



Sponsors



**Teachers Resource Pack**



## ★ Welcome to the Teacher Resource Pack for First Family Entertainment's *Peter Pan*, sponsored by Robinsons!

For many of us the annual school pantomime trip was our first experience of live theatre, and a very exciting and fun-filled one that kept us wanting to return again and again.

Linking your traditional end of term Christmas treat to exciting projects back in the class can help you and your pupils gain more from the experience and we hope that this pack will provide ideas and inspiration.

We have included a variety of background information and follow-up activities inspired by the pantomime genre and *Peter Pan* itself. The activities are designed to be adaptable to a range of ages and abilities, although the pack is written with particular focus on the Key Stage 1 and 2 National Curriculum and National Literacy Strategy.

### How to use this pack:

The pack is designed for you to dip in and out as you wish, picking resources and activities that best suit your class. With each section you will find a range of activities; look out for the symbols indicating the type of activity:



Performance



Art and Design



Writing



Discussion



Research



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# The History and Traditions of Pantomime...

In this country we have all grown up with the annual pantomime as a traditional part of our Christmas celebrations but try explaining pantomime to an American, French or German child and see how much they understand of this strange tradition...

For a start there's a man dressed as a woman... and often a woman dressed as a man, lots of audience participation, lots more slapstick comedy and very often one or two animals thrown in. It is really a very British tradition not usually seen in other countries. So what really is panto and where does it come from?

The word 'pantomime' comes from the words 'panto' meaning 'all' and 'mime' meaning 'no words'... it is a story told in actions without words. It is generally believed to stem from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Italian tradition of 'Commedia Dell' Arte'. These were very physical shows performed by travelling actors which told a repertoire of stories using mime, music, dance, acrobatics and slapstick. 'Commedia Dell' Arte' made its way across Europe to Britain where it became very popular and where its stock characters (such as the 'Harlequin' and 'Clown') began to appear in British plays. The form was developed until, in 1717 the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane opened what is now recognised as the first modern pantomime.

From these very early performances the genre developed, becoming more widespread as more theatres were granted performing licences and the traditions that we recognise today began to be introduced. The first transformation scene (such as Cinderella's famous transformation into a princess fit for a ball), now a necessity in pantomime, was first seen in 1849 in Planche's 'Island of Jewels', the use of the fairytales that we now know and love as pantomime titles first came about in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as pantomime became popular with children who already knew the storylines, the Victorian era saw the beginning of many Christmas traditions and it was at this time that pantomimes became particularly associated with the festive season and in 1902 Dan Leno became the first ever pantomime dame starring in 'Mother Goose'.



Find out more about Commedia Dell Arte, what it was, where it came from and the characters and stories involved. Develop your findings into a display or even produce your own Commedia Dell Arte inspired production.



Discuss what experience the class has of pantomime. Who has been before and what are their favourite pantomime traditions? If this is a first visit, what expectations does the class have. Invite an older member of the community into class to talk about their own memories of pantomime.



Write a letter to a pen friend from America who has never heard of pantomime – how would you explain what it is?



## The Story of *Peter Pan*...

***Peter Pan*** is the story of the boy who never grew up! His story begins in London, in the home of the Darling family and more importantly in the children's nursery, where the eldest child Wendy tells stories of pirate adventures to her younger brothers.

Wendy's magical stories become reality when the children are visited by Peter Pan, a magical boy who can fly and who never grows up. Peter lives in a magical place called Neverland and he offers to teach the children how to fly and take them there. And so, we follow the Darling children as they fly out of the nursery window and over the rooftops of London to Peter Pan's magical home.

Neverland is more magical than the children ever imagined and they encounter Indians and mermaids and meet Peter's friends, the Lost Boys. Finally, they meet the dastardly pirates led by the evil Captain Hook! Hook is determined to kill Peter Pan and tries to poison him in his underground home, kidnapping Wendy and the boys in the process.

And so, we join the action onboard Hooks ship, the Jolly Roger. Peter rescues Wendy and the boys and defeats Captain Hook in one final showdown.

The children sail back to London aboard the ship, leaving Peter Pan to live where he is happiest, in Neverland.



The synopsis given here is the pantomime version that you have seen. Read some other versions of ***Peter Pan***, especially J.M Barrie's original story.

Discuss where the versions differ and where they are similar; can the class identify similar characters, places and events across the versions?

Use the discussion to explore how the same narrative can be structured and written differently to suit the writer's purpose. Ask the class to retell the story in their own way to suit a chosen audience and medium.



Imagine that you can fly like Peter Pan, where would you go? What adventures would you have? Who, where or what would you see?

In small groups write a new script telling of your own adventures and perform your play for the rest of the class or develop a bigger production to show to the whole school!



## Characters in Peter Pan...

Every pantomime has a number of 'stock characters', which we expect to see in every pantomime. There is always a villain, a hero or principal boy and his helper, a principal girl, an over-protective parent figure, a fairy, a dame and usually an animal.

**The following characters all appear in Peter Pan:**

<b>Peter Pan</b>	The boy who never grows up, our hero.
<b>Tinkerbelle</b>	A fairy and Peter Pan's best friend.
<b>Wendy</b>	Visits Neverland with Peter and her brothers and is kidnapped by the pirates
<b>The Lost Boys</b>	Boys who live with Peter Pan in Neverland after being lost by their nannies.
<b>Captain Hook</b>	The baddie! Wants revenge on Peter Pan after having his hand bitten off by a crocodile.
<b>The Pirates</b>	The crew of Captain Hooks ship.



Discuss the characters you have seen in ***Peter Pan***.

Identify who the 'stock characters' are in the story. How do we identify them? What other characters do we see and do they fit into any of the roles given above? Can you think of any other stock characters that you would expect to see in a pantomime?



Design a costume or a piece of headwear for one of the characters in ***Peter Pan***.

Think about who they are and their personality and choose a design that reflects this. Are they rich or poor? Outgoing or shy? Good or bad?



Split into groups assigning one character to each group and give each person a name tag. Move around the room until the teacher shouts 'stop' and turn to the nearest different character. Improvise a short scene with them, thinking about how your character feels towards the other. On 'go' move around again, next time stopping at a new character you've not met before.



## A History of Peter Pan...

*Peter Pan* is now one of the best selling pantomime titles in the country but where does the story come from?

If you have already completed the task on page 5 looking at different versions of the story, you may already know that the original play was written by J.M Barrie in 1904 and published as a book in 1911.

Barrie's inspiration for the story came from his friendship with the Llewellyn-Davies family. He would tell the family's young children adventure stories featuring them and it was these stories that eventually developed into the play '*Peter Pan - or the boy who wouldn't grow up*'.

Peter Pan and Wendy had appeared earlier than this, in a novel called '*The Little White Bird*', which Barrie had written in 1902. Following the plays success, the story was republished in 1906 entitled '*Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*'.

For a while, strict copyright laws meant J.M Barrie's version of the play was the only one allowed to be performed, however later changes to the copyright allowed new versions to appear and there are now many different adaptations, sequels and prequels of the story, including of course the British pantomime!

The pantomime version is quite new as, for a long time, it wasn't considered a suitable pantomime story, however over the last 12 years it has been adapted into a pantomime format and enjoys huge audiences every Christmas.



Find out more about J.M Barrie's life and the history of the *Peter Pan* story and present your findings to the class.

Use the information to develop a display, story, poem or even a new play based on the life of J.M Barrie or the history of *Peter Pan*.



Write your own adventure story for a group of younger children. Think about where it is set? Who are your characters and what are they like? What happens to your characters.

Remember to *structure* your story correctly, with a clear beginning, middle and end.

Perhaps you could visit a younger class in your school and read your stories to them, or choose a favourite story to turn into a play, which could be performed for the rest of the school.



## Fairies in Peter Pan...

Fairies feature strongly in the original tales of *Peter Pan* and in many of our pantomime stories. Today though, Peter's friend, Tinkerbelle, is probably the most popular fairy character. So what are fairies and where do they come from?

Fairies appear in many traditional tales, myths and folklore and the idea of little people living in the bottom of the garden has extended throughout generations.

In folklore, fairies are supernatural beings who perform magic and enchantments and stories about them exist in literature from all over the world. Many societies see them as natural beings (which may be why they are generally shown in natural settings such as a forest or garden), some people think they are fallen angels and others see them as beautiful enchantresses.

There are many different representations of fairies in different cultures, including the Irish Leprechaun, the Arabic Jinni (or Genie), the Scandinavian Troll and the German Elf.

Fairies are often described as mischievous (such as in *A Midsummer Nights Dream*) but have also been seen as loving, caring creatures who care for the mortals they come to know. Perhaps this is where the idea of the 'Fairy Godmother' character in pantomimes comes from!



Find some other stories featuring fairies, including some from other countries. Compare and contrast the descriptions of the creatures in different texts.

In small groups choose your favourite fairy story and present an 'oral retelling' of your story to the rest of your class.



Collect some natural materials such as bark, leaves and stones and make your own fairy homes in class using old shoe boxes.

Think carefully about the design and what a fairy might need, before designing it as naturally as possible so your fairy feels at home.



Create a fairy grotto in your classroom, including your own pictures of fairies and the fairies homes that you have designed and made.

This could also be used to display the texts you have found about fairies and any other completed work.





# Exploring Neverland...

The story of Peter Pan is set, not in a real world like many stories but on a magical island called '**Neverland**' which is home to many interesting characters including fairies, lost boys, mermaids, pirates and, of course, Peter Pan himself. It's an exciting world worth exploring further...

When J.M Barrie created Peter Pan, he knew that such a character would have to live in a world that could provide many fascinating adventures and other exciting characters for Peter and his readers to meet. Such a place didn't exist in the real world so a fantasy island was created to house Peter and all his friends and foes.

J.M Barrie's original novel explains that "Neverlands are found in the minds of children" and so everything in Peter's world is brought into being by the imaginations of Peter and the Lost Boys. This allowed Barrie to give them as many adventures as he wished!

Fantasy lands are useful to writers as they allow characters to have experiences that wouldn't be possible in our own world.



Discuss further how the use of imaginary worlds can help stories come to life. Think about other books that you have read as well as *Peter Pan*.

How has the behaviour of the characters been affected by the setting? How is mood and atmosphere created by different authors of narratives with fantasy settings?



Read again some of the other versions of *Peter Pan* that were looked at earlier. Using the descriptions of Neverland, collect together as much information as you can about the island - How does it look? What is there?

Using the information you collect design your own maps of the island.



Imagine what happens to new characters who are introduced to a fantasy world. How do they react to this new place? Is it easy or hard to adjust to this new and strange environment?

Write a letter to Mrs Darling from Wendy when she first arrives in Neverland. Think about her thoughts and feelings towards this place. How does Wendy describe the island?



Use photo-editing software to create your own fantasy settings.

Think about characters and narratives inspired by the land you have created and develop these into a new fantasy, adventure story.



# Producing Your Own Pantomime...

A big event in any school calendar is always the Christmas production but if this is your first time in the directors chair it can be a daunting prospect! Our brief guide to producing panto should get you started...

**1/ Choose your title...** Decide which pantomime you would like to produce. Traditional favourites include Peter Pan, Cinderella, Dick Whittington and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

You may wish to write your own script with references to local people or places (perhaps your baddie is the headmaster and your fairy the lollipop lady!) or use a pre-written script but if you do, remember that you will need to pay for the performance rights.

**2/ Cast your stars...** Once you have a script ready you will need to cast your stars... hold auditions to choose main characters although when working with young children it is nice to ensure there are enough parts for everyone, providing numbers are manageable. If there is a lot of interest some children could be encouraged to be involved behind the scenes.

It can be an idea to hold a workshop rather than 'x-factor' style auditions to take the pressure of individuals.

**3/ Give out scripts and arrange rehearsals...** Now your script is completed and your cast have been given their roles, hand out scripts and encourage everyone to learn their lines BEFORE rehearsals start. This will give you more time to devise each scene and work on movement and spacing.

Give out rehearsal schedules with dates and times so everyone knows when they are needed in advance. It may also help to outline what you hope to achieve in each session so you know that you are on track for opening night!

**4/ Sets, props and lighting...** Get some volunteers involved at this stage! The school caretaker and parents who are handy with DIY may be able to help. Sets and lighting may be more or less complicated depending on the facilities your school has but remember to make them easy to work with. If necessary it is better to keep things simple.

**5/ Costumes...** Again a volunteer who is handy with a needle is useful here! Your wardrobe mistress will need to identify any specific costumes needed for principal characters as these may need to be specially made or hired. For ensemble pick simpler costumes that can be picked up easily on the high street or that some may already have and ask parents for donations.

**6/ Marketing...** School plays always have a guaranteed audience of parents and family members but if you are relying on ticket sales to help cover the costs of the production some marketing is useful! Encourage the children to sell as many tickets as possible by offering a prize for the person who sells the most. Encourage the schools wider community to be involved by coming along as well...your local press and 'What's On' Guides can help with this.

**7/ Opening Night..!** Ensure you have had at least 3 run-throughs of the entire play, including a technical and dress rehearsal and you are ready to go! Break a leg!



# Resources...

You may find the following resources useful for information on pantomime and *Peter Pan*...

***Peter Pan*** by J.M Barrie. Penguin Popular Classics; New ed. Edition, Jan 2007.

***Walt Disney's Peter Pan***. DVD. Directed by Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson and Hamilton Luske. 1953; USA. Walt Disney Productions.

**[www.its-behind-you.com](http://www.its-behind-you.com)** for information on the background to the *Peter Pan* stories.

**[www.fairiesworld.com](http://www.fairiesworld.com)** for information on fairy folklore, fairy images and ideas for craft activities.

**[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)** - Search 'Neverland' for a history, description and list of locations on the island.