The Alabama Shakespeare Festival
2013 Study Materials and Activities for

Around the World in 80 Days

by Mark Brown
from the novel by Jules Verne

Contact ASF at: www.asf.net
1.800.841-4273
Welcome to *Around the World in 80 Days*

All aboard for travel adventure, 1872 style! The latest modes of transport whisk Phileas Fogg and his French servant, Passepartout, all the way around the world to win a £20,000 wager if the trip can be made in 80 days. While that time frame may sound snail-like to 21st century travelers, it was the cutting edge of mechanical efficiency and technological advancement when Verne wrote the novel, setting the action at the very time the novel was being serialized in a Paris magazine so that some readers thought it was actually taking place.

Verne combines a coolheaded, unflappable Englishman and his warm-hearted French servant into a dynamic duo the likes of Holmes and Watson or Batman and Robin. Their beat-the-clock progress hits a few predictable snags, such as a typhoon and inaccurate travel information, and a few unpredictable challenges, such as a drugged woman about to be burnt on her dead husband’s pyre in India or an attack by Indians on another continent—ours. Once the widowed maharini, Aouda, is rescued from immolation, a second motivation subtly enters the action: she now needs a future away from India.

The lively action of the journey is doubled by the wild and inventive action of the story’s theatrical telling, for seven actors take on all the roles in this episodic tale, and designers find creative and witty means to travel the world and put an elephant on stage. "Eighty Days" never passed more quickly than in this energetic version of Verne’s novel.

*These Study Materials include:*
- information about author Jules Verne
- information about the geography and technological advances on which the novel depends
- analysis of the novel’s structure and characters
- activities and discussion/research topics
- things to watch for in the play

**About Adapter**

**Mark Brown**

Mark Brown is a New York City actor who has become a full-time writer. He has not only adapted Verne’s novel for the stage in an award-winning script seen, of course, around the world, but also Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* into *The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge* as well as a stage version of *The Little Prince* (with Paul Krienen). His other plays include *China, The Whole Enchilada; Poe; and Deep into That Darkness Peering* (with Mark Rector). He has acted in film and television and on stage.

The genesis of this show came during a discussion with friends about adapting novels. When Verne was mentioned along with how cool the balloon would be, he said, "There’s no balloon”—not in the novel, not in the play.
The Novelist Jules Verne

A prolific and industrious writer, the French writer Jules Verne is often called the father, or grandfather, of modern science fiction along with his English counterpart H. G. Wells—although Verne himself would have seized the "science" and left the "fiction" title to Wells. Nonetheless, he is popularly credited with prophesying space travel, the submarine, and a host of other modern developments.

Raised and educated in Nantes, France, by his lawyer father in order to take over his law practice, Verne benefitted from studying law in Paris, because there he began writing—at first poems, then thirty plays and more than 20 short stories, and eventually 65 novels, a collection that in 1866 his publisher christened Les Voyages extraordinaires. These "extraordinary journeys" started with his first novel in 1862 published by Jules Hetzel, Five Weeks in a Balloon, about searching the unknown in Africa, and include the famous Journey to the Center of the Earth (1864), From the Earth to the Moon (1865), Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea (1869), The Mysterious Island (1874), and of course Around the World in 80 Days (1872)—which contains no science fiction at all.

Verne, His Publisher, and His Critics

His relationship with Hetzel gave him a secure publishing contract, but it also determined the nature of much of his work. While the drafts of Verne's novels often had tragic or violent endings, by the time Hetzel had edited them for serialization in his Magasin d'Education et de Récitation, they were upbeat adventure stories suitable for younger readers as well as adults. As a result, for much of the 20th century, critics considered Verne's work youth fiction, and he never gained the highest recognition of a French writer, admission to the Académie Française. Only after Hetzel's death in 1886 did critics notice a (not so) sudden darkening in Verne's work, prompting such comments as "in later novels, the author's pessimism about the future of human civilization reflected the doom-laden fin-de-siècle atmosphere."

In 1978, on the 150th anniversary of his birth, French scholars began reconsidering Verne's canon, and subsequently many critical views have emerged about the writer from every stripe and strain of critical thought. Perhaps best is the way readers have begun to perceive Verne's creative uses of narrative. And many critics claim that "on a cumulative basis" Verne is "the most translated writer of all time."

A Jules Verne Timeline

• 1828—born on February 8 in Nantes. He has one brother and three sisters
• 1830—July revolution in France
• 1833–7—boarding school
• 1846—passes his baccalauréat (secondary school diploma) and begins writing
• 1847–49—influential trip to England and Scotland; writes Backward to Britain
• 1851—befriends a group of explorers and scientists and begins including science in his fiction
• 1857—marriage to a young widow, Honorine de Viane; works as stockbroker
• 1859–60—influential trip to England and Scotland; writes Around the World
• 1863—January 31, Hetzel publishes Verne's first novel, an instant success
• 1864—with a new one-book contract from Hetzel, Verne writes four books, including one on Poe and Journey to the Center of the Earth. His futuristic novel Paris in the 20th Century is refused and not published until long after Verne's death
• 1865—new contract specifies 200,000 words per year (about 800 pages typed).
• 1867—trip to the United States
• 1869—20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and Around the Moon.
• 1870—Franco-Prussian War
• 1872—Around the World in 80 Days
• 1873–4—their works published in serialized form in Vehicule, France's premier newspaper, and in L'Illustration, the most influential illustrated journal in France
• 1874—Verne elected to local council, which he serves on for next 15 years
• 1879–80—Verne begins adapting his novels for the stage, rejected an earlier draft in 1870. Verne begins adapting his novels for the stage, including 80 Days
• 1879–80—The Begum's Fortune, a novel about the founding of two cities, one militaristic and one artistic, a parable about Germany and France
• 1886—shot by his mentally challenged nephew and lamed for life. Hetzel dies
• 1888—Verne elected to local council, which he serves on for next 15 years
• 1889—his son Michel begins writing (and publishing under his father's name, which he does more assiduously once Verne dies)
• 1896–7—Verne in ill health
• 1905—diabetes attack and Verne's death
• 1905–14—Verne's son Michel publishes many Verne manuscripts along with some of his own works. The original, unaltered Verne works are finally published 1985–93

Publisher Hetzel's Description of Verne's Mission as Writer

Verne was to "summarize all the knowledge—geographical, geological, physical, astronomical—amassed by modern science, and to retrace, in the attractive and picturesque form which is his own, the history of the universe."

Lucky for the novels, his "attractive and picturesque form" was also very artful.

Quotation at right from:
http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/verne.htm
Quotation above from:
Verne's Extraordinary Journeys—Oh, The Places You'll Go!

The series of novels that made Jules Verne's name in adventure and early science fiction writing were, Verne insisted, all based on aspects of contemporary science—with a bit of imagination added. Travel/adventure literature may be one of storytelling's oldest genres, but it holds its fascination for readers. No matter the advances or technology, the world can still seem vast, and the unknown extends to the limits of deep space.

Though the territories may be uncharted, the human scope of Verne's novels is often quite limited. As Lee Krystek comments,

Verne was fascinated in building a closed universe in which his characters could act. In some cases it was a balloon basket, in others an island, cave or a ship. Almost always Verne's heroes are characters that can thrive in that universe, making do with whatever available materials there are to build a solution to the obstacles that arise.

Consider how true this description is for the action and characters of Around the World in 80 Days. While Fogg travels the world, isn't he mostly in a steamer cabin or a railway car? The narrator annotates the time and space traveled, but do we feel its passage with Fogg?

Not surprisingly, given the need for foreign turf and adventures, Verne's novels often involve castaways on the model of Robinson Crusoe, called robinsonades. Verne also uses financial challenges, love triangles, and lost family members to drive his plots. Several of his adventure novels are more intrigue-driven than disaster/survival adventures, and many examine human desires and fascination with technology for good or ill—as in his later novels where, as Krystek explains,

in Propeller Island, he lamented destruction of the native cultures of various Polynesian islands. In the story The Ice Sphinx he predicted the decimation of whale populations. His book The Begum's Fortune warns that technology and scientific knowledge in the hands of evil people can lead to destruction.

With such insights as well as his unpublished futuristic vision of a Paris with glass and steel skyscrapers, high-speed trains, automobiles fueled by gas, calculators, and global communication, no wonder Verne's novels fascinated late 19th-century readers and continue to do so today.

ACTIVITY
Look at the online National Geographic photoarticle "8 Jules Verne inventions that came true" at:


Destinations for Verne's Early "Journeys"
- Unexplored parts of Africa by hot-air balloon in Five Weeks in a Balloon (1863)
- Paris in the 1960s, a society obsessed with technology (rejected by Hetzel; published in 1994 with a fabricated marketing pitch that it had just been discovered in a family safe)
- The center of the earth entered and exited by volcano in Journey to the Center of the Earth (1864)
- To the moon in a capsule shot from a large cannon in From the Earth to the Moon (1865)
- The North Pole, though the crew mutinies and destroys the ship in The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Hatteras (2 vols., 1866)
- Across South America and south Pacific to find a lost ship captain based on a note in a bottle found in a shark's stomach in The Children of Captain Grant (3 vols., 1868)
- The moon in Round the Moon (1870), a sequel to the earlier novel
- Under the sea, even to Atlantis, with Captain Nemo in a submarine in 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (2 vols., 1870)
- Kalahari Desert in The Adventures of Three Englishmen and Three Russians in Southern Africa (1872)
- Around the world in Around the World in 80 Days (1873)
- Northwest Canada on land that becomes an island after a volcanic-based earthquake in The Fur Country (2 vols., 1873)
- A South Pacific island during Civil War, now overseen by Capt. Nemo and beset by pirates and an erupting volcano in The Mysterious Island (3 vols., 1874)
- Shipwreck on reef in mid-Atlantic (to us, a Bermuda Triangle disaster novel) in The Chancellor (1875)
- On a comet passing Earth in Hector Servadac (2 vols., 1877)

Other destinations: various parts of Africa, a Scottish mine beset by a "goblin," all over the Pacific, China, U.S., India with steam-powered "elephant," the Amazon River, the Black Sea, Greece, around the world in a heavier-than-air vehicle, Transylvania, Egypt, Venezuela, Siberia, the Sahara

"We are all, in one way or another, the children of Jules Verne."
—Science fiction author Ray Bradbury

Cover of the original 1873 novel, Le tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours, which appeared after the work was published serially in Hetzel's magazine in the fall of 1872

Illustration from Verne's From the Earth to the Moon, about a man on a cannon—a rocket launch shot from a cannon—and that returned to splash down in the Pacific Ocean

Quotations from:
http://www.unmuseum.org/verne.htm
Starting Line/ Finish Line: London's Reform Club

Founded in 1836 for supporters of the 1832 Reform Bill that extended voting rights to more middle-class property owners and allowed the prime minister, Cabinet, and House of Commons more independence from the monarch's influence, throughout the 19th century the Reform Club served as unofficial party headquarters for the Liberals in British government. After that time, the Club slowly evolved into a men's social club that finally began admitting women members in 1981. Famous members include politicians Sir Winston Churchill, William Evert Gladstone, and David Lloyd George, writers Henry James, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, H. G. Wells, and William Makepeace Thackeray, actor Sir Henry Irving, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall (Prince Charles’s wife) and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, the famous opera soprano.

Designed after the Farnese Palace in Rome, the Reform Club's address on Pall Mall puts it in the heart of London, neighbored by two other prestigious London clubs, the Travellers and Athenaeum. To this day it maintains a jacket-and-tie dress code and is open to members only.

At the time of the novel, a men's club had an exclusive membership, and Verne makes much of otherwise unknown Fogg gaining membership. Such a club offered dining privileges, a library—the Reform Club's houses more than 75,000 books—social parlors for conversation and games, and rooms for those wanting to stay the night.
### Time and Timetables for the Journey

**The Calculation in the *Morning Chronicle* (basis of wager)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>London to Suez</strong> (via Mont Cenis and Brindisi)</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>by rail and steamers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suez to Bombay</strong> by steamer</td>
<td>13 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bombay to Calcutta</strong> by rail</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calcutta to Hong-Kong</strong> by steamer</td>
<td>13 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hong Kong to Yokohama</strong> by steamer</td>
<td>6 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yokohama to San Francisco</strong> by steamer</td>
<td>22 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>San Francisco to New York</strong> by rail</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New York to London</strong> by steamer and rail</td>
<td>9 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Phileas Fogg’s Actual Journey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AR Oct. 9</td>
<td>6 1/2 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Oct. 20</td>
<td>11 days</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Oct 25</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>incomplete rail line; by elephant; saves Aouda from suttee; arrested; posts bail</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Nov. 6</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>gale wind and tempest</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Nov. 14</td>
<td>8 days</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>ships delayed; typhoon; catch steamer in Shanghai</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Dec. 3</td>
<td>22 days</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Dec. 11</td>
<td>7+ days</td>
<td>late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Dec. 7: weak bridge delay Dec. 8: Indian attack, left by train; 20 hours late; by wind sledge to Omaha; to NY, miss ship to England by 35 minutes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR Dec. 20</td>
<td>8+ days</td>
<td>&quot;late&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>ship gets to Queenstown, Ireland, train to Dublin, ship to Liverpool, arrested; misses express train, hires a special train to London; arrives 5 minutes late</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 80 days

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### The Wager in Verne’s novel

**Fogg leaves** Wednesday, October 2, 1872 at 8:45 p.m.

**Fogg must return** Saturday, December 21, 1872 at 8:45 p.m.

**Fogg returns** Saturday, December 21, 1897 at 8:50 p.m.

(actual Friday, December 20, 1872 at 8:50 p.m.)

*NOTE*: in the play all these times are listed as ten minutes later because a point is made of Fogg hearing the clock chime as he arrives, but clocks do not chime at 8:50, only on the hour. Even Westminster chimes strike only quarter hours. So Brown moves the times to 8:55 and 9:00 so there can be a dramatic clock chime to mark Fogg’s being late.

### The Money Involved

Fogg’s bank account: £40,000

Amount wagered: £20,000

Cost of trip: £19,000+

£20,000 in today’s currency = £1,324,289 or $2,118,862

So if Fogg wins, he has increased his wealth by 50%; if he loses he is all but bankrupt.

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*Monetary equivalents drawn from Wikipedia article on the novel. Note that such figures are notoriously difficult to establish precisely.*
1872 Travel Advance #1: The Suez Canal

For hundreds of years, explorers and merchant sailors had voyaged east from Europe by rounding the Cape of Good Hope off the southern tip of Africa and returning by the same route laden with exotic goods. That long voyage to Asia changed dramatically with the opening of the Suez Canal in November of 1869, a 102-mile single lane canal linking the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. Phileas Fogg had no chance of circumnavigating the globe in 80 days if he had to sail all the way around Africa to get started. Only the opening of the Suez Canal made the new 80-day "speed circuit" possible by cutting 5,100 miles off the start of his journey.

The Suez Canal in the Novel

While the Suez Canal is one of the major advances that make the novel's story possible, it is the one Verne celebrates least, perhaps because his protagonist is English and the project was French-led. In fact, the novel jumps from London to Suez, so that once the journey starts we next see Phileas Fogg and Passepartout disembarking at the southern end of the canal. That spot is also the first shift in narrative focus from Fogg to Detective Fix, so that while the travelers were crossing Europe and the Mediterranean, the novel traces London's response to the wager and then to the suspicion that Fogg may be the much-sought bank robber.

Detective Fix of Scotland Yard is on the case in Suez, however, waiting for any man who matches the description of the thief. Archetypal Englishman that Fogg is, of course the description will match him well enough, and Fix will turn the voyage and wager into a dramatic pursuit as he desperately tries to get an arrest warrant sent to one of the remaining British ports so he can apprehend the perpetrator before he escapes with the remaining money and also so Fix can collect the reward.

ACTIVITIES about the Suez Canal

- Research the ancient world's attempts to create a canal between the Red Sea and the Nile River or the Mediterranean. How long has a "Suez Canal" been envisioned?
- Research what role Napoleon played in the search for ancient canals in Egypt.
- Research the building of the Suez Canal and the various roles the French and British play in its development and history.
- Research what alternatives to the Suez Canal are available today and when or why they are used.
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1872 Travel Advance #2: Bombay to Calcutta Railway

In the late 1840s India had no passenger railroads at all. Twenty years later, 4,000 miles of track connected Madras with Bombay and Bombay with Calcutta, and a decade later 5,000 more miles of branch lines extended inland. The completion of the Bombay to Calcutta line (now Mumbai to Kolkata) was the last major link in the initial cross-country system; it opened March 7, 1870—just in time for Verne to use it in his novel.

One logical question must be why bother to get off the steamer at all? Why train across India when you could just sail around it and keep going east? One answer may be that the train was involved in the newspaper account that established the wager; it described the new route.

A second answer is the plot—Verne needs to save Aouda so she can help save the day back in London. The novel needs complications; so far, the journey has all been as planned, in fact, ahead of schedule. Verne has several complications in mind, but they only happen if Passepartout is off the steamer to walk in the Temple in his shoes and if they must arrange an elephant for a short cut through the forest to rejoin the rail line in Allahabad.

Moreover, the train across France and Italy was familiar to European readers; the cross-India train was new and the local features not so well known to the French as to India’s colonial rulers, the English.

While in Bombay: Malabar Hill

Passepartout is the sightseer on the journey, and one of his first forays after the long voyage to India is a walk to the highest point in Bombay, Malabar Hill.

On Malabar Hill he finds the Walkeshwar Temple, outside of which is the Banganga Tank where the god Rama, when thirsty, legendarily shot an arrow and water sprang forth. The Tank is the oldest standing structure in the city. The Temple is sacred to the Hindu god Shiva, who acts as both destroyer and benefactor. As a sacred spot, the locale now hosts temples of several different religions.

Malabar Hill is now also one of the priciest neighborhoods in modern Mumbai.

A 1906 Indian locomotive and a map of the early railroad routes in India
European trade with Asia exploded during the Renaissance following negotiations that opened China and Japan—and eventually India—to trade. The quintessential English tea began its craze as an imported product at this time, as did coffee and chocolate.

The 17th- and 18th-Century Trade

The English presence in India began through the East India Company, which established a trade agreement with the Mogul emperor Jahangir in 1614. The Moguls from Afghanistan had conquered northern India a century before and as a result had become both powerful and wealthy. Jahangir's son Shah Jahan brought Islam to India and when his wife died built the Taj Mahal as her tomb.

As the Mogul empire declined in the early 18th century, Europeans tried to dominate India, and the East India Company proved victorious because it had its own army of British and Indian troops (sepoys).

Political Change in 19th-Century India

For another hundred years the East India Company guided India and came to be called "the Raj" (from Sanskrit for "king," raja), though there was as yet no official British political rule of India. That only came about due to the India Mutiny of 1857-8 in northern India, a rebellion of sepoys that led to massacres of the British. In suppressing the mutiny, the British proved equally violent. Afterward, the British crown abolished the East India Company and took over rule of its new colony, though that had never been its goal when trade was established.

In assessing the Mutiny, the British felt that their interest in reform and the presence of Christian missionaries had overlooked the traditions of the Indians, which had grown stronger in response to the British control. Not only the new railways but also new trade markets for Indian crops and goods and a new textile industry helped the country grow.

In the 20th century India became increasingly restive under British control, and an independence movement led by Gandhi's nonviolent protest brought about political separation in 1947.

The Parsees in India

Bombay, where Fogg lands in India, is full of Parsees, but the ones he encounters are in northern India—Aouda and the elephant mahout. Parsees (the term means Persians) are descended from Iranian Zoroastrians who fled to India to avoid a Muslim invasion of Iran in the 10th century.

Parsees worked with and for the British East India Company as they established their position in India, especially in Bombay. The British provided schools for Parsee boys and girls, and as scholar Tanya Luhrmann reports, the Parsees were able to "represent themselves as being like the British" and were considered to be diligent, conscientious, and skillful at a time when the British "saw the other Indians 'as passive, ignorant, irrational, outwardly submissive but inwardly guileful.'"

As a Parsee, Verne describes Aouda as having "an absolutely English education, and from her manners and cultivation she would have been thought a European" (chap. 13). And as a Parsee, both burial and cremation would be forbidden practices.
Getting Off the Train in India

The first major complication Fogg faces in his round-the-world journey is the incomplete railroad line in northern India, an entirely fictional event in 1872 since the completed line had actually been open since 1870. When Sir Francis Cromarty, a British official in the novel, protests that papers reported the line's completion, the train's conductor simply says, "But, generally, the papers were mistaken."

Now the men need alternate transport for the 50 miles to Allahabad, but Fogg remains unperturbed since the steamer had arrived in Bombay two days early; he is even willing to walk. The only means of conveyance the enterprising Passepartout can find is an elephant. Suddenly the novel's celebration of modern conveyance and speed shifts to an ancient one and the elephant is hired for 15 hours for a fee of £2,000—costly, but far from the most costly alternate transport in the story.

Suttee

The men realize they are about to witness a suttee (in India, sati), which is a Brahmin (high caste) or royal widow's immolation on her husband's funeral pyre, supposedly but not always a voluntary act. In Hindi texts the term equates with "good wife"—whereas "widow" suggests a bad woman who did not keep her husband alive (and who at times might inherit property the family wants). References to the practice date from the first century BCE and the practice spread across India by the 10th century.

The Mughal rule (1526-1858) diminished suttee except for widows of Rajahs. The British, too, eventually outlawed it in 1829, though independent states continued it. Rare today, there are still occasional instances, the most recent in 1999, though it is outlawed across India.

In most instances, the widow sits or lies beside her dead husband on the pyre. Some wait to jump into the flames, while others lit the fire themselves. The widow often wore her wedding garments to the ceremony. Cases of compulsion are recorded when the widow was drugged or bound onto the pyre.

Incomplete East India Company records mention 8,135 suttees between 1813 and 1828, about 543 per year (1813 was the year the British began allowing voluntary sati of childless widows). The practice was particularly common among higher caste widows.

Not all English men allowed or approved, however. English General Sir Charles Napier famously said, "This burning of widows is your custom; prepare the funeral pile. But my nation has a custom. When men burn women alive we hang them, and confiscate all their property. My carpenters shall therefore erect gibbets on which to hang all concerned when the widow is consumed. Let us all act according to national customs."

For online discussion of suttee, see:
- http://www.historyextra.com/oup/suttee-self-sacrifice-or-murder
- Wikipedia entry on suttee
Even more influential than the cross-India railroad was the transcontinental railway link between East and West in the United States, running from Omaha, Nebraska to Oakland, California. Built between 1863 and 1869, the lines were united by the driving of the "Golden Spike" in Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869. This railroad proved to be how the West was won for both settlers and business. Where once the wagon train or stagecoach slowly traversed the Plains and Rocky Mountains, for $65 someone could now ride the rails West in only 8 days.

Two railroad systems built the 1777 miles of the "overland route," the Union Pacific, using Civil War Army veterans and Irish immigrants as laborers, and the Central Pacific, which hired Chinese immigrants as laborers. Once completed, the population of the West exploded, and as a result the territory held by native American tribes radically diminished, though not without a fight.

The Challenges of Crossing America

Distance is the least of Fogg's worries in crossing America; the greater challenges prove to be infrastructure with the weak bridge and also political—an attack by native Americans that saves him from a duel with a vociferous U.S. colonel. Again, as with Aouda in India, Fogg chooses to rescue the one in need, this time Passepartout, without even a mention of the time involved.

In the play, as in the novel, we see the Indian attack but do not see Fogg's efforts to free Passepartout or negotiate the peace treaty. Verne keeps us behind to worry and wait with Aouda and Fix until Fogg reappears.

Online Educational Sites for Studying the Transcontinental Railroad:

- "I Hear the Locomotives: The Impact of the Transcontinental Railroad" lesson plans at: http://edsitelement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/i-hear-locomotives-impact-transcontinental-railroad
- http://railroad.lindahall.org

ACTIVITIES with the Railroad:

- Research the building of the railroad across the West and the economic incentives for completion
- Research the impact the railroad had on U.S. treaties and agreements with native American tribes in the West and on their territorial holdings
- Research the engineering of suspension bridges and whether a train could dash across such a weakened structure
- The novel has Sioux Indians attack the train; the play has Apaches attack. Research which tribe's territory would put it in western Nebraska for the attack
Crossing the Atlantic Back to Europe

With the Gulf Stream and prevailing winds flowing west to east, we might expect the last leg of Fogg's journey to be the easiest, almost coasting home. But missing the steamer in New York means not only must Fogg find another ship, which proves difficult, but also one already fueled for the long voyage to England, which also becomes a challenge, since the most likely ship is only fueled for France.

What does one do when every minute counts and fuel for the steam engines is running out far from land? Counterintuitively, if one is Fogg one burns the ship from the inside out—first the poop-deck, cabins, bunks, and spare deck; then the masts, rafts, and spars; then the railings, armour, and deck, that is, all of the ship above water—which in the novel is just enough to gain the coast of Ireland.

This final image of devouring the means of transport parallels Fogg's spending half his financial holdings to win the bet, so that if he loses the wager and must pay, he will be ruined. The image has broader ramifications as well: what is there in our lives that should sustain us but may be destroyed in the process of "getting there"—families, values, environment? The stark image of this last dramatic push to the finish line raises larger issues we should consider.

**ACTIVITY**

Discuss whether Fogg seems to go beyond reasonable bounds with his buying, commandeering, and destroying the *Henrietta* in order to meet his deadline for the wager. Is this an aspect of his character we have seen before?

Can people go too far in trying to achieve their objectives? How? Why? What examples can you give?

The Action: Circular and Parallel

In any novel that announces it will go around the world, the circle is obviously a major narrative device. In fact, the narrator at one point comments that Fogg "did not travel, he simply described a circumference."

Completing the circle itself—the return home of voyage stories—is not enough in this story. The circle must be completed in conjunction with the linear passage of time. Once Verne establishes his line and circle, he then begins to sport with them.

In the major linear element, time, there is also a circle, for Fogg gets to "circle back" to repeat a day when he crosses the International Date Line, even if this otherwise completely informed gentleman forgets its existence.

Likewise, though Fogg's journey is relentlessly forward, the narrative itself more than once circles back to relate separate strands of story. The first such instance is when Fogg leaves London but the story doesn't; it stays and describes London's reaction to the wager and the suspicion that Fogg may be the much sought thief. Thus we have two alternate versions of the voyage—wager and flight. And we have two parallel travelers, Fogg and Fix, one for each version of the trip. Fix may miss the elephant ride, but he misses little else as he shadows Fogg's progress.

Likewise, Fogg and Passepartout, master and servant, have parallel courses on the voyage that suddenly turn into narrative circles on the way to Yokohama from Hong Kong. Separated by circumstance, each tends ever onward as the narrator alternates accounts of their travels.

Passepartout and Aouda share parallel roles, too, as the support team for Fogg, who projects no need of support. Their growing affection and concern for the man, however, and the readers' trust in their "good hearts" (a term that recurs in the novel) let us believe that Fogg must be more than a mechanism.

Completing the geographic circle only leaves Fogg to complete the temporal circle and gain his day at the last moment, and having stared into the one-way street of defeat and death, finally to circle back into victory and happiness.
Great Ending—Is It True?

Maybe not. Though Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne use this trick in their 19th-century stories, 21st-century sleuths have calculated the midnights and noons of Fogg vis-a-vis London, as well as the elapsed travel time versus the 24-hour "sun" time, and decided that 80 days are 80 days, even with the International Date Line consideration. Bad news for the fact checker of the novel (who missed a couple of other howlers, too), but since no one in the novel seems to notice, we'll just say Fogg got away with it and enjoy the fiction.

To study the argument about the time passage, have your math and science students look at "Around the World in Eighty Days and its 'Doubling of Midnight'":
http://truescans.com/index-Verne-2.htm

The International Date Line

The International Date Line is an offshoot of a 1884 international meeting to agree upon the prime meridian, so nautical charts and geography would have a common reference. When the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, England, was chosen prime meridian, that 180° meridian, which would be the date line, fell in the Pacific where only a few islands posed issues. A precise mid-Pacific date line was not established, however, and the de facto line became that used by the British and American navies. More precise negotiations occurred in 1899-1900, with the line adjusted in 1910 and 1920.

Read the Wikipedia article on the Date Line to learn how there can be THREE different days at one time on Earth!
Character Study: Phileas Fogg

Phileas Fogg's imperturbable nature mystifies not only his new valet, the Frenchman Passpartout, but many critics as well. Jules Verne purposefully keeps our knowledge of the protagonist superficial and Fogg's inner state a mystery. The narrator and the characters can judge only from the outside, and not even the narrator knows the protagonist's secrets, his background, or the source of his money. In that regard, Fogg's name is very apt: his actual nature is difficult to perceive at a glance. Thus we must judge by experience, as do the other characters in the novel.

Verne introduces Fogg with a series of facts; he is described as:

• "one of the most singular and most noticed members of the Reform Club"
• "an enigmatic personage"
• "a very polite man and one of the most perfect gentlemen of good English society"
• "his only pastime [at the Club] was reading the papers and playing whist"
• one who gives his card-playing winnings to charity

"Mr. Fogg evidently played for the sake of playing, not to win. The game was for him a contest, a struggle against a difficulty."

He is single and childless; he lives alone and keeps to a meticulous schedule.

Taking the 19th-century view of identity, the narrator notes that Fogg's class/social status origins and the basis of his fortune are unknown. The absence of such background detail—the fact that no one really knows him or his provenance—leaves Fogg open to the mystery of this adventure novel: could he possibly be the missing bank robber? Fix adamantly believes so, but Passepartout and Aouda as vehemently believe otherwise; in fact, they come to admire and love the man who manages to save each of them.

Fogg has a factual, precise approach to life. When he accepts the wager, he gathers his copy of Bradshaw's Continental Railway Steam Transit and General Guide, gathers his money, has Passepartout pack a few shirts, and he's off—anything else they need they can buy en route.

Whenever he is confronted with a possible obstacle or warned about delay, Fogg consistently replies: "That delay would not have deranged my programme … I would have foreseen the probability of certain obstacles." The tension we have with Fogg is his precision and foresight versus the imponderability of life and its delays. Fogg's answer to each crisis is money: he buys an elephant, he even buys a steamer if he must, he hires a special train, but he will get back to London within 80 days.

The heroic side of Fogg is occasionally, if understatedly, on show. In the novel, as he first reaches the London train station, he gives his winnings from the card game at the club to a tattered beggar woman who approaches him, Fogg saying only "I'm glad to have met you." In India as the others see the suttee procession and turn away, Fogg decrees, "If we could save this woman…. I have still twelve hours to spare. I can devote them to her." Sir Francis at once commends him as "a man of heart," to which Fogg replies simply, "Sometimes, … when I have time." Passepartout and Aouda see moments such as these throughout the journey, and each is deeply impressed by the man's character.

ACTIVITY: Topics for Discussion

• How do we judge someone's character if we do not have long acquaintance or experience as a basis? How do we judge someone we've just met? How long does it take us to judge another's character accurately?

• What elements do we consider part of defining someone's "character"? Passepartout meets Fogg for the first time the day the journey begins, and Fogg meets Aouda in India on his journey. How do they decide the kind of man he is? Are they part of a foolish escapade? Are they endangered by this man's wager? Or are they liberated, or changed at all? Do they defend him? Why or why not?

• If we judge character by actions, what actions do we see Fogg take and how do we judge them and him?

• Assess Andrew Martin's view of Fogg: He is "the purest and most passive of Verne's travellers: indifferent to adventure and appropriation alike…. Fogg is the standard-bearer of nineteenth-century technocracy, its travelling salesman and representative…. he is all hardware, mechanistic, chronometrically punctual, a rigid automaton" (44). Is this the Fogg you see in the play?
Character Study: Passepartout

Jean Passepartout's name in French means "a skeleton key"—the one who can go anywhere. Verne has him introduce himself as a man of several past trades: a traveling singer, a circus rider and tightrope walker, a gymnastics teacher, a fireman, and then a valet in England. Longing for repose and "in the hope of living tranquilly," he applies for the job with Fogg, who was described to him as a man "who never slept in a strange bed, who did not travel, who was never absent." What a surprise he gets!

Passepartout's natural curiosity and warmth complement Fogg's punctiliousness in the story, and it is, of course, Passepartout who will be the active character, getting into scrapes, and who has his own ability to solve problems. If Fogg solves challenges monetarily, Passepartout solves them with physical adeptness, as when he has the idea to disguise himself as the dead rajah on the pyre and kidnap Aouda or when his agility lets him climb under the train carriages overrun by Sioux Indians and uncouple the engine. In his way, he is as much a rarity as Fogg.

Passepartout, like Aouda, develops a keen respect and affection for his master, a loyalty to the man he perceives to be brave and generous. His trust in others makes him vulnerable to Fix, whose presence he decides must be to validate the journey, but he refuses to aid him, allying always with Fogg and dedicated to Aouda's care while sharing her concern for his master.

Passepartout's Watch

In the novel, Jules Verne stipulates that Passepartout never changes his watch from London time. Consequently, he is perpetually told he never has the correct time as they circumnavigate the globe. Several people explain that he needs to change it four minutes per degree of latitude travelled, but halfway around the globe he is overjoyed to find his watch to be correct.

The theme of time begins as he meets his new employer, Phileas Fogg, who tells him his watch is four minutes slow, and then states an "accurate" time nine minutes ahead—thus alerting us to the fast/slow element of the story's time plot. The novel watches the calendar and clock obsessively, but only at the end mentions the International Date Line, which—along with Aouda—provides the climactic happy ending to the 80-day journey.
Character Study: Detective Fix

In a detective tale, we usually admire the sleuth who garners the clues, discerns cause and effect, and can "get his man," grabbing the guilty perpetrator every time. In Verne's novel, however, Fix's name becomes his major character trait—he is fixed in the idea that Fogg is his bank robber, and nothing can dissuade him, not even Fogg's generosity in helping Fix continue his travels.

Verne uses Fix to cross the adventure plot line with the tension of a whodunit; he provides an alternate narrative within the novel. Early in the story, while Fogg and Passepartout cross Europe outside the narrator's view, the novel instead reports how London responds to news of the wager, and then the sudden buzz of suspicion about the bank robbery alters that, a change which fuels Detective Fix's role as we meet him waiting for the steamer to arrive in Suez. He adds another angle of observation on Fogg.

Full of suspicion and wrongly reading Fogg's every move and motive, Fix nonetheless does eventually proves helpful in America when he could have obstructed Fogg's train journey, the very thing he had asked Passepartout to do earlier. He alone knows of the wind sledge's availability, and he tells Fogg. Driven like Fogg by the mantra, "Cost what it may, I must succeed," has he been caught up in Fogg's race against time as well as his own need to get back to British soil to be able to arrest him?

Character Study: Aouda

Aouda is a remarkable character because she is the best of both worlds—an "exotic" upper class Indian woman, lovely and well educated who speaks perfect English, and who, as Verne has the narrator note, is "white" enough to pass for a European. Verne barely blinks as he sails past any ethnic/racial issue to fold Aouda, who becomes a model of modest Victorian femininity, into the Fogg entourage.

The Effect of Gazing on Beauty

Her beauty would seem to have no effect on Fogg, although Passepartout recognizes her attractiveness as he does her goodness and growing affection for Fogg. Yet both the novel and the play find narrative ways to suggest that Fogg is not utterly oblivious to the lovely woman traveling with him.

In the novel, as Aouda revives from her drugged state after the rescue, the narrator quotes a lengthy passage by the poet-king Ucaf Uddaul celebrating his wife's physical charms, starting with her hair and face, including "her ebony eyebrows have the form and strength of the bow of Kama, god of love; and under her long silken lashes, in the black pupil of her large limpid eyes, there float, as in the sacred lakes of the Himalayas, the purest reflections of the celestial light," and continuing to praise her hands, feet, waist, bosom, and "under the silken folds of her tunic she seems to have been modelled in pure silver by ... the immortal sculptor."

The passage is so strikingly out of place that the narrator catches himself and clarifies that she "was a charming woman in the entire European acceptation of the phrase." One wonders where this narrative "gaze" comes from, who is so aware of Aouda's beauty.

Mark Brown in the play makes a clear choice about the gaze, having Fogg respond with cool politeness to Aouda on the voyage to Yokohama, then when she leaves the ship's deck he has Fogg repeat some of the lines of the lush physical description from the novel, without saying it's a quote. Brown thus reveals Fogg to be a very different man in his emotional core than he exhibits on the exterior. The next beat announces a typhoon—Typhoon Aouda? Brown's is a more graphic choice than Verne makes in the novel, but consonant with the narrative implication of the passage.

At the end Aouda must propose to Fogg—a lovely, smart, and proactive young woman!
Activities in Conjunction with the Play

GEOGRAPHY
- Pin up two large, blank maps of the world and see if teams of students can identify Fogg’s major ports of call on the map one at a time and thus go around the world in 80 seconds. The ports are Suez, Bombay [Mumbai], Calcutta [Kolkata], Hong Kong, Yokohama, San Francisco, New York City, Liverpool, and back to London. Have the map at one end and the destination cards away from the board so “travel” is involved—or pass them out one per team member and have them go in order (and have them figure out the proper order).
- Try the contest in two waves. Do a first run to see how many they know without research. Then give them five minutes on computer to get information and run the contest again.

HISTORY
- How many of the ports Fogg stops in are part of the British Empire in 1872—and thus places in which Fix might arrest him (if he had the warrant)? How often does Fogg actually leave British-held territory? How much has changed about these lands since 1872? When, why, how?
- Compare Fogg’s expectations of British rule and law with the activities he sees in areas under other regimes, especially India’s independent states and the United States. How does Verne portray the world?
- Research the British colonial presence in India and how India became independent.
- Research the part the transcontinental railroad played in the settlement of the American West and how native Americans and their lands were treated.
- Verne bases his book on technological progress, yet Fogg still must rely on ancient means of transport at times. What is Verne’s view of technology and progress in this work? Is progress an unerring good?

LITERATURE
- Most English-language critics comment that almost all English translations of Verne’s works are substandard or inadequate, including those of Around the World in 80 Days. The recent Oxford World’s Classics translation by William Butcher (a Verne scholar) has been better received. It is available online, with an excellent introduction and textual notes, at: http://www.ibiblio.org/julesverne/books/awed%20revd%20edn.pdf
- Also see Butcher’s Appendix B to learn how Verne adapted his novel for the stage—in a much more complex and altered manner than Mark Brown provides.
- Characterization vs. Stereotypes
  Verne uses the stereotype of the English gentleman for Fogg. What is that stereotype and how does it affect the portrayal of his character and his role in the action?
  Passepartout is French. How does Verne portray the French character and does he use stereotypes for the valet?
  How do we view this dynamic duo of travelers? Are they a good team? How do they complement each other?
- Several works could have inspired Verne’s story, including one by a traveler named W. P. Fogg, but the plot twist definitely comes from Edgar Allan Poe’s “Three Sundays in a Week” (1841). Compare how Poe and Verne use the International Date Line by reading to Poe story at: http://www.online-literature.com/poe/2131/

TECHNOLOGY
- How long had trains and steamer ships been around when Verne wrote this novel? What was the state of their technology? How fast could they go? How did they work?
- Mike Todd’s 1968 film inserted a balloon into the journey and made it the central image for the work (see left). Research the debate between lighter-than-air and heavier-than-air flight in the 1870s and argue why Verne, who had used balloons in other works, did not use one for this story. (Critics later say that he favored the idea of heavier-than-air flight.)
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Around the World in 80 Days
by Mark Brown

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