

Math Rashes

One act play for children

By Douglas Evans



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CHARACTERS

Miss Pedagog: new first-year third grade teacher

STUDENTS 1-9: the nine students can play themselves. When MISS PEDAGOG calls out name, she can use student's real name. Change dialog for gender preference. The number of students can be altered as needed.

Setting

A third-grade classroom during the winter. Nine desks arranged in three rows center stage face a large teacher's desk stage right. A portable whiteboard stands next to teacher's desk. Classroom windows, unseen, are downstage. Classroom door, unseen, stage left.

PRODUCTION NOTES:

CHARACTERS: 10 characters, 9 students of either gender. 1 female teacher.

PLAYING TIME: 20 minutes

PROPS: portable whiteboard.

Whiteboard pen

Whiteboard eraser

9 student desks

9 math books

Tattoo stickers of math symbols: +, -, ×, ÷, =, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0

SETTING:

A third-grade classroom during the winter.

Nine desks arranged in three rows center stage

Desks face a large teacher's desk stage right.

A portable whiteboard stands next to teacher's desk.

Classroom windows, unseen are downstage.

Classroom door, unseen, stage left.

Unseen snowy playground is outside windows.

COSTUMES: students, modern winter school clothing

Teacher, warm sweater, long skirt, long coat, scarf

LIGHTING: No special lightning

SOUND: School bell

MUSIC: recording of *Let it snow!*

Scene One:

Time: The present. Early morning.
Wintertime

Setting: Modern third grade classroom.
Nine desks in three rows stage center.
Desk face teacher's desk stage right.
Portable whiteboard stands next to
teacher's desk. Classroom windows,
unseen, downstage. Classroom door,
unseen, stage left. Snowy playground,
unseen, is outside windows.

At Rise: School bell rings.

MISS PEDAGOG sits at her desk, grading
papers. Her coat and scarf hang on the
back of teacher's chair.

STUDENTS 1-9 file into classroom stage
left. They blow on hands and rub arms
after coming in from the cold. Students
sit at their desks and gaze out unseen
windows downstage staring longingly at
snowy playground.)

STUDENT 1

Look at it all All that snow on the playground.

STUDENT 2

The whole playground looks so different than it did
yesterday. Yesterday it was wet and covered with soggy
leaves. Today it's all white, white, white.

STUDENT 3

The tetherball poles have on tall white hats. The monkey bars
are wearing thick white coats. The soccer field looks like a
comfy white quilt.

STUDENT 4

And we didn't have a second to play in all that snow. The bus
aide blew her whistle hurried us straight off the bus into
the school.

STUDENT 5

If I were out there now, I'd pepper the kickball wall with
snowballs. I'd cover it with polka dots.

STUDENT 6

I'd dig a tunnel in the snowdrift by the slide

STUDENT 7

I'd stomp my name in giant letters out on the soccer field.

STUDENT 8

I'd make an army of snow angels.

STUDENT 9

I'd build a snow fort and keep all the kindergartners out.

(MISS PEDAGOG looks up from her grading and smiles. She stands and walked to front of her desk.)

MISS PEDAGOG

(addressing students.)

Good morning, class. How about all this snow? Quite a storm we had last night, wasn't it. Brrrr. I had a hard time driving my car into the school parking lot. Brrr. Our custodians will have a big job shoveling off the school sidewalks. I'm glad the buses made it here safely. A snowstorm can cause many problems for a school.

STUDENT 1

(looking out window)

Snow! Oh, so much flat untouched snow outside!

STUDENT 2

(looking out window)

Nothing's more fun than being the first one out on a snowy field.

MISS PEDAGOG

And because of all that snow, we're getting a late start. So let's get right to work. Please take out your math books. Open to page seventy.

(Students groan and take math books from desks. They plop them open.)

STUDENT 3

(looking out window.)

How can I think about math with all that snow calling to me? If I opened the window I could grab a handful.

STUDENT 4

(looking out window.)

One hour until recess. By then all the kindergartners will have trampled the snow. The playground will look like the surface of the moon.

STUDENT 5

(looking out window)

Why didn't they call a Snow Day. I lay in bed listening to the radio, hoping, hoping, but no, this city never calls a Snow Day.

STUDENT 6

Classroom fever. I have classroom fever.

MISS PEDAGOG

(facing class)

Today, class, we'll work on three-digit subtraction problems.

(Miss Pedagog turns and writes a three digit subtraction problem on board.)

$$\begin{array}{r} 471 \\ -235 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

MISS PEDAGOG (CONT'D)

(work problem on whiteboard)

Now watch, class. First you look at the ones place and ask yourself '*Can I take five from one?*' No. So you must regroup. Now you take one ten from the tens place and it becomes six tens. Then you add that ten to the ones place and it becomes eleven ones. Now...

(MISS PEDAGOG'S voice trails off but she completes the problem on whiteboard while students talk.)

STUDENT 6

Classroom fever. I have classroom fever.

STUDENT 7

(looking out the window)

Before school I didn't have a chance to touch a single snowflake.

STUDENT 8

(looking out window)

Me neither. And recess is still one hour, forty-eight minutes, and thirteen seconds away.

STUDENT 9

Twelve seconds...Eleven seconds...

MISS PEDAGOG

(facing class)

Now, what do you do if there is a zero in the tens place. Like in this problem for instance.

(Miss Pedagog turns toward whiteboard. She erases first problem and writes another one.)

$$\begin{array}{r} 302 \\ -156 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

MISS PEDAGOG

(working problem on board)

Now class, you must again start by looking at the ones place. Ask yourself do you need to regroup? Yes, you can't take six from two. So what do you do?

(MISS PEDAGOG'S voice trails off but she completes the problem while students talk.)

STUDENT 1

(looking out window)

Think of all the things I can do in the snow. I can go sledding or skiing or snowboarding.

STUDENT 2

(looking out window)

By tomorrow, all that wonderful snow might be gone.

STUDENT 3

(looking out window and sings)

Let it snow. Let it snow. Let it snow.

STUDENT 8

One hour, forty-one minutes, and six seconds until recess.

STUDENT 6

My classroom fever is worse than ever.

MISS PEDAGOG

(facing class)

And sometimes you must regroup twice in a problem. Like in this one.

(MISS PEDAGOG turns toward whiteboard and erases problem. She writes another one.)

520

-237

MISS PEDAGOG

(working problem on whiteboard)

Now class, you must again start by looking at the ones place. Ask yourself do you need to regroup? Yes, you can't take seven from zero. So what do you do?...

(Miss Pedagog's voice trails off but she completes the problem on whiteboard while students talk.)

STUDENT 1

(starts scratching arm)

Man, I itch. My arm itches like crazy. What's going on?

(pulls up shirt sleeve. Plus and minus signs cover his/her arm.)
 Hey! There are red spots on my arm!
 (scratches other arm and pulls up other shirt sleeve. Plus and minus signs cover this arm, too.)
 No, they're not spots; they're plus and minus signs. My arms are covered with plus and minus signs!

STUDENT 2
 (begins scratching and pulls up sleeve.)
 There are things are on my arm, too. They're numbers! I'm covered with numbers! That's a one, and a two, and a three. There's a four, five, six, and a seven. An eight is on my wrist and a nine is by my elbow.

STUDENT 3
 (scratches side. lifts shirt and inspects skin.)
 Yikes! I have itchy, red spots on me, too. They're times and division signs.
 (looks closer)
 There are also numbers and equal signs! Yikes! Entire math problems are breaking out all over me! ****

MISS PEDAGOG
 (turns toward class)
 What's this. Did some of you say you itch and have broken out in a red rash?

(STUDENTS 1, 2&3 nod while continuing to scratch.)

MISS PEDAGOG
 Did you say your rash is in the form of numbers and math symbols.

(STUDENTS 1,2,&3 nod again while continuing to scratch.)

MISS PEDAGOG
 (walks up to Student 1 and inspects arm)
 Goodness I know what this is. I've never seen this rash before but I learned about it in teacher's college. I'm almost certain you have broken out in... Math Rashes!

STUDENT 1
 (still scratching)
 Math Rashes?

STUDENT 2
 (still scratching)
 Math Rashes?

STUDENT 3
 (still scratching)
 Math Rashes?

MISS PEDAGOG
 (nodding)
 Fortunately, except for the itching, Math Rashes are harmless. They can't spread like a poison ivy rash.

STUDENT 4
 (scratching legs)
 I think I have Math Rashes, too.
 (pulls up pants leg)
 Yep, fractions and equal signs. I have Math Rashes all over me.

STUDENT 5
 (pulls at neck of T-shirt and checks shoulder)
 And so do I...
 (looks closer and scratches)
 ... Multiplication facts are covering my shoulder. Six times six is thirty-six. Seven times seven is forty nine.

STUDENT 6
 (scratching back)
 Me too. I think I have Math Rashes on my back. I can't see them but they sure do itch.

MISS PEDAGOG
 Goodness. In teacher college, I learned what to do about bee stings, mosquito bites, and poison ivy bumps, but I don't remember any cure for Math Rashes.

(MISS PEDAGOG wanders around room inspecting the student's Math Rashes. By now everyone is scratching.)

MISS PEDAGOG
 Math Rashes? Math Rashes? Like most rashes this can only mean one thing, you've all had a allergic reaction to something, something in this classroom. But what could it be? You haven't eaten anything. You haven't touched anything. How can we cure these Math Rashes and get back to our math lesson.

(Students scratch even harder.)

STUDENT 7
 Teacher, when you mention math, my itching get worse.

STUDENT 8

(scratches back of neck)

Mine, too. The subtraction problems on my ankles itch the most.

STUDENT 9

(scratching back of hand)

Could our Math Rashes have something to do with all the math we've done this morning?

MISS PEDAGOG

(nodding)

I have an idea. I'll do an experiment. Ready... Class, take out some paper and a pencil. It's time for a pop math quiz.

(Students scratch faster.)

STUDENT 1

(scratching)

That was awful. Just thinking about more math made my Math Rashes itch more.

STUDENT 2

(scratching)

I'd rather have poison ivy any day rather than Math Rashes.

STUDENT 3

(scratching)

Math. We've become allergic to math.

STUDENT 4

(scratching)

Right. I'm allergic to pollen, and I must also be allergic to doing too much math!

MISS PEDAGOG

OK, so now that we know what's caused your Math Rashes, what can the cure be? You can't sit here all day, scratching.

STUDENT 5

(scratching)

Teacher, maybe... just maybe... since too much math work caused our Math Rashes, maybe...just maybe... doing the opposite thing might get rid of them.

STUDENT 6

(scratching)

And the opposite of work it play!

STUDENT 7

Maybe if we all go outside and play in the snow, our Math Rashes will go away.

STUDENT 8

Whatever we do let's do it quickly. I don't think I can stand any more itching.

STUDENT 9

Me neither! These Math Rashes are making me hate math.

MISS PEDAGOG

OK, I think you're right class. To cure these Math Rashes we must go outside and play right away.

(steps toward down stage toward window.)

So your next assignment is to put on your wraps and head straight to the playground.

(Students stare at teacher.)

STUDENT 1 AND 2

Snow tunnels and snow forts!

STUDENTS 3 AND 4

Snowballs and snow boulders!

STUDENTS 5

Snow slides!

STUDENTS 7 AND 8

Snow angels!

STUDENT 9

Snow everything!

STUDENT 5

No more Math Rashes!

STUDENT 6

No more Classroom Fever!

ALL STUDENTS

Snow!

MISS PEDAGOG

Now no arguing about it. No more math for today, class. You have your assignment. Make sure you play hard and long out in the snow. We'll stay outside until I'm sure your Math Rashes are gone for good.

(Students cheer and start for door stage left.)

STUDENT 7

Dibs on the kickball wall.

STUDENT 8

I'll beat you out to the soccer field.

STUDENT 9

We'll be the first one out there! No other class has touched the snow yet.

(students exit stage left)

MISS PEDAGOG

(puts on coat and scarf)

Math Rashes! Itchy Math Rashes! Goodness, there's so much about teaching I still need to learn.

(Miss Pedagog faces stage left)

MISS PEDAGOG

(calling to class)

Wait for me, class. Let's build the world's tallest snowperson!

(MISS PEDAGOG exits stage left. *Let it Snow* music plays.)

End of Play