to the west side (theatre side) of the building. When you emerge from the parking deck, there will be a Centre representative to check you in and direct you to your seats.



Additional Map for All Vehicles Attending



Local Dining

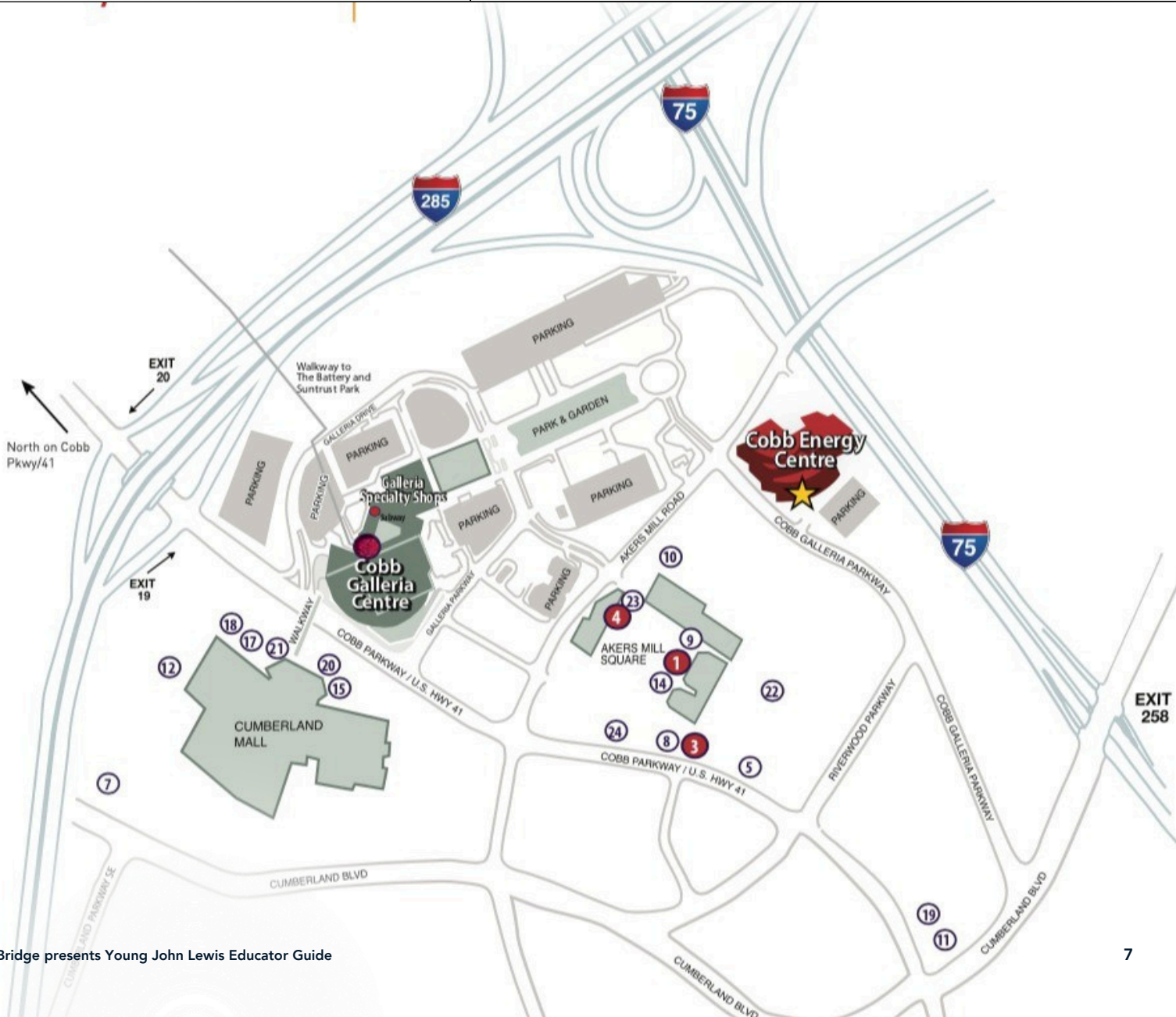
Food Sponsors

ArtsBridge Program Food Sponsors within driving distance of Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre:

1. Hopdoddy Burger Bar
2. Chick-fil-A
3. Subway

Other Nearby Restaurants

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5. Bonefish Grill | 15. Maggiano's Little Italy |
| 6. C&S Seafood and Oyster Bar | 16. Olive Garden |
| 7. Carrabba's | 17. P.F.Chang's |
| 8. Chipotle Mexican Grill | 18. Stoney River Legendary Steaks |
| 9. Korean BBQ & Hot Pot | 19. TacoMac |
| 10. Cinco's Mexican Cantina | 20. Ted's Montana Grill |
| 11. Copeland's of New Orleans | 21. The Cheesecake Factory |
| 12. Fresh To Order | 22. Top Spice |
| 13. Kuroshio Sushi Bar & Grill | 23. Blaze Pizza |
| 14. Longhorn Steakhouse | 24. CAVA |



A black and white photograph of several chess pieces, including a king, queen, and pawns, arranged on a chessboard. The pieces are in sharp focus, while the background is blurred.

Theatre Etiquette

A live performance is a unique experience shared between performers and audience members. Unlike television or movies, audience distractions can disrupt the performers, production and audience. Before you arrive at the Cobb Energy Centre, please review the following information with your students and chaperones, and help ArtsBridge create a meaningful experience for all.

- Arrive early. Groups are seated on a first-come, first-served basis. Seats are not assigned for ArtsBridge events.
- Food, drink, candy, gum, etc. is not permitted in the theatre.
- Silence or turn off all electronic devices. We encourage you to share your ArtsBridge experience at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre via social media, but please refrain from doing so or texting during performances; the glow from your device is distracting.
- Photography and video/audio recording of any kind is not allowed in the theatre during the performance.
- Respect the theatre. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time. Talk before and after the performance only.
- Remember, the theatre is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice! Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated.
- Pay attention to the artists on stage – they will let you know what is appropriate.
- If you need assistance during the show, please find your nearest volunteer usher.
- As you enter and exit the theatre, remember to walk and stay with your group.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!



Pre-Show Activities

Before attending an ArtsBridge Field Trip, review the following questions and vocabulary with your students:

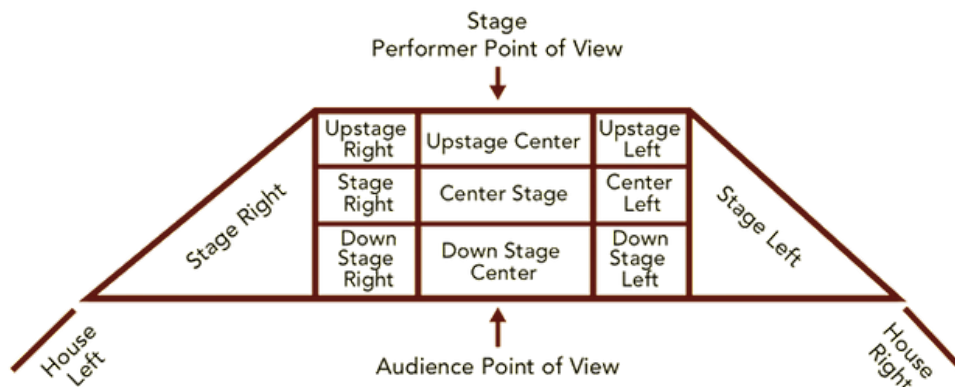
1. How many of you have experienced a live theatre performance? What did you see?

2. What are some of the differences between going to the theatre and watching television or going to a movie?

3. The BAD Audience Member! A fun way to review theatre etiquette with your students is to have them point out bad audience behavior during a show. Here's one way to illustrate this concept:

- Have students present something to the class. The key is they are "actors" and the class is the audience.
- Once they are into the activity, you (the teacher) leave the room and then re-enter. Enter loudly, chew gum, step on people's feet, talk to them, etc. Be the worst audience member. Find a seat and continue to talk to others, ask what's going on in the performance, take pictures, talk on your cell phone etc.
- Ask the class to list all the bad behavior. Write these on the board.
- Ask the audience members how they felt when the bad audience member came into the theatre. Could they hear the actors? Were they distracted?
- Ask the actors how they felt. Could they concentrate on their performance?

4. Review the stage diagram below with the students . Draw the diagram on the whiteboard and have students come up and write in each part of the stage.



THEATRICAL VOCABULARY

Before attending an ArtsBridge Field Trip, review the following questions and vocabulary with your students:

Author – the writer of a script; also called the book

Audition – to perform to get a role for the production; usually includes singing, dancing, and reading scenes from the show; usually takes place in front of the Director & Creative Team

Ballad – a slow song for actors to showcase vocal clarity

Blocking – the specific movement of actors on stage; usually given by the Director

Box Office – a booth inside the theater where tickets are sold

“Calling the Show” – the process of calling out the lighting, sound, and scene-change cues during a performance; usually done by the stage manager

Casting – the process through which actors are chosen for roles in the production **Casting Agent** – one who chooses actors for roles in the production

Choreographer – one who designs dance sequences and teaches them to the cast of the production

Composer – one who writes the music

Conductor – one who directs the orchestra

Costumes – a set of clothes in a style typical of a particular country or historical period

Curtain Call – the appearance of one or more performers on stage after a performance to acknowledge the audience’s applause **Director** – one who supervises the creative aspects and guides the artistic vision of the production

Dress Rehearsal – rehearsal in which performers practice with costumes, props, lights, and microphones

Dresser – one who assists performers with their costumes during dress rehearsals and shows

Electrician – one who works with the lighting designer to adjust and operate lighting instruments

Ensemble / Chorus – typically singers, dancers, or actors who perform in group numbers

Head Carpenter – one who builds the sets for the production

House Left – the left side of the theater, when facing the stage (audience’s point of view)

House Manager – one who oversees all aspects of the audiences; responsible for ushers and audience safety

House Right – the right side of the theater, when facing the stage (audiences point of view)

Lighting Designer – one who decides where the lighting instruments should go, how they should be colored and which ones should be on at any particular time to affect mood, visibility, and to showcase costumes and sets.

Lyricist – one who writes the words to a song

Makeup Artist – one who applies cosmetics to a performer’s face and body.

Music Director – one who teaches and rehearses the music with the orchestra

Orchestra Pit – the lowered area in front of a stage where the orchestra (musicians) sit and play during the performance

Overture – an orchestral piece at the beginning of an opera, suite, play, oratorio, or other extended composition

Producer – a person responsible for the financial and managerial aspects of staging a play, opera, musical, ballet, etc.

Program – a listing of the order of events, names of the cast and crew, and other relevant information for the production

Property (Props) Manager – one who manages all items used on stage that cannot be classified as scenery, electrics, or wardrobe

Proscenium Arch – the arch opening between the stage and auditorium; the frame of the stage

Read-through – the cast reads through the script without movement or music; typically done at the first rehearsal

Set Designer – one who creates the scenery for the stage

Sitzprobe – the first rehearsal with both the performers and the orchestra, with no staging or dancing

Sound Designer – one who plans and executes the layout of all sound playbook and equipment for the show

Sound Operator – one who handles the sound playbook and mixing equipment for the show; works with Sound Designer

Sound Board – a desk comprising a number of input channels where each sound source is provided with its own control channel through which sound signals are routed into two or more outputs; controls all microphones and music

Spotlights – a lamp projecting a narrow, intense beam of light directly onto a place or person, especially a performer on stage **Standby / Understudy** – one who studies a role and is prepared to substitute a performer when needed

Stage Left – the left side of the stage, when facing the audience (performer’s point of view)

Stage Manager – one who is responsible for the quality of the show’s production, assists the director, and oversees the show at each performance

Stage Right – the right side of the stage, when facing the audiences (performer’s point of view)

Technical Rehearsal – rehearsal incorporating the technical elements of a show such as the scene and property shirts, lighting, sound, and special effects

Uptempo Song - a fast, upbeat song for actors to showcase dancing and acting ability

Usher - one who guides audience members to their seats

Wig Master/Mistress - one who obtains and customizes wigs for performers to wear.

A Study Guide For

Theatrical Outfit Presents

YOUNG JOHN LEWIS

IN CONCERT & ON TOUR

Book & Lyrics by **Psalmayene 24**
Music by **Eugene H. Russell IV**

A "MADE IN
ATLANTA"
World Premiere
Hip Hop Musical

FALL 2025 & WINTER 2026

produced by

THEATRICAL OUTFIT

84 Luckie St. NW, Atlanta, GA 30303 | www.theatricaloutfit.org



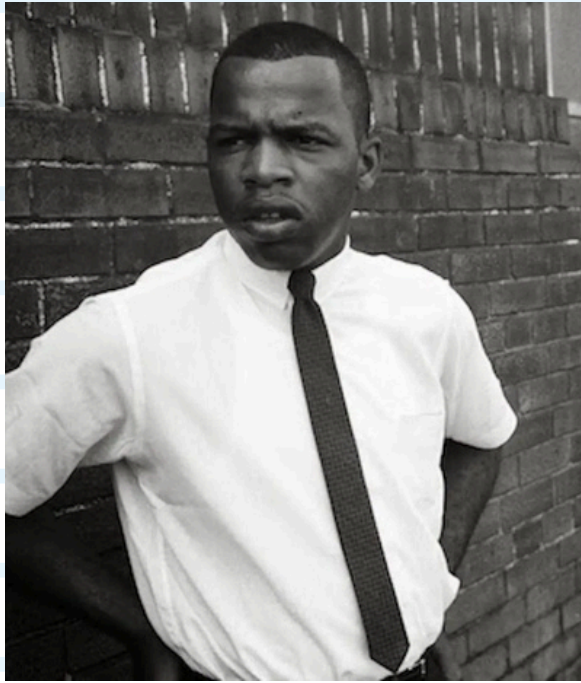
Written by hip hop & spoken word playwright Psalmayene 24 with all original music composed by Atlanta composer EugeneH. Russell IV, this new hip hop musical examines the ten crucial years in the early life of the congressman, and his journey from student activist to major leader in the Civil Rights movement – all by the time he was 28. This innovative journey dares to ask how we grow into the courage of our convictions and offers a fresh perspective on one of the most dynamic periods in American History. The time has come to make some good trouble!

“Every Generation Leaves Behind A Legacy. What Legacy Do You Want To Leave Behind?” —John Lewis

Run Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes with no intermission

Please Note: *This production contains mature themes. We recommend this show for audiences ages ten and older.*

The Man



John Robert Lewis (1940–2020) emerged from humble beginnings in Troy, Alabama, to become one of the most enduring figures of the American civil rights movement and a long-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives. His journey from a young seminary student to a revered statesman embodies a lifetime of commitment to justice, nonviolence, and equality.

Lewis originally planned to attend Troy University and was denied entrance because of his race. This incident began his work as an activist. He then attended the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, Tennessee, while also attending Fisk University, where he studied religion and philosophy. In Nashville, he became deeply involved in the burgeoning civil rights movement. Under the guidance of James Lawson, he joined workshops in nonviolent

resistance and quickly rose to leadership in the Nashville Student Movement. His courage was evident during the 1960 sit-ins at segregated lunch counters and later as one of the original thirteen Freedom Riders challenging segregation in interstate bus travel.

By 1963, Lewis, only 23, was elected chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), becoming one of the movement's youngest and most visible leaders. That same year, he delivered a fiery speech at the March on Washington alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Two years later, Lewis's leadership was immortalized during the Selma to Montgomery marches. On March 7, 1965—"Bloody Sunday"—he was brutally beaten by state troopers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge while leading marchers demanding voting rights. His skull was fractured, but the televised violence galvanized national support for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

After stepping down from SNCC, Lewis continued his activism through the Southern Regional Council's Voter Education Project, helping register millions of Black voters across the South. His public service career took shape when President Jimmy Carter appointed him to lead ACTION, a federal volunteer agency, in the late 1970s. In 1981, Lewis was elected to the Atlanta City Council, where he focused on ethics, accountability, and housing.

In 1986, Lewis won election to the U.S. House of Representatives from Georgia's 5th District, a seat he would hold until his death. During more than three decades in Congress, he became known as the "Conscience of the Congress," championing civil rights, voting rights, health care, and progressive causes. Though soft-spoken, he was unwavering in moral clarity, often invoking his call to make "good trouble, necessary trouble."

In his final years, Lewis continued to inspire new generations, participating in protests, mentoring young activists, and bearing witness to the ongoing struggle for justice. Even after being diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer in December 2019, he remained active, visiting Black Lives Matter Plaza in Washington, D.C., weeks before his passing.

John Lewis died on July 17, 2020, at the age of 80. His body lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, a rare honor, reflecting the deep respect he commanded across partisan lines. His legacy endures as a moral compass for the nation: a reminder that courage, sacrifice, and hope can bend the arc of history toward justice.

The Musical



Young John Lewis is a musical that incorporates hip-hop, gospel, soul music and spoken word to explore the early years of Lewis' life beginning with the pivotal moment of Emmett Till's murder, and continuing through the passing of the Voting Rights Act, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, and John's decision to pursue politics.

Throughout the play John is guided, and haunted, by the memory of Emmett Till, and we see the dynamic development of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC,) and the brilliant and fiery young activists that both inspire and challenge John's growing philosophy and practice of non-violent direct action.

At its core, *Young John Lewis* is a rousing coming of age tale about a young American

fighting for equity and humanity while challenging his nation to live up to tenets under which it was founded.

Exploratory Questions and Activities for *Young John Lewis*

- 1.) In the musical, there is a spoken word/ rap battle between two stalwarts of the Civil Rights Movement with differing perspectives, John Lewis and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure). Write a spoken word/ rap battle between two historical figures with differing political or ideological views.
- 2.) What were some of the challenges that the Student NonViolent Committee encountered in their nonviolent direct action work? What strategies did they use to overcome those challenges?
- 3.) In the musical, Young John is asked to change his March on Washington speech. Write a scene between Young John and his mother, where they debate if he should revise his speech?
- 3.) There is a debate between Dianne Nash and Ella Baker about the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement. Research and share information about two lesser known women activists during that era.
- 5.) What is non-violent direct action? Give examples of how this strategy is still being used in contemporary activism. Is this still a viable option in contemporary activism? Support your opinion with data.
- 6.) List three things about John Lewis' life, or the Civil Rights movement, that you did not know before the musical. Describe how these insights have changed your opinion of the movement and the people involved?
- 7.) Write a scene or a song that explores a contemporary political, cultural, or social issue that you are passionate about.

For a timeline of the the events explored in the musical, and video links of the real life individuals from the show, click on link or scan the QR Code:

<https://www.theatricaloutfit.org/yjl-history/>



Standards

SSSocSC4 Analyze the function of social institutions as agents of social control across differing societies and times.

- a. Analyze the function of social institutions in society, include: family, education, religion, economy, government/politics, health care, and media.
- b. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various social institutions.
- c. Evaluate other possible social institutions such as sports.
- d. Analyze the functions and inequalities of the criminal justice system in relationship to a society's construct of crime and punishment.
- e. Explain the role of total institutions.
- f. Analyze the re-socialization process.

SSSocIC1 Analyze forms of social inequality.

- a. Explain how unequal distribution of power and resources affects the life chances of individuals in that society.
- b. Analyze the sources and effects of stratification on the basis of social class, race and ethnicity, gender, age, and emotional, mental, and physical disabilities.
- c. Analyze the sources of global stratification and inequality.
- d. Evaluate the impact of global stratification and inequality on global relations.

TAHSTL.RE.1 Evaluate various aspects of dramatic arts literature using appropriate supporting evidence.

- a. Compare and summarize theatre literature from various historical periods, cultures, and styles.
- b. Develop and apply a set of comprehensive criteria for theatre text analysis.
- c. Compare and contrast theatre texts to live/film performance.
- d. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone.)
- e. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

TAHSA.PR.1 Act and direct by communicating and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments.

- a. Examine and implement the voice, body, observation, and imagination as tools of the actor in presentations of formal and informal theatre.
- b. Research and assess the development of acting skills for character creation and performance including historical movements, personal experience, and cultural influences.
- c. Act by developing, communicating, and sustaining roles within a variety of situations and environments.
- d. Identify and examine the responsibilities and tasks of an actor in relationship with directors, designers, and technical crew.
- e. Use the skills and tools of a director to conduct rehearsals for performance.



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