

**Assembly Ideas for
J.D. and the Great Barber Battle (2021)
by J. Dillard**

- 1. A History of Hair** – This assembly can combine fun and information! Have two different contestants and a host on stage. The host will show various pictures, highlighting people who were known for their famous hairstyles. (If you can, use a projector to display the photos as this would be helpful for your audience.) Contestants will get points if they can identify each person and their hairstyle, and the host can tell a bit about the history of each style. Here is an example:

Host stands in the middle of the stage, holding large 8 x 10 cards. On each side is a podium with a contestant standing behind it.

Host: Hello and welcome everyone to another round of The History of Hair! Today, we have two brilliant contestants with us, and we are going to see who knows the most about the lovely locks that hang from our heads. Are you all ready for some *hair-raising* fun?

Contestant 1: I'm ready!

Contestant 2: I was born ready!

Host: Okay, the first question is to you, Contestant 1. (*holds out a picture of Rapunzel and/or points to the projected picture behind him*) This princess taught us all that hair can be a blessing and a curse. Who is this?

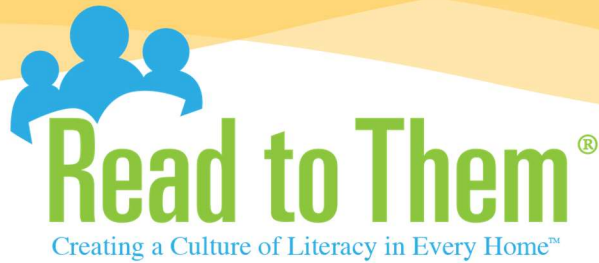
Contestant 1: Rapunzel!

Host: You're right! (*audience claps*) *Rapunzel* is a German folktale, published in 1812, about a princess who was locked in a tower by an evil witch and is eventually saved by a prince who climbs up her golden locks to rescue her.

Contestant 2: That sounds painful.

Host: Yes, I wouldn't recommend it. (*looks at Contestant 2*) Are you ready for the next question?

Contestant 2: (*pumps fists*) Hair! Hair!



Host: This is a good one. (*holds up a photo of James Brown*) Can you venture a guess as to who this handsome fella is and what his hairstyle is called?

Contestant 2: (*rolls eyes*) That's easy! You are holding a picture of James Brown, the legend, the Godfather of Soul, who was famous for wearing his hair in The Konk Pompadour style.

Host: You are correct! (*audience cheers*) The Konk Pompadour was a popular style for men from the 1920s through the mid- '60s. It took a lot of work to get someone's hair to look this good! (*turns to Contestant 1*) Are you ready for the next question?

Continue questions/answers as long as you'd like! See *Assembly Script* on the Book Resource Page for *J.D. and the Great Barber Battle* for a full script of this idea.

2. **Read Aloud!** – An easy assembly idea would be to read the book, *Crown: An Ode to a Fresh Cut* by Derrick Barnes and illustrated by Gordon C. James. This gorgeous picture book is written in a rhythmic way and is a story about what it feels like to go to the barbershop and get a fresh haircut. If you can project the pictures on a screen while reading, this book will be a perfect kick-off to introducing *J.D. and the Great Barber Battle*!
3. **Hair Care Day** – All through *J.D. and the Great Barber Battle*, hair is a central theme. Different types of hair, hairstyles, and hair care are all prominently featured and discussed. Here's a chance to play barbershop in your auditorium!

Ask around and see if you can find a parent or community member who is a hairstylist or barber that would be willing to come in and show off their talents. Then, recruit a few teachers or staff who will serve as the "clients" for your makeshift barbershop. Set up a row of chairs on stage and have each client sit facing the audience. While the hairstylist/barber is cutting or styling each client's hair, they can talk about the different tools they use, why certain haircuts are better for different hair types, and maybe even share a little about their profession and why they decided to go into it. Here's a chance for students to see some haircutting up close, and a few good-spirited adults to get a much-needed trim...for free!



4. **A Hair-Raising Moment** – This assembly highlights the moment when J.D. decides to try his hand at cutting his brother’s hair. The stage should be set to look like a bathroom, and you will need a full-length mirror. (You can also have a towel rack or a shower curtain strung behind the boys.)

You will need to find a big, crazy wig that Justin can wear, and J.D. can cut. Remember to give the audience just enough dialogue to make them interested, without giving away the plot point of this scene. Here are some lines to get you started:

J.D.’s on stage alone. He stares at himself in the mirror.

J.D.: *(touching his hair)* This hair of mine. It looks terrible! How can I start school with hair that looks like this? *(picks up a pair of scissors)* Do I dare try to fix it myself? *(holds scissors close to head)* I could do it, right? I mean, I’m pretty good at making art...why not a hairstyle?

Justin’s voice comes from off-stage

Justin: J.D.? Where are you?

J.D.: *(shouts back)* I’m in the bathroom! Leave me alone!

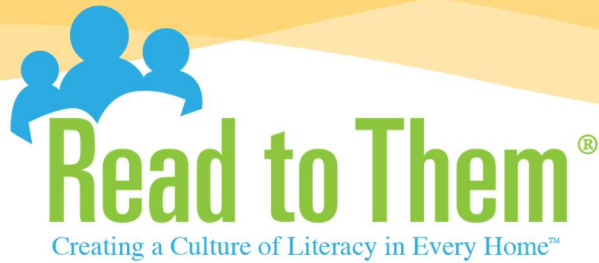
Justin: But you’re supposed to be babysitting me! Mom said!

J.D.: *(sighing)* Little brothers. They’re useless. *(looks down at scissors, then out at the audience)* Or ...are they? *(shouts again)* Hey, Justin, come here for a second!

The sound of feet clomping across the floor comes from off-stage. Justin appears.

Justin: *(whiny voice)* What are you doing in here? Mom says the bathroom is for doing your business then getting out.

J.D. *(smiles and waves him over)* Well, you could say this is my business, I guess. Want to play a game?



- Justin:** *(looks skeptical)* What kind of game can we play in a bathroom?
- J.D.:** A super fun game! *(grabs Justin's shoulders and spins him around in front of the mirror.)* This crazy hair of yours...would you like it to look different? More cool? Less babyish?
- Justin:** *(touches hair/wig)* I guess. But what do you know about cutting hair?
- J.D.** *(holds up scissors, opens and closes them dramatically)* Well, I guess we are about to find out!

Continue the scene as long as you like but remember not to give away the plot. Leave your audience intrigued and wanting more!

5. **Fix Me First!** – This assembly will be set in what looks like a barbershop. Have a row of chairs set up, a small table with some magazines, and other props such as hand-held mirrors, clippers, brushes, etc. Cast one person to play the barber, who is new to the business. This is his first day on the job.

Have different “clients” come into the barbershop asking for specific haircuts. (All of them will be wearing wigs that can be cut up). The Barber doesn’t recognize any of the haircuts people are asking for, but pretends he does and tries to improvise. The results are unexpected and hilarious.

6. **A Barber-Off** – Consider an assembly where J.D. and Henry Jr. are both on stage, but engaged in their own, separate monologues. They stand back-to-back, both with hair-cutting items in their hands. When they talk, they turn toward the audience, but stay standing frozen in place staring off stage when they aren’t speaking. They each take turns talking about the other barber, unaware the other person is on the stage. They shouldn’t talk about having an actual competition. Rather, they can talk about how frustrated they find the other character to be.
7. **Vanessa’s Turn** – A monologue could focus on Vanessa, J.D.’s sister. In this assembly, Vanessa is on stage alone, talking about her own talents as a hairstylist and how she often feels overlooked by her brother. She could share some information on J.D. and give the audience an idea of what he’s like, how he likes football and art. She can hint at events that are going to happen throughout the book, without giving any big plot points away.