

# Amaze Curriculum Guide

**GRADES 6–8 | The physics of illusion, technology on stage, and how magic history built modern spectacle**

## How To Use This Guide

Amaze runs 2 hours 15 minutes including intermission and is suitable for all ages. This guide is built for a single field-trip visit: one pre-show lesson, structured observation during the performance, and one post-show discussion or written task. Every section is optional — take what fits your unit.

## Before The Show

- Introduce Harry Houdini as a historical figure: immigrant, self-promoter, escape artist, debunker of frauds.
- Discuss what changed between 1926 and today in technology available to a performer.
- Set a purpose for viewing: students track one illusion from setup to reveal.

## Key Vocabulary

- **Misdirection** — deliberately guiding an audience's attention away from the method.
- **Method** — how an effect is actually accomplished.
- **Effect** — what the audience experiences.
- **Persistence of vision** — the eye briefly retains an image after it disappears.
- **Spectacle** — large-scale staging designed to overwhelm the senses.
- **Skepticism** — withholding belief until evidence supports it.

## While You Watch

- Diagram the stage layout: where are the sightlines, entrances and blind spots?
- Identify one illusion that could not have been performed 100 years ago, and one that could.
- Track a single object through an illusion and note every moment it leaves your view.

## After The Show: Discussion

- Which illusion depended most on technology, and which depended most on human attention?
- Houdini exposed fraudulent mediums while performing illusions himself. Is there a contradiction there?
- How does a performer earn an audience's trust before breaking their expectations?

- Write a paragraph arguing whether knowing the method would have improved or ruined your experience.

### **Activity: Effect vs. Method Lab**

- In groups, choose one illusion from the show and write the EFFECT in one sentence.
- Propose two competing hypotheses for the METHOD, each with the physical evidence that supports it.
- Present to the class; classmates challenge each hypothesis with counter-evidence from what they observed.
- Close by naming which hypothesis survived scrutiny and what evidence would settle it.

### **Standards Alignment**

Connects to NGSS MS-PS4 (Waves and electromagnetic radiation), NYS Social Studies (industrialization, immigration and mass culture), and ELA argument writing.

Booking: school groups of 10 or more save 30%. Request dates at [amazemagic.com/schools](http://amazemagic.com/schools). Jamie Allan does not perform at all shows; select performances star Harry De Cruz.