

Quiet on the Set!
A Reader's Theater for the Great Race of 1908
New York to Paris Automobile Race

(This lesson is best after completing the On Your Mark, Get Set, Go! lesson).

AUTHORS: Geri Garrison and Amy Stover

HISTORICAL TOPIC/ERA: The 1908 New York to Paris Automobile Race

GRADE LEVEL(S): 4th-6th

TIME REQUIRED: Flexible; 45min. or 1 hour a day for 5 days. You determine the amount of time needed for your particular class and the level of the production you desire.

BACKGROUND:

On February 12, 1908 six cars from four different countries lined up in Times Square for the start of the New York to Paris automobile race. Some 250,000 people were there to witness this historical event. While there was much fanfare and excitement surrounding this event, many, especially the drivers and crews of the cars, had no idea just how difficult this journey would be for them.

The six cars participating in this event were the American Thomas Flyer, the French Motobloc, Sizaire-Naudin, and De Dion, the Italian Zusta and the German Protos. Over the course of the next several months, both machine and man would be tested to the limits and beyond what anyone could have imagined at the time. Despite treacherous weather conditions, lack of roads and definite routes, car repairs too numerous to count and unbelievable odds, these competitors made the best of what was available to prove to the world that the automobile was here to stay. Only three cars would ultimately finish the race, but the journey captured the world's attention.

NEVADA STANDARDS:

Nevada History Standard 9.4.5 – Identify major advancements in science and technology, including television, computers.

Nevada History Standard 7.4.7 – Identify the contributions of the inventors and discoverers.

Nevada History Standard 5.5.4 – Explore the impact of human modification of the physical environment on the people who live in that location.

Nevada History Standard 5.6.3 – Identify an industry and explain how its use of technology has accelerated change in the physical environment.

Nevada Listening/Speaking Standard: 9.4.2 -Select and use appropriate public speaking techniques such as rate, pace, and enunciation.

Nevada Listening/Speaking Standard: 9.5.2 – Select and use appropriate public speaking techniques such as gestures, facial expressions, posture, speaking rate/pace, and enunciation.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS:

Students will learn about the trials and tribulations of the Great Race of 1908 by working together to produce a Reader's Theater.

MATERIALS/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Read and use the attached Reader's Theater. Improvise with props and costumes as you see fit. Each player will need a copy of the play to memorize their parts. No other materials are needed. References are cited below.

SETTING THE STAGE:

We recommend using the On Your Mark, Get Set, Go! lesson plan to provide adequate background knowledge for your students.

ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES:

1. Make enough copies of the script for each student in your class. It is easier to copy one-sided to avoid unnecessary flipping of paper!
2. Assign parts. Use the following guide.

Required Readers: 22 or 15

Characters:

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Announcer, Date Reader, Zust Team (Antonio Scarfoglio, Mr. Sirtori, Mr. Haaga), Thomas Team (Charles Schuster Mr. Roberts), De Dion Team (Mr. St. Chaffray, Mr. L'Autran, and Mr. Hansen), Protos Team (Mr. Koeppen, Mr. Knape, Mr. Maas), Passerby, Employee 1, Employee 2, Ship Captain, Race Official, Gendame, Crowd. (For 15 parts, one student will be the Announcer, Employee 1, Race Official, and Date Reader. Another student will be Passerby, Employee 2, Ship Captain, Gendarme, and Crowd. You may also assign more than one student to be the crowd.)

3. Provide students time to read through their parts and generate ideas for props and production.
4. Schedule a future date for performance.
5. Each day, allow students time to practice lines.
6. When your students are ready, perform!!

This is really up to you as the classroom teacher. You can spend as much or as little time as you would like on this production.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:

The performance will be the evaluation. Teachers may choose to grade fluency or speaking skills. Teachers may also choose to combine the two lessons to evaluate student learning.

References:

New York Times Archives (10/10/2007). TRAIN CREW RESCUES ZUST.; Italians Borrow Wrecking Tackle and Pull Car Out of Mud. Retrieved on October 19, 2007
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9E04E7DF143EE233A25753C2A9659C946997D6CF> from

Matthew, Jeff (2005). Around Naples. Antonio Scarfoglio & the Around the World Race of 1908. Retrieved on October 21, 2007 from
<http://faculty.ed.umuc.edu/~jmatthew/naples/greatrace.htm>

Great Automobile Race of 1908, The (10/06/07). Retrieved on October 21, 2007 from
<http://www.thegreatautorace.com/>.

Jackson, Robert B. (1965). Road Race Around the World. Scholastic Book Services, New York; New York.

Nevada Automobile Museum (2007). 1908 New York to Paris Automobile Race Timeline.

Zike, D. (in print). Foldables for grades 1-6; 3-D Interactive Study Organizers. Macmillian/McGraw-Hill. New York:NY.

The Race That Changed the World: The Great Race of 1908

(Based on the book, *Road Race Round the World* by Robert B. Jackson)



Age Group: 4th - 6th grade

Required Readers: 22 or 15

Characters:

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Announcer, Date Reader, Zust Team (Antonio Scarfoglio, Mr. Sirtori, Mr. Haaga), Thomas Team (Charles Schuster Mr. Roberts), De Dion Team (Mr. St. Chaffray, Mr. L'Autran, and Mr. Hansen), Protos Team (Mr. Koeppen, Mr. Knape, Mr. Maas), Passerby, Employee 1, Employee 2, Ship Captain, Race Official, Gendarme, Crowd

(For 15 parts, one student will be the Announcer, Employee 1, Race Official, and Date Reader. Another student will be Passerby, Employee 2, Ship Captain, Gendarme, and Crowd. You may also assign more than one student to be the crowd.)

Narrator 1: It was a time of rapid growth in America and the World. The automobile was considered a "new fangled contraption" in 1908. Many places had never even seen an automobile.

Narrator 2: Even so, a group of men who manufactured these automobiles had the vision to propose a race around the world. They would start at Times Square in New York City and end in Paris, France.

Narrator 1: But there is a lot of water between North America and Asia. Cars can't drive over water. What did they do?

Narrator 2: The plan was to go through Alaska and drive over the frozen Bering Strait.

Narrator 1: Did they?

Narrator 2: Let's listen along and see how it comes out.

Announcer: Gathered here today are six of the finest competitors ever assembled. They will survive unbeatable odds and take their cars around the world.

Crowd: Hooray!

Announcer: The first car is the American built Thomas Flyer. It is driven by Montague Roberts, with George Schuster as their mechanic.

Crowd: Go Americans!

Announcer: Italy is represented by the Züst. It is driven by Antonio Scarfoglio and team members, Mr. Sirtori and Mr. Haaga.

Crowd: Ciao, Züst!

Announcer: France has three entries in this great race. They are the De Dion, the Motobloc, and the Sizaire-Naudin. The De Dion is driven by St. Chaffray and Commissioner General of the race and with him is Hansen, a world famous arctic explorer. The mechanic is Mr. L'Autran.

Crowd: Viva, la France!

Announcer: Finally, the Germans are represented by Lieutenant Koeppen the team captain, Mr. Knappe, the driver, and Mr. Maas is the mechanic. They are driving the Protos, which was commissioned by Kaiser Wilhelm himself.

Crowd: Gute Reise!

Announcer: Gentlemen, start your engines. (Climb to top of a stand and fire pistol). And they're off.

Narrator 1: Can you believe 250,000 people have come out to see the start of this race?

Narrator 2: What I can't believe is that they are starting in February. I bet they encounter lots of snow.

Date Reader: It is February 12th just outside of New York City

Zust Team:

Scarfoglio: It is just the first day and we have already broken a chain and had a crack in the radiator.

Mr. Sirtori Yeah, but we caught up with the De Dion and the Thomas.

Mr. Maas Oh, no! We've driven into another snow drift.

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: There are the Zust and De Dion teams, stuck in the snow.

Mr. Roberts: Let's help them out.

Mr. Schuster: What a great idea, since we are now stuck too.

Narrator 1: Snow plows had not been invented yet. What did the teams do?

Narrator 2: Mostly they dug themselves out and at times tunneled through snow drifts higher than their automobiles. You have to remember that cars didn't have heaters yet either.

Date Reader: February 13th near Albany, New York.

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster I have word that the Sizarre is out of the race.

Mr. Roberts: That didn't take long. But, I understand in these freezing conditions.

Date Reader: February 22nd near Toledo, Ohio

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: We drove all night to catch up with the Thomas.
(Hits a bump.)

Mr. Sirtori: I can't believe we have hit another snow bank.

Mr. Maas: I am exhausted! Let's rest a minute before we dig out.

Passerby: Excuse me, excuse me. Are you one of the autos in the Great Race?

Zust Team: Yes, we are.

Passerby: You've fallen asleep and you will freeze to death if you don't get to shelter soon. Let me help you out of this snow bank.

Zust Team: Grazie.

Date Reader: February 26th in Chicago, Illinois

De Dion Team:

St. Chaffray: Look at all the people who have come out to welcome us.

Mr. L'Autran: I am looking forward to a warm bed and a warm meal.

Mr. Hansen: The Thomas is still 36 hours ahead of us, so we'll make it a short stay.

Narrator 1: Is it true that students got to get out of school to see the race?

Narrator 2: All over the U.S., teachers dismissed the students as the cars came through their cities and towns. The students gathered to cheer and wave the participants on.

Date Reader: March 7th in North Platt, Nebraska

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: We've been invited to visit the Scout's Rest ranch.

Mr. Roberts: We are going to meet the famous Buffalo Bill Cody.

Mr. Schuster: It looks like it.

Date Reader: March 9th somewhere in Iowa

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: I cannot believe the appalling condition of roads in this country. The mud is up to our axle at times.

Mr. Sirtori: Well, why don't we run on the tracks of the railroad?

Mr. Maas: Good idea. I heard that the Motobloc is also out of the race. That leaves the Thomas in the lead, us, the De Dion, and finally the Protos.

Mr. Scarfoglio: Let's drive faster.

Narrator 1: Why did they complain about the roads?

Narrator 2: Autos were such a new idea that the country had not thought about how they would get around. Roads were not paved and there were no gasoline stations. Gasoline was difficult to find.

Date Reader: March 16th in Utah

Protos Team:

Mr. Koeppen: Our auto has had a serious breakdown.

Mr. Knape: What will we do?

Mr. Koeppen: We will ship it by train to Seattle.

Mr. Haaga: Is that o.k. with the race officials?

Mr. Koeppen: I hope so. I sent them a telegram to the race office asking for permission.

Narrator 1: Do the officials allow them to do that?

Narrator 2: No, in fact they are penalized 7 days for it.

Date Reader: March 20th in Tonopah, Nevada

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: It was nice of the people of Tonopah to welcome us so warmly.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, but they charge outrageous prices for everything. Water is as expensive as gold here. I can't believe, Schuster, that you paid \$20 to borrow a flea-bitten horse so you could ride out to find a part for the car.

Mr. Schuster: Neither can I!

Narrator 1: Why is water so expensive? And everything else?

Narrator 2: In 1908, there are not a lot of people living in Nevada. Mining towns have become ghost towns, and water coming up from the ground in springs is scarce.

Date Reader: March 24th in San Francisco, California

Crowd: Hooray for the Thomas!

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: We made it across the United States. And we beat the other teams. We will leave for Seattle on the 27th and board a boat to take us to Alaska.

Mr. Roberts: Let's enjoy our time in this fine city.

Date Reader: March 29th in Death Valley, California

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: I cannot believe there is a place as hot as this on Earth. It is like breathing fire.

Mr. Sirtori: I agree. Look—are those human bones?

Mr. Maas: They must have been bleached white by the searing sun.

Date Reader: April 8th in Valdez, Alaska

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: The whole town has turned out to greet us! I think I will honk the horn—I bet it is the first automobile the people of Valdez have ever seen. (Honk horn).

Crowd: Hooray! Honk the horn again!

Thomas Team:

Mr. Roberts: I don't think we can drive across the Bering Straight. The snow drifts are 12 feet high and the only path we could take is only wide enough for a dog sled.

Mr. Schuster: I will wire the race officials for instructions.

Narrator 1: What happens?

Narrator 2: The race officials cancel the Alaska portion of the trip and allow the automobiles to go by ship to Japan. The Zust and the De Dion have already left for Japan and the Protos has shipped off for Vladivostok, Russia. The race officials allow the Protos back in the race with the 7 day penalty and give the Thomas team a 23 day credit because of their detour to Alaska.

Date Reader: April 30th on a ship in the Pacific Ocean

Ship Captain: Gentlemen, I regret to inform you that my crew has removed the leather from your wood plank fenders. I have asked that the ship's carpenter replace it with some canvas we have on board. I hope this does not inconvenience you.

Thomas Team:

Mr. Schuster: Canvas should work fine. But, what in the world did they need the leather for?

Ship Captain: It seems they were desperate to resole the bottom of their shoes.

Mr. Roberts: I hope it helped! (laughing)

Date Reader: May 12th near Nagoya, Japan

Crowd: This is the only bridge across the river. We built it with bamboo and rope.

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: We will need to take most of the weight off our autos. Go tell the De Dion team.

De Dion Team:

St. Chaffray This looks like quite a pickle.

Zust Team:

Mr. Sirtori: You may go first.

Crowd: Go slowly, be careful.

De Dion Team:

St. Chaffray: We made it! Come on Züst, you are next!

Mr. L'Autran: Whoa—watch out!

Mr. Hansen: Whew, the bridge collapsed just as your rear tires touched the other side.

Crowd: What about our bridge?

Date Reader: May 15, 1908

Protos Team:

Mr. Koeppen: Well, it is good to see you, De Dion and Züst teams. We have been here for 4 days and our factory in Germany sent parts to help us repair our automobile.

De Dion Team:

St. Chaffray That does not seem quite fair. Oh well!

Mr. L'Autran: Our owner has sold our automobile to a Japanese businessman. (running in, waving telegram)

Mr. Hansen: We will no longer be in the race?

St. Chaffray: So it seems. (Taking telegram and reading it.) It looks like it's just the Protos, Züst, and Thomas teams now.

Date Reader: June 13, 1908 in the Manchurian province

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: We are two weeks behind the Thomas and Protos.

Mr. Maas: I sure hope they were bogged down in mud as much as we were.

Narrator 1: China and Siberia must have been challenging for the teams.

Narrator 2: The only roads were muddy, and the Trans-Siberian railroad had not been built yet, though it was under construction. The Zust team had an interesting experience while traveling on the tracks.

Narrator 1: I can't wait to hear what happened.

Zust Team:

Mr. Sirtori: We would be honored to transport employees from the Siberian railroad with us. Climb on in.

Employee 1: How do you like driving on our fine tracks?

Zust Team:

Mr. Maas: It is far better than the muddy road conditions.

Employee 2: Sir, I see a train coming. Do they know we are on the tracks?

Employee 1: I don't believe they do. Jump down and wave a flag to alert them to stop.

Zust Team:

Mr. Scarfoglio: We will need to lift the car off the tracks.

Mr. Sirtori: Ahhh, the car is on fire!

Mr. Scarfoglio: Quickly, get our clothes. Take your shirts off. We will stuff them in the engine to smother the flames.

Employee 2: (Covering eyes) The train is not stopping. Whew, that was close! Just another few feet and the Zust would be gone.

Date Reader: June 17th at Lake Baikal

Narrator 1: The Thomas team drove like crazy. They pushed themselves and their automobile to the breaking point. They put a strap across one team member to keep him in the auto while he slept. Then, one of the other team members would drive. At one point, they drove for 2 solid days.

Narrator 2: They caught up to the Protos on the shores of the world's deepest lake - Baikal.

Thomas team:

Mr. Schuster: Hurray, I see the Protos ahead! It looks like they are boarding a ferry across the lake.

Mr. Roberts: Drats, foiled again. The ferry just pulled out, and the next doesn't leave for hours.

Date Reader: July 26th in Paris, France

Narrator 1: The Protos reached Paris at 6:15 p.m., but there were no cheering crowds. The race sponsor had penalized the Protos for not driving all the way across the United States.

Narrator 2: What did the Protos do?

Narrator 1: They shook hands with race officials and left the next day for Germany, where they were welcomed as heroes.

Race Official: Congratulations for completing this grueling race! Even though you arrived in Paris first, you did not win because of the 7 day penalty.

Protos Team:
Mr. Koeppen: It is an honor to finish this grueling race. We are proud to represent the Protos Company and Germany.

Race Official: There are many people who said that a car could not go around the world. I guess you proved them wrong.

Date Reader: July 30th in Paris, France

Crowd: We have decided to ride our bicycles beside the winner of the race.

Gendarme: Monsieur, you cannot proceed on French roads with a broken headlight. I must give you a ticket.

Thomas Team:

Mr. Roberts: We are very close to finishing the race. What should we do?

Mr. Schuster: I have an idea; let's borrow that bike with a headlight.

Mr. Roberts: Good idea. We'll attach it to the auto. Will this work, Monsieur?

Gendarme: Oui, good luck.

Narrator 1: So the Thomas Flyer won the Race Around the World and was met by cheering crowds in Paris and then New York upon its return. At times it seemed that none of the cars would finish, but the American car endured and succeeded. The Thomas Flyer team drove the car to Sagamore Hill, where they were greeted by President Theodore Roosevelt.

Narrator 2: What happened to the Italian Zusto?

Narrator 1: They were plagued with problems, like when they drove into a ditch and the team was hospitalized for a week. But even after all they went through; they arrived in Paris on September 17th. Six automobiles started the race and three finished.

Narrator 2: So ended one of the most daring races in history. The automobile proved that it was capable of being a reliable and efficient form of transportation.

Narrator 1: We owe a lot to these hardy, resourceful, and courageous men. They had won the respect and admiration of the entire world.