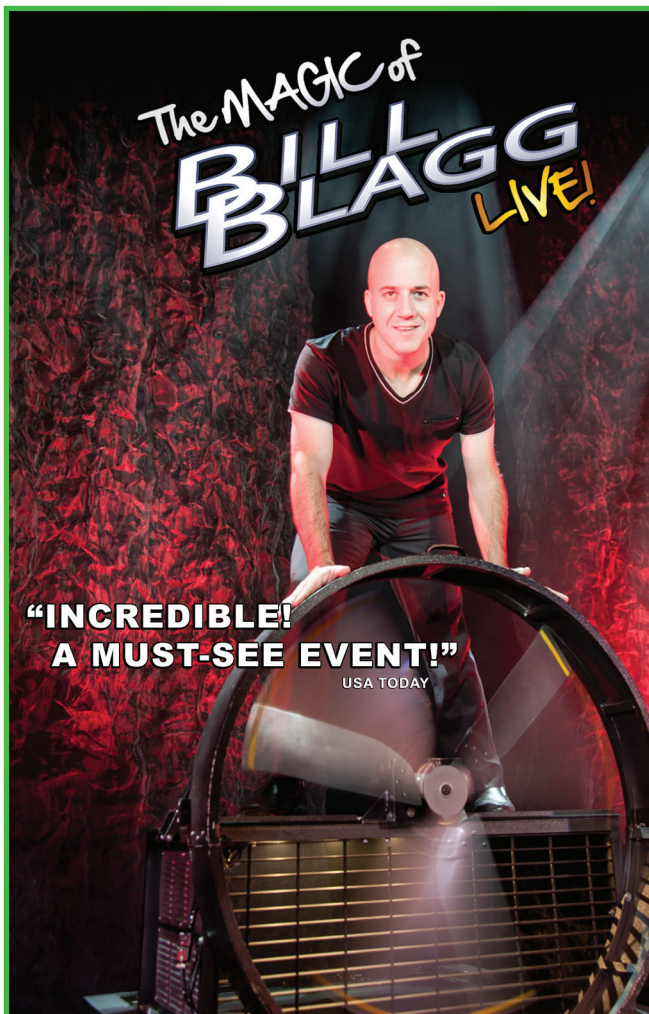


## Teacher Resource Guide:

# The Magic of Bill Blagg LIVE!



### *Before the Show*

- About the Performer
- Examining Magic
- Coming to the Theater

### *Pre-Show Activities*

- Discussion Topics
- Magic Terms

### *Post-Show Activities*

- Magic Tricks for Younger Students
- Magic Tricks for Older Students
- Resources

## ABOUT THE PERFORMER

Bill's first big break occurred in 1998 at the Abbott Magic Get-Together in Colon, Michigan. He entered the Adult Stage Competition and debuted his now-signature effect, The Dancing Hank. Members of the audience, including many magicians, were astounded with Bill's routine. Not only did he give the hank attitude and style, he made the hank dance in ways that were all but impossible! Though countless hours of practice amounted to only four minutes of stage time in Colon, Bill turned the magic world on its head by becoming the youngest contestant to win the Adult Stage Competition at Abbott's. In his first major competition, Bill had joined the ranks of his idols. The buzz circulated through the convention and people noted, "We'll be seeing that young man in Vegas or on TV in the near future."

Bill insists that though the show is advertised as *The Magic of Bill Blagg*, none of his success would be possible without the dedication of his crew. "I'm very fortunate to have such extreme dedication from these key people," Bill says with a big smile on his face. "Putting together a show is a long process, sometimes it takes over a year, and without the help and support of my crew, none of it would be possible. They're amazing." With college out of the way, where does one find Bill when he's not creating, producing and practicing magic? "Well, I'm involved in all aspects of the show. There's a lot of things that people

don't see, things that go on behind the scenes. There are a lot of meetings, but I love all that."

When Bill does have a free minute, he enjoys dinner with friends, maybe a movie, and he loves talking with his closest friends. "Just relaxing. That's what I like. So much of my life revolves around my magic that sometimes it's nice to put it all aside and just be with my friends."

What does the future hold for Bill Blagg? More magic, that's for sure. How can magic still hold Bill's attention after 17 years of dreaming and inventing the next big thing? "I do it to see the smile on people's faces. Seeing their looks of amazement, hearing their laughter and knowing I'm making a difference in their day, even if it's only for a short period of time. Those are the greatest highlights of being an entertainer and that's why I love it. I want people to come to my show and enjoy every single moment. That's the reason I'm always pushing myself harder, to give people what they want," Bill says.

The future is limitless. With an attitude aimed to please and a talent as large as they come, Bill is truly changing reality one city at a time!

Visit his official website to learn more: [billblagg.com](http://billblagg.com)



## Examining Magic

The fascination with tricks and illusions is universal and timeless. Before you can examine magic in detail, it is helpful to let children discover the broadness of the topic. As you are introducing magic to the group, brainstorm all the different types of activities that might fall under the category of magic.

Making things disappear, appear and change form is described as magic. Seeming to defy the “natural” order of the world (e.g. defying gravity, walking through walls) is called magical. Moreover, amazing feats that stun or surprise are deemed “magical.” You may soon find your list of magic acts getting quite lengthy!

Next, it is helpful to look at some synonyms for magic. Illusions, tricks, stunts and deceptions are all used to describe magic acts. Discuss with your students why something might be called a “stunt,” whereas something else is called an “illusion.” Decide how broadly you would like to define the category of magic. Work with the children to create a working definition for the topic of magic.



## Coming to the Theater

Playhouse Square is an exciting field trip destination! As the country's largest performing arts center outside of New York, the not-for-profit Playhouse Square attracts more than one million guests to 1,000+ performances and events each year. Playhouse Square thus acts as a catalyst for economic growth and vitality within the region. When you visit, be sure to note the GE Chandelier, the world's largest outdoor chandelier, and the retro Playhouse Square sign with its 9-foot-tall letters!

As audience members, you and your students play a vital role in the success of the performances. You are part of a community that creates the theater experience. For many students, this may be their first time viewing a live theater production. We encourage teachers to discuss some of the differences between coming to the theater and watching a television show, attending a sporting event or viewing a movie at the cinema. Here are a few points to start the discussion:

- ◆ Students are led into the theater and seated by an usher.
- ◆ Theaters are built to magnify sound. Even the slightest whisper can be heard throughout the theater. Remember that not only can those around you hear you; the performers can too.
- ◆ Appropriate responses such as laughing or applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage; they will let you know what is appropriate.
- ◆ There is no food, drink or gum permitted in the theater.
- ◆ Photography and videotaping of performances is not permitted.
- ◆ When the houselights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please turn your attention toward the stage.
- ◆ After the performance, you will be dismissed by bus number. Check around your seat to make sure you have all of your personal belongings.

*An exciting destination for field trips and more!*



## Pre-Show Activities

### Discussion Topics

Use the following questions to start classroom discussions prior to attending *The Magic of Bill Blagg Live!*

- What is magic?
- Name some famous magicians.
- What is your favorite magic trick?
- Does anyone in our class know a magic trick?
- Do magicians have magical powers or do they use science to fool us?
- Where do magicians learn how to do magic?
- Have you ever seen a live magic show before?
- Where do you think you could go to buy magic tricks?
- What props could you use in a magic trick?
- Do you know of any television shows that feature magic?





## Magic Terms

**Abracadabra:** magic word used to help magicians “make something happen.” In reality, it is derived from ancient cabalistic symbols and at one time was believed to hold real power. The word may be derived from the Hebrew Ha-b'rakah, meaning “the blessing” or “the sacred name.”

**Ace:** either the playing card with a singular pip, or the side of a die with only one spot. From the Latin word as, or unit.

**Attract:** to come together

**Center of Gravity:** the point where the effect of gravity on an object is equal

**Fakir:** a performer of seemingly miraculous feats (such as fire walking, snake charming and lying on a bed of nails), usually with some religious significance. This term is sometimes mistakenly used to describe a magician or conjurer; the proper Indian term for “magician” is really jadoo wallah.

**Hat Production:** not the production of hats, but rather the seemingly impossible production of many items from a single hat. Hartz's “Devil of a Hat” routine and Thurston's “All Out of a Hat” were spectacular productions. This effect lost its popularity when fashion changed and men no longer wore hats; today, the hat would seem to be a prop rather than an “ordinary object.”

**Hocus Pocus:** nonsense phrase used to help the magician “make something happen.” Some feel that the word is a corruption of a Latin phrase used in the Mass; others say that it was the name of a magician. Still another source considers it a reference to the Norse folktale sorcerer Ochus Bochus. It could also be a meaningless phrase, created for its sound alone.

**Illusion:** something that produces a false impression of reality

**Misdirection:** focusing attention on one thing in order to distract attention from another

**Perspective:** the way object appears to the eye

**Levitate:** to float in air

**Magnetism:** the invisible force that causes items to attract or repel each other

**Mirror:** an object with at least one reflective surface

**Mirror Image:** the image seen when looking into a mirror

**Plane Mirror:** a mirror with a flat surface. Most common type of mirror.

**Presto:** magic word taken from the musical term presto, for “quickly”

**Reflection:** the bouncing of light from a surface

**Refraction:** the change in direction of light as it moves from one transparent substance to another

**Profonde:** large pocket in the tails of a long tuxedo coat that allows the magician to vanish items by tossing them down and behind him into his pocket

**Servante:** pouch or shelf positioned on the magician's side of a table, hidden from the spectator's view, but allowing the magician to dispose of items by secretly dropping them onto the servante while the hands seem to always remain in full view above the table

## Post-Show Activities

# Magic Tricks for Younger Students

**Trickiness Level: 1 out of 3**

## Crayon ESP

Child picks a crayon from a box. You guess the color with mind-reading powers!

**Props:** A small box of crayons.

### Trick:

1. Stand with your back to your student. Put your hands behind your back and ask them to pick a crayon out of the box and place it into your hands.
2. Once you can feel it in your fingers, turn to face your student with your hands concealed behind you. While you're talking about the magic, scrape the crayon with your right thumbnail so some wax gets stuck between your finger and the nail.
3. Keeping the crayon behind your back in your left hand, transfer your student's thoughts to your own with your right hand. Wave your fingers in front of their face, repeating, "I'm reading your thoughts" and "I'm moving them into my mind."
4. As you're waving your hand in front of your eyes, sneak a glimpse of the color under your thumbnail.
5. Reveal the answer, adding a few dramatic abracadabras for effect.



## It'll Cost You

**Preparation:** You'll need a quarter, a piece of tinfoil just bigger than the quarter and a small square of paper (big enough to fully cover the coin). Place the tinfoil over one side of the quarter and around the rim and gently rub it to set the coin's impression on the foil. Remove the quarter and cut off any excess foil.

### Trick:

Place the foil quarter in the palm of your hand and show the audience; tell them you're going to make it disappear. Place the piece of paper over the quarter, wave your magic wand, say the magic words and remove the paper. When the audience sees that it's still there, say you'll try again. When it doesn't work for the third time, apologize to the audience and crumple the paper and the foil into a tiny ball. Make sure the paper covers the foil so it looks like the quarter has been crushed.



## Magic Touch

**Preparation:** Fill an aluminum pie plate with just enough water to cover the bottom. Arrange some toothpicks in a square in the middle of the pie plate, making sure their tips overlap so they stay together. Dip another toothpick in dish detergent.



**Trick:** Have your audience gather around the pie plate, which you can either set on a table or the ground. Tell them that you will fill a toothpick with your power and then use it to make the square of toothpicks separate. Take out your toothpick dipped in dish detergent, say your magic words and place the soap-dipped end into the middle of the square. The soap will cause the toothpicks to fly apart in the water.

# Magic Tricks for Older Students

**Trickiness Level: 3 out of 3**

## The Linking Paper Clips

Two paper clips spring into the air and mystifyingly link themselves together!

**Props:** A dollar bill and two paper clips.

**Trick:**

1. Take the dollar bill and accordion-fold it into thirds so it's shaped like an S.
2. Attach one of the paper clips to the front of the bill from the top, with the shorter side of the clip facing you. The clip should go over the outer layer of the folded bill as well as the middle layer, and it should be clipped near the edge of the bill, not the fold.
3. Attach the other paper clip to the back of the bill from the top, with the shorter side facing away from you. Again, the clip should go over the outer layer of the folded bill as well as the middle layer.
4. Take one end of the bill in each hand and give it a quick snap. The clips will fly into the air and when you pick them up, they'll be attached. How? Magic, of course.



## Brain Power

**Preparation:** Before you perform the trick, choose a friend to assist you and explain to them how it works. Tell your assistant to always inquire about the audience-chosen object after an item that's the color black. Your assistant will appear to be "testing" your powers in front of the audience.

**Trick:** Tell your audience that you have psychic powers. Ask your friend to assist you, and then instruct the audience that they must choose an object when you leave the room. When they call you back in, ask the audience to concentrate on the item and then ask your assistant to start testing your powers. Have your assistant go through different objects in the room asking: "Is it the yellow chair? Is it the green rug?" etc. Astound everyone when you correctly identify the object!



## All Fall Down

**Preparation:** Get a dishtowel, a plastic cup and a small, flat eraser. Sit at a table and have your audience stand on the opposite side.

**Trick:** Put the eraser on the table and cover it with the cup; then place the dishtowel on top. Lift both the cup and dishtowel up, revealing the eraser, and ask your audience to concentrate on it. While they're focused on the eraser, discreetly drop the cup into your lap, but continue holding the towel as if the cup were still there. Then put the towel back over the eraser and smash your hand down on it. At the same time, drop the cup from your lap to the floor. Lift the towel to show that the eraser is still there, but that the cup has fallen "through" the table.

## Critical Response Questions

Students develop their comprehension when they reflect upon what they wondered about, noticed and felt. Ignite a classroom discussion with the following critical response questions:

1. What was your favorite magic trick in the show and why?
2. How do magicians create magic tricks?
  - *They use the steps of the scientific method. They develop a theory (hypothesis) and then they test it. If it fails, they change one variable and test it again. They repeat this procedure over and over until they get their theory to work.*
3. Do magic tricks always work?
  - *No. Just like scientists, magicians must keep experimenting to find ways to make illusions work. Some ideas NEVER work and others take YEARS to create.*
4. How do magicians use mirrors to make magic?
  - *They use mirrors to reflect light to make a person think they are seeing something (a mirror image) that is not really there.*
5. What type of mirror do you think Bill used to make things disappear in the magic box?
  - *A plane mirror.*
6. What can you do with an object when you find its center of gravity?
  - *Make it balance.*
7. If you could learn one magic trick you saw today, which one would it be and why?
8. What do you think was the most difficult magic trick in the show? Why?
9. What would the name of *your* magic show be?



# RESOURCES

## Books

**52 Series: Cool Tricks for Kids Cards** by Chronicle Books. Chronicle Books Publishing, (September 1, 2008).

**101 Ways to Amaze & Entertain: Amazing Magic & Hilarious Jokes to Try on Your Friends & Family (101 Things) Flexibound** by Peter Gross (Author), Walter Foster Jr. Creative Team (Author). Walter Foster Jr. Special edition (October 5, 2015).

**Big Magic for Little Hand: 25 Astounding Illusions for Young Magicians** by Joshua Jay. Workman Publishing Company, 2014

**Card Tricks for Beginners** by Wilfrid Jonson. Dover Magic Books Publications, 2004.

**Easy-to-Do Card Tricks for Children (Become a Magician)** by Karl Fulves. Dover Publications, 1989.

**Joshua Jay's Amazing Book of Cards: Tricks, Shuffles, Stunts & Hustles Plus Bets You Can't Lose** by Joshua Jay. Workman Publishing Company; Pap/DVD edition, 2010.

**Kids' Magic Secrets: Simple Magic Tricks & Why They Work** by Loris Bree. Marlor Press Publisher, 2003.

**Magic Science: 50 Jaw-Dropping, Mind-Boggling, Head-Scratching Activities for Kids** by Jim Wiess. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

**Science Magic Tricks** by Nathan Shalit. New York: Rinehart and Winston Publishing, 1981.

## Websites

**About Magic:**  
[magic.about.com](http://magic.about.com)

**Best Magic Trick Resources:**  
[blifaloo.com/magic/resources.php](http://blifaloo.com/magic/resources.php)

**Card Magic Tricks**  
[learncardmagictricks.co.uk](http://learncardmagictricks.co.uk)

**Card Trick Central:**  
[cardtricksite.com](http://cardtricksite.com)

**Free Magic Tricks:**  
[freemagictricks4u.com](http://freemagictricks4u.com)

**Good Tricks:**  
[goodtricks.net](http://goodtricks.net)

**Learn Magic Tricks:**  
[learnmagictricks.org](http://learnmagictricks.org)

**Magic Tricks:**  
[magictricks.com](http://magictricks.com)

**Mr. Magician**  
[mrmagician.co.uk](http://mrmagician.co.uk)

## YouTube

[youtube.com/user/MagicTricks](https://youtube.com/user/MagicTricks)

[youtube.com/watch?v=eRtLOABCWOY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=eRtLOABCWOY)

[youtube.com/watch?v=C06dC5liFRs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=C06dC5liFRs)

## Apps

**Magic-Tricks Tutorial:** Use the Magic-Tricks Tutorial to learn awesome magic tricks in no time! This app teaches tricks in four categories: card tricks, coins, mind reading and objects. Magic-Tricks Tutorial explains the basics of magic tricks in easy-to-follow step-by-step-instructions. Additionally, the pictures help you to better understand the instructions and recreate the tricks. From the "Disappearing Coin" to "Mind Reading," the whole spectrum of magic tricks is presented. For Droid Phones. **FREE**