

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut

February 13, 2020, 10-11am, Grades K-5



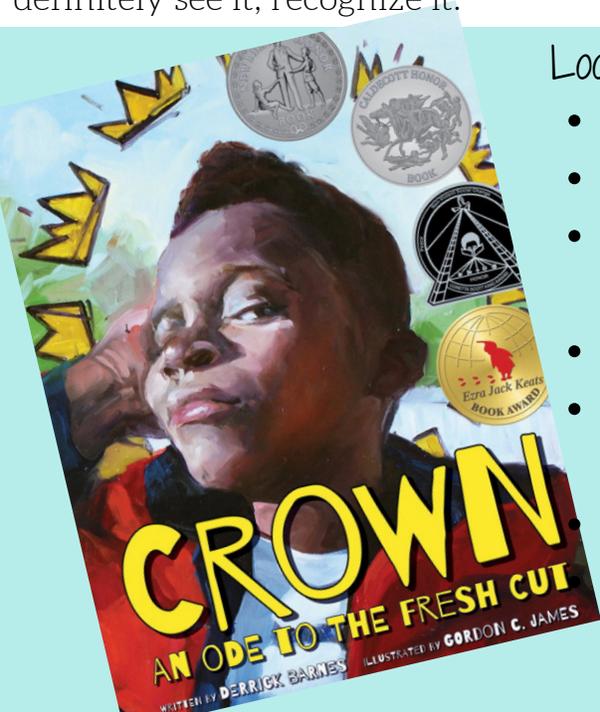
This study guide will give you background information, discussion questions, and activity ideas to do with your class before and after the performance at the PAEC.

Performance Information:

A trip to “the shop” is a magical thing. “It frames your swagger.” You know you can be anything. A manufacturer of cool. Guided by “thousands of black angels” important. You hop out of that chair looking otherworldly fresh, the best version of yourself you can ever imagine. This story is for all the black and brown boys learning to be men. And to all the rest of the world who should see what they see in that barbershop mirror—their lives matter, always have.

Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut, based on the book by Derrick Barnes, is a production of Book-It Repertory Theatre, a non-profit organization dedicated to transforming great literature into great theater. This poetic work presents the elevating power of community and mentorship, as we bear witness to the confidence, imagination, and self-esteem that can come from a fresh cut and a new view of ourselves. Join us in one of the only places a young man of color gets “tended to” in our society, so that we may see the magic that can come when we treat ourselves and others with respect.

According to author Derrick Barnes: “*Crown: An Ode To The Fresh Cut* is actually a poem I was inspired to write after seeing an illustration from one of my illustrator buddies (shout out to Don Tate!) of his teen son after a trip to the barber. It took me back to when I was a kid, and how sitting in that barber’s chair and receiving a dope haircut was probably the only place in the Black community where boys are treated like royalty. Still are. It’s a poem about self-affirmation and how the world may not see your brilliance, or your beauty, but you do, and everyone around you that loves you can definitely see it, recognize it.”



Look and Listen For:

- How the actors become different characters.
- How the actors work together to tell the story
- How the actors move and they express the characters' feelings.
- Why the characters do what they do.
- How the actors use objects (props), costumes, and the set.

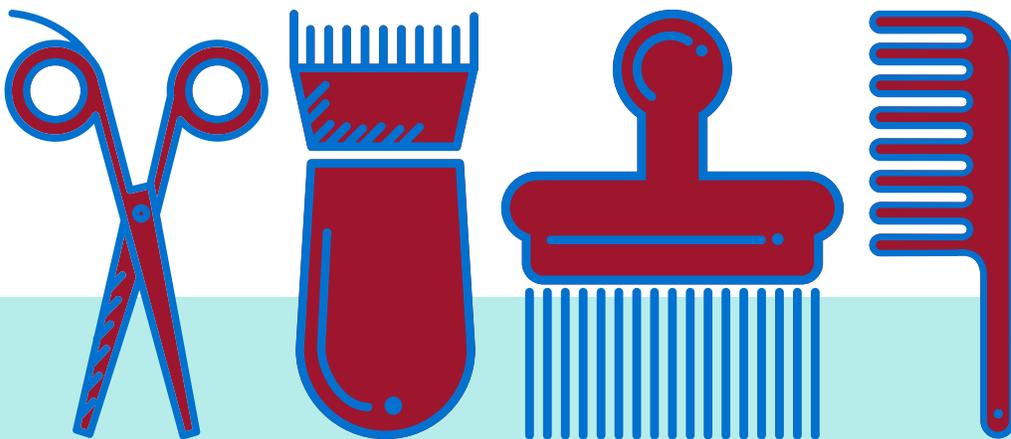
Happy, funny, sad, or surprising parts of the stories.
How the story makes you feel and what it makes you think.

Discussion Questions (before and after the performance):

- What do you know about seeing a play? (Ask before and after the performance). Do you want to see another one?
- Who has gone to a live performance before? What was it like? How is it different from going to a movie? What should you do and remember when you're there?
- Discuss the acting, the costumes, the sets, the plot, and the setting (time and place). What is your opinion of them? How well did they set the scene, tell the story, and engage the audience?
- What was your favorite part of the play?
- How did you feel at different points in the performance?
- What was the purpose of the play? To entertain, inform, persuade, describe...
- After the performance, what new ideas or understanding do you have? What was interesting and what was challenging? What did you use to think and what do you think now?
- Discuss the sequence of events in the stories. (You may wish to chart this). What would happen if the actors did not tell the story parts in order?
- How can you describe the characters? (You may wish to create a bubble map). What about them is similar to or different from you?
- Describe the relationships between the characters. How did the actors work together to tell the story?
- How did the actors use their bodies, voice, and expression to create believable characters? What do you think of the choices the actors made to create their characters?
- What were the problems the characters had to solve? How did they solve them? Can you think of other ways to solve the problems?
- What did you notice about the props? How did the actors use them?
- Compare and contrast the book and the play. What was the same and what was different? Why do you think they made these changes? What books would you like to see as a play?
- What do you know about, and what do you wonder about, now that you've seen live theater?
- What do you know about the job of an actor? Would you like to try it?
- What connections to other arts, stories, or their own lives can the students make?

Recommended Reading:

- *Uncle Jed's Barbershop* by Margaree King Mitchell
- *Bippity Bop Barbershop* by Natasha Tarpley
- *I Love My Hair!* by Natasha Tarpley
- *Big Hair, Don't Care* by Crystal Swain-Bates
- *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry
- *Don't Touch My Hair!* by Sharee Miller
- *Hair, It's A Family Affair!* by Mylo Freeman
- *Natalie's Hair Was Wild!* by Laura Freeman
- *My Hair Is a Garden* by Cozbi A. Cabrera
- *Happy to Be Nappy* by bell hooks
- *Princess Truly in My Magical, Sparkling Curls* by Kelly Greenawalt
- *The King of Kindergarten* by Derrick Barnes
- *In Plain Sight* by Richard Jackson
- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña
- *A Night Out With Mama* by Quvenzhané Wallis
- *Doo-Wop Pop* by Roni Schotter
- *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold
- *Going Down Home with Daddy* by Kelly Starling Lyons
- *Yesterday I Had the Blues* by Jeron Ashford Frame
- *I, Too, Am America* by Langston Hughes and Bryan Collier
- *Black All Around!* by Patricia Hubbell
- *Shades of Black: A Celebration of Our Black Children* Sandra L. Pinkney



Be sure to check out
[derrickbarnes.com!](http://derrickbarnes.com/)

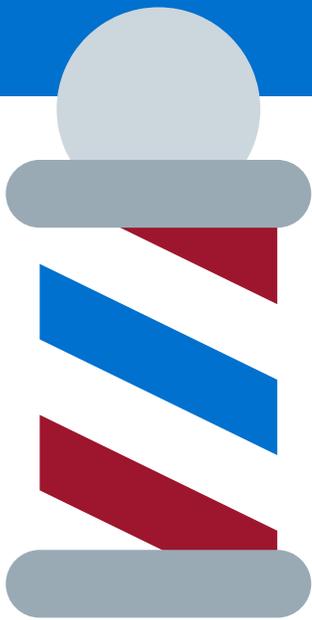
Crown Awards and Honors:

- A Newbery Honor Book
- A Caldecott Honor Book
- A Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book
- A Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book
- An Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award Book
- An Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Honor Book
- A Society of Illustrators Gold Medal Book
- Kirkus Prize for Young Readers



Activity Ideas (before and after the performance):

- Read *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut*, by Derrick Barnes to the class. Discuss what you might see in the play. Note characters and plot elements to look for. Return to this list after the performance.
- Have students write and/or draw reviews of the show. Have them include what they liked, what they did not like, what parts they remember the best, and what they think of the performers.
- Have students step inside a character from the play. Have them think and/or write about what that character feels, knows about, believes, and cares about. Have the students become that character and talk about who they are and what they are experiencing.
- Copy images from the book *Crown* and have students put them in sequence. Ask them to retell the story in their own words, using expressive vocabulary and dramatic vocalization. They can even record their narration or perform it for others.
- Have students in small groups create tableaux of important scenes in the story. A tableau is a living picture. Groups of students pose themselves in a frozen scene, using their arrangement, facial expressions, and positions to convey the event and the characters. Students can also write what their character says in the scene.
- Have students make puppets of the characters in *Crown* and act out a scene with a partner.
- Encourage students to act out their favorite scenes from the play, using improvised dialog. Ask them to show what the characters are feeling, not just what they are doing.
- Have students write about their experience watching *Crown* using these sentence stems: "I used to think... Now I think..."
- Invent a headline for an article about *Crown* that tells why it's interesting or important.
- Have students write a diary entry from a character's perspective.
- Have students draw a picture of a favorite scene from the play. Can they convey the emotions the actors expressed, the setting, and the plot point? Can they add their own response as an audience member?
- *Crown* is written as a poem. Have students watch and discuss videos of poetry readings then perform *Crown*, their own poems, or ones from your curriculum. How do poetry and performance engage with language? How do you show the feelings and meanings in the words?
- Create a musical accompaniment for *Crown* to represent each line of the poem, conveying its rhythm, imagery, meaning, etc. Students can even create their own percussion instruments and use basic musical elements.
- Students can write letters to the PAEC telling us their thoughts on the play. (*We'd love to hear from you!*)



Remember:

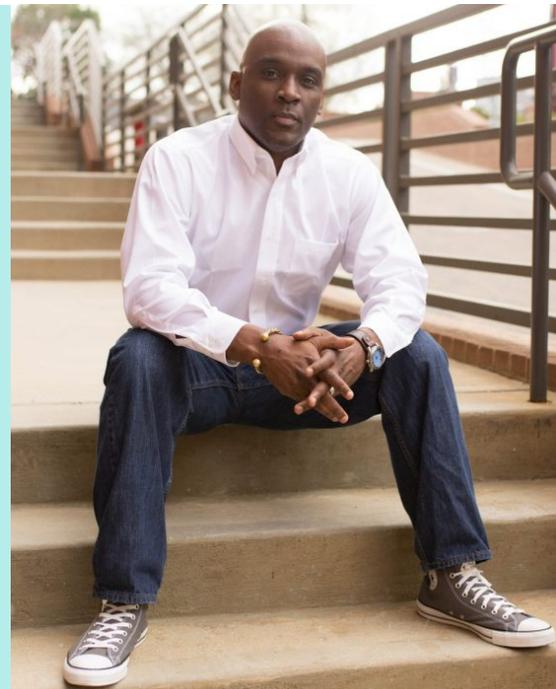
Watching live theater isn't like going to a movie because the performers can hear you! Please don't distract them, but do laugh when something is funny, cry when something is sad, cheer when something is awesome, and clap at the end. Show the actors you appreciate their hard work and help everyone have a good time!

Book-It
REPERTORY THEATRE

PAEC PERFORMING ARTS
AND EVENT CENTER

"I believe, as an artist, that your primary goal should be to build an important body of work that will be here long after you're gone. A body of work that your family can be proud of. A body of work that will make people feel good about themselves, that will make them think, laugh and cry. That's what I've always tried to do. Make something meaningful."

- Derrick Barnes



Aligned Standards:

- Theater Anchor Standards, Responding 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work; 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work; 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- Theater Anchor Standards, Connecting 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art; 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
- Common Core ELA, Key Ideas and Details: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Common Core ELA, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics.

Please see fwpaec.org for our field trip guide and more resources!