

Education Pack

The Birmingham Stage Company

BIRMINGHAM STAGE COMPANY

ABOUT THE COMPANY

In 2002 The Birmingham Stage Company celebrates its tenth anniversary as the resident company of the Old Rep Theatre Birmingham. In 1991 Neal Foster approached the Birmingham City Council with a proposal of setting up a new resident company at the Old Rep. In 1992 the Old Rep Theatre was re-opened by the Mayor of Birmingham with the newly named Birmingham Stage Company in residence.

Since then the Birmingham Stage Company has staged over thirty plays, breaking box office records year after year and setting a quality and standard that has earned the company an enviable reputation around the country.

Birmingham Stage Company's production of James and the Giant Peach will be the longest touring Children's Production in British History kicking off in residency for three months at The Old Rep Theatre.

ABOUT THE TEACHERS PACK

The aim of this pack is to give a focus for fun learning around the different themes within James and The Giant Peach. You can use the ideas and approaches before and after seeing the play or reading the book. They cover a wide range of curricular subjects and also explores some circle time issues. I hope you enjoy using the ideas, stories, research, games and exercises as much as I have enjoyed compiling it and testing it out! Please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions as we are continually looking to expand our education and outreach programme!

James has his own website! Why don't you pop along and see! www.birminghamstage.net

ENGLISH AND LITERACY

QUESTIONS PAGE

1. Who wrote James and The Giant Peach?
2. What were the names of James' Aunts? Describe them in your own words.
3. Where was the start of James and his friends Journey and where did it finish?
4. In the book whom does the Ladybird marry?
5. Name 4 differences between the book and the play.
6. How did James parents die?
7. Describe how James got into the Peach.
8. What did James find at the centre of the peach?
9. In the book, who chases James and his friends through the sky?
10. What was the Grasshoppers' favourite hobby?

EXERCISE

When you have read the book write a book review, describing it and what you liked and disliked about it.

When you have seen the play write a review of the play.

Compare and contrast the book to the play. How were they different? Why do you think that they were different?

EXERCISE:

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

News reports are different to story writing. Discuss this with your class and describe what is meant by the terms, “headlines” and “quotes.”

Choose a section of the book to write your own News report from.

. E.g. Whale of a Peach Spotted basking in shark infested Atlantic!
Limeys Land a Peach!
Amazing Aunts Grow a Corker!

Who would you quote? What would they say?

POETRY

EXERCISE: USING THE FIVE SENSES (FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS)

The five senses and places are important in the book and play. Combine these two aspects to create a poem with your class. Discuss with your class the five places in the book / play; The sea, The Countryside, The Air, The City and The Peach.

Discuss each place with regard to the senses e.g. what does the sea taste like? Smell like? And so on.

Divide the class into five groups. Each group should have a place to describe; E.g. The Sea smells like The Sea looks like Etc. They must work together to decide upon their answers.

After the groups have come up with their words, come together as a class and write each groups words out. The poem will be formed from their words.

They can write the poem on another piece of paper so they have their own copy. They could also illustrate it if you have time!

DRAMA, MOVEMENT and MUSIC

EXERCISE – MEDIA FREENZY!

Discuss the Media and how they present events as they occur.

In groups of five get the class to prepare their own TV LIVE News Report to present to the rest of the class. Use James and the Giant Peach as an initial starting point then get the groups to create their own story for a groundbreaking news report.

EXERCISE – “SCENIC ACTION”

Explain the term “Scene” (a part of continuous action in a play or film). Explain that in drama the important events (Scenes) can be linked together in a variety of ways without showing the audience everything that occurs before or inbetween. E.g. Someone says “I’m going to school now” it is not necessary to show the journey of that person to work (unless something interesting happens!). You can jump forward to a scene of that person at school and miss out the boring bits!

Put the class in groups of five and give them each a scene from the play/book to re-enact as simply and clearly as possible! It may be best to let them create a clear strong frozen visual image of that scene and characters first before they start to act it out.

MUSIC

Ask the class to try vocalising insect noises and movements using different musical instruments - think about which instrument suits the different insects best, considering their personality as well as the type of insect they are.

EXERCISE – CREEPY CRAWLIES

Examine how insects move in different ways, particularly those featured in the book/play. What speed do they move at? Fast, slow, smooth, jerky? How do they travel? Sideways, vertical, jumping, low to the ground? How do they defend themselves? Curl up, stay still, and fly away?

Get the class to work individually in the space. Tell them to think of an insect and choose one movement, one way of traveling (crawling, tiptoes, slithering), a style (jerky, smooth etc) and a speed. Then let them choose a starting point and finishing point for their way of traveling and they can choose any direction as long as they finish where they have started. Finally to create their sequence they can decide where they are going to put their movement, at the beginning, end, middle or at all three stages!

Play them some different styles and tempos of instrumental music (about three) and get them to choose which one they think is most appropriate for their sequence. Get them to perform their pieces three/four at a time (depending on their choice of music!) and you should have created an instant movement piece!

You can try to develop and vary their perceptions of what they have created by telling each individual different numbers or points in the music to start and stop on / slow down / speed up so it becomes more movement based and less about how the insect moves.

PUPPETRY

Instead of using actors you could use puppets for the insects or characters! Different types of puppets from across the world could be used hand puppets, shadow puppets, Marionettes.

Culturally puppets are very important Indonesia use Shadow Puppets traditionally before big events such as weddings (check) and to teach and highlight morals.

Try getting your class to devise their own simple shadow puppet play of the performance. The shape of the puppet is important and you can also get your class to cut out details on their puppets and experiment as to what shapes they project in the light.

LET'S FACE IT

**LET'S FACE IT
14 FALLOWFIELD
YATELEY
HAMPSHIRE
GU46 6LW**

TEL :01252879630 / 0208 9312829



Lets Face it is an International mutual help organization dealing with facial disfigurement. Birmingham Stage Company have teamed up with this worthwhile organization to include a free book and leaflet from The Charity which we would very much like you to take the time to read and perhaps support in some way. We have devised some exercises based around James and the Giant Peach to link into this area, based around "looking different".

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think James thought when he went into the peach and met the Insects for the first time?
2. Do you think that the insects were happy or angry to see him?
3. At first how do you think James portrayed his feelings without even speaking to the Insects?
4. Draw a picture of what you think James' facial expression was when he first saw the Insects faces. Draw another picture of what you think James face looked like when he was with the insects at the end of the play/book, do you think he felt differently at the end? How?

EXERCISE: RECIPE OF FRIENDSHIP

Write a recipe for friendship, what ingredients do you think you'd need?

E.G. ***RECIPE FOR FRIENDSHIP***

1 Tbsp	Trust
A pinch of	Sharing Interests
5 grams	Kindness
5 Kilos	Understanding

ETC.

Describe how you would then mix / prepare it to create the perfect culinary friendship experience!

Around the sides of your work you can decorate with your ideas about Friendship.

QUESTIONS ON FRIENDSHIP (*Source Personal and Social Education Pbl Staley Thomas*)

Who are your friends?

Who are your best friends?

How long have you known them?

How did you get to know them?

Why are they your best friends?

Why do you get on well with them?

Are your friends like you?

Do you laugh at the same things?

What do you enjoy doing?

Do your friends enjoy doing the same things?

Would you tell your friends if you were sad?

How do your friends treat you if they know you are angry? How do you treat them in this situation?

Can your friends rely on you to help them?

Can your friends trust you not to tell other people their secrets?

Do you trust your friends in the same way?

Do you have arguments? What about?

How do your friends influence you?

BODY CUBE:

You will need:

Medium sized cardboard box
Pictures, drawings, magazine cuttings

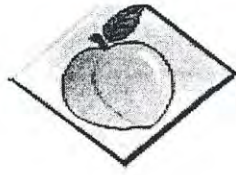
Decorate each side of the box with pictures that illustrate the five body senses: eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, toes/fingers for touching, mouth and tongue for tasting and nose for smelling.
On the sixth side write ROLL AGAIN

RULES:

Each student rolls the Body Cube on the floor. Then they must describe how they used a sense to gather information about the world from the picture shown on the cube, e.g., I used my tongue to taste my breakfast this morning.

VARIATIONS:

- 1: Increase complexity by asking players to describe what life would be like without the use of the sense.
- 2: Expand the activity to direct pairs to conduct research to learn about modifications for people with impaired senses e.g. hearing devises, Braille or sign Language.



PEACHES

Of course peaches don't often grow to enormous sizes or fly across the Atlantic Ocean, but the Peach does have a fascinating history and has travelled a great deal!

They originate from China back in the 10th century B.C. and can be found in drawings from that time. The peach eventually got its name around 300 B.C. A Greek philosopher called THEOPHRASTUS thought it came from Persia and so he named this fruit after this country. In the first century the Romans imported the fruit from Persia and it reached Europe by the year 0, but England didn't see its first peach until around 1650 A.D!

Darwin (1731 - 1802) noticed that Peach Trees spontaneously produced nectarines and also noticed that this happened the other way around!

QUICK QUIZ

1. Where does the Peach originate?
2. How much money did Percy Molteno's peach sell for in Covent Garden?
3. What other fruits can peach trees grow? Who discovered this?
4. When did the first peaches arrive in England?
5. Where did the Greek philosopher Theophrastus think that peaches came from?
6. When did the peach reach Europe by?

The Right order is:

1. Being picked from the trees in South Africa.
2. Arrives at the pack house
3. Washed, dried, graded and packed.
4. Loaded onto the ship.
5. A Two Week Journey
6. Held in Holding Chambers or loaded straight onto Lorries.
7. Quality Checks and information fed back to Capespan in Cape Town.
8. Buying from the shelf in the Supermarket.

The Industry: A Brief History

Deciduous fruit grows in abundance in the Cape, situated at the Southern point of the African Continent. This tradition of fruit growing goes back to the 1650's when the first trees were planted, essentially to supply to the crews of ships passing around the Cape from Europe to the East.

During the 1870's and the late 1880's the first attempts were made to export fruit to England. In 1892 a son of the Cape's prime minister, Percy Molteno, successfully landed a consignment of 14 trays of PEACHES at London's famous Covent Garden. These were sold at such a high price of up to 2 shillings and 3 pennies a peach (about thirteen pence!) that even more were shipped that same season.

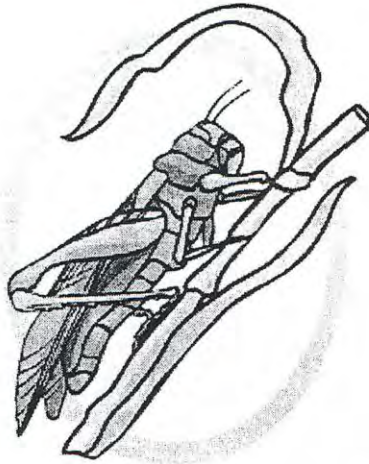
In 1914 the inspection of all export fruit was made compulsive with the Fruit Export Act which set high standards of quality.

During the two World Wars no fruit could be exported. This affected the industry greatly, so when exports resumed in 1946, THE DECIDUOUS PRODUCERS TRUST took over all exports. During the 1960's the familiar "Cape" Logo was established as the official export brand name.

Today the industry exports more than 70 million cartons of deciduous fruit to more than 60 countries around the world!

All this information and more in-depth information and activities based around fruit can be found at www.capespan.com

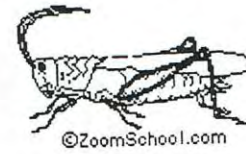
GRASSHOPPERS



Hello! I'm a pest! In fact most of the world thinks I am a serious big leaping pest! Ha! Ha! You humans say that I am a pest because I eat a lot of plants as well as eating insects so you don't like me as much as you like ladybirds and spiders. Well I don't care because I think that I am one astounding creature. I shall begin by describing myself to you, I have a three part body - a head, thorax and abdomen, which is covered by a stiff shell, a bit like a crab. Then I have six jointed legs, two pairs of wings, two antennae, five pairs of eyes - pretty amazing eh? What's more, I can do fantastic things with my body parts. I can leap 20 times the length of my body. I can use my long hind legs to hop and my short front legs to hold prey and walk on and male grasshoppers like myself can make wonderful music by rubbing our back legs together. Spring is usually quite busy for us Grasshoppers as it is hatching time. The eggs will have been laid in winter in preparation for the yearly grand hatch as there is only one generation of us born a year!



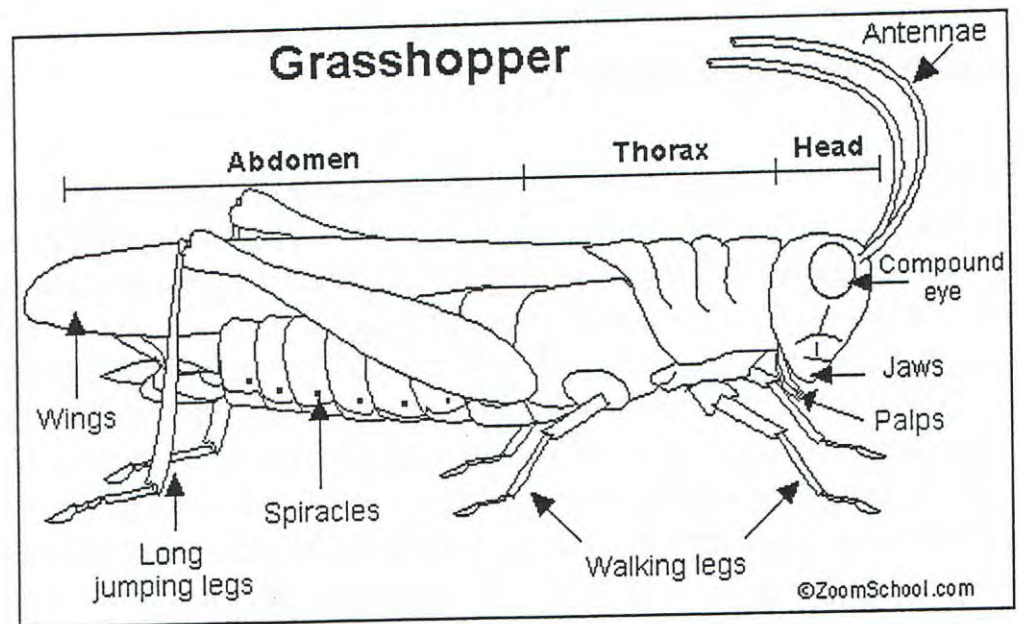
STORIES



There are a few Aesops Fables regarding Grasshoppers, the Ass and the Grasshopper, The Grasshopper and the Owl and The Ants and the Grasshopper, here is the story of

The Ants and The Grasshopper

The Ants were spending a fine Winters Day drying grain collected in the Summer time. A Grasshopper, perishing with famine, passed by and begged for a little food. The ants enquired of him, "Why did you not find and store food during the summer?" He replied, "I had lots of leisure time. I passed the days in singing." The ants replied lightly "If you were foolish enough to sing all the summer, you must dance supperless to bed in the winter."



FAME

Worms have had many famous people talk about them from all over the world and through time. Here are a few famous people and their comments about earthworms!

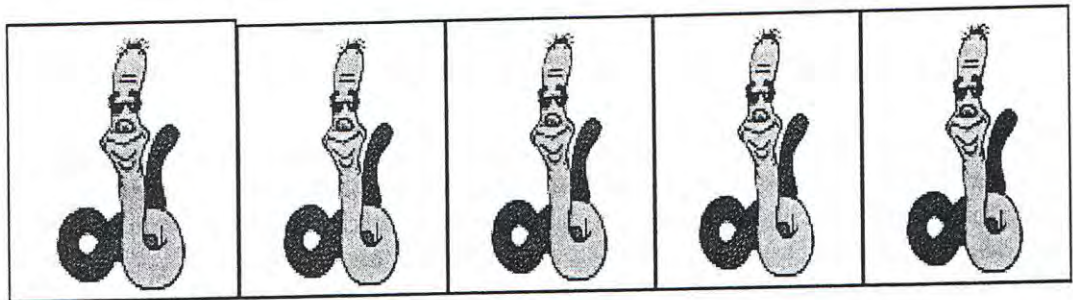
Aristotle called them the "Intestines of the earth"

Cleopatra regarded them as "Sacred"

Charles Darwin studied worms for 39 years and said "It maybe doubted whether there are many other animals in the world which have played so important a part in the history of the world."

EXERCISE

Discuss how your class feels towards worms. Do they think that they are yucky, disgusting? Write or perform an interview with a worm (give them a voice!!). Do you think they get a good or bad press? What are the everyday dangers that they face? How hard do they work? What would the world be like if they weren't around? Do you think that they are our friend or enemy? Are worms really blind?



STORIES

There are many famous stories from all corners of the world about spiders, from the Ananse stories of the West Indies, to The European Legend of Arachne. Other legends include the one from West Africa where the thread of the spider is a link between humans on earth and God in the Sky. In China stories date back 2000 years with the monk Tae Seng who met the Seven Spider Fairy Sisters! Native American Stories are in abundance about the Spiderwoman who existed before creation. There is also a story from the Choctaw People of Tennessee and Mississippi about Grandmother Spider.



GRANDMOTHER SPIDER STEALS THE FIRE

The Choctaw people say in the beginning the world was dark, opened eyes saw nothing. This was true of all people, the Animal People, The Bird People, The Insect People and The Human People. All the people moved around by touch and if they found something that didn't eat them first, they ate it raw, as they had no fire to cook it.

The people had a great powwow, with the Animal and Bird People taking the lead. They decided that life was cold and miserable. Someone spoke from the dark, "I've heard that people in the East have fire." This caused a stir of wonder, "What could fire be?" There was a general discussion and it was decided that if fire was warm and gave light, they should have it too. Another voice said, "But the people of the East are too greedy to share

The powwow sent Crow to look the situation over, for Crow was very clever. Crow at that time was pure white and had the sweetest singing voice. But he took so long standing over the fire trying to find the perfect piece to steal that his white feathers were smoked black. And he had breathed in so much smoke that when he tried to sing, out came a harsh, "Caw! Caw!"

The Council said, "Opossum has failed. Buzzard and Crow have failed. Who shall we send?"

Tiny Grandmother Spider shouted with all her might "LET ME TRY IT PLEASE!" Though the council thought that she had little chance of success, they agreed she should have her turn. She made a tiny clay container and a lid that fitted perfectly with a tiny notch for air. Then she put the container on her back, spun a web to the East and walked tiptoe until she came to the fire. She was so small that the people from the East took no notice. She took a piece of the fire and put it in the container. Then she walked back on tiptoe along the web until she came to the People. Since they couldn't see any fire, they said, "Grandmother Spider has failed." "Oh no," she said, "I have the fire!" She lifted the pot from her back, and the lid from the pot, and the fire flamed up into its friend the air. All the birds and Animal People began to decide who would get this wonderful warmth. Bear said, "I'll take it!" But then he burnt his paws on it and decided fire was not for animals, for look what happened to Opossum!

The Birds wanted no part of it, as Buzzard and Crow were still nursing their wounds. The Insects though it was pretty, but they, too, stayed far away from the fire.

LADYBIRDS

Ladybird, Ladybird
Fly away home
Your house is on fire
And your children all gone

All except one,
And that's little Ann
For she has crept under
The frying pan.



Hello my dears, my name is Lucia Ladybird and I am one of 42 species of Ladybird who live in Great Britain. I am a kind of beetle and my head is covered by a kind of hood called a pronotum. We are very delicate and small creatures but we can eat up to 5000 aphids (insects that feed on plants) in a lifetime so we are considered very good friends of gardeners! I am a red ladybird but my friends are all different colours, some are white or pink or yellow or orange and some are black. It is very nice that we are all so different we nearly make a rainbow when we are all together!

PROJECTS:

Ladybirds are distasteful to predators. When disturbed they may secrete an odourless fluid from their joints to warn enemies. Can you think of any other insects or animals that do something similar?

Find a picture of a ladybirds larvae (baby) describe how they look and how are they different to an adult ladybird?

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE 2 Ladybirds are the same, can you find them?



INSECT QUIZ

1. What insect takes its name from a word meaning 100?
2. How many legs do Ladybirds have?
3. How many wings does a Grasshopper have?
4. Which of James' friends would be considered to be a big pest to farmers?
5. What is the name of the spider that can jump?
6. Why do earthworms' tunnels benefit the soil?
7. What kind of insect can eat small mammals?
8. How many different species of Spider are there around the world?
9. How many aphids can a ladybird eat in its lifetime?
10. Which Insect has five eyes?
11. Which insect curls up to protect itself?
12. What does a cobweb spider have on its legs to help trap its prey?
13. What colours can a ladybird be?
14. Who called Earthworms "the intestines of the earth?"
15. Name 2 insects that have segmented bodies?



FIRE SAFETY



(With thanks to West Midlands Fire Service Community Relations officer Kevin Lynch)

In James and the giant peach the ladybird has a fear of fire

Your local Community Fire Relations Office should be able to provide you with a lot of information, Safety advice, quizzes and activity packs for your school. It is well worth getting in touch with them.

**The Community Relations office number for Birmingham is:
0121 753 1313**

Here are a few safety tips!

If your clothes catch fire remember the sequence

STOPI Don't run it will make the fire worse!

DROPI Get down onto the floor!

ROLLI With your arms above your head, roll over – this will put out the flames!

EXERCISE: THE WARMING UP GAME!

With your class you can practice this as a warm up game for PE and Movement by moving around the space to music or a drum when you stop the music and shout the right combination the children do it and then carry on, if you shout the wrong combination or words like “run”, “panic”, “jump up and down!” if they move on these they are out!

If you discover a fire:

- Close all doors behind you.
- Get everyone out as quickly as possible.
- Call the fire brigade
- Do not re-enter the house until a fire officer has told you it is safe.

Then a small voice said, "We will take it, if Grandmother Spider will help." The timid humans, whom none of the animals or birds thought much of, were volunteering!

So Grandmother Spider taught the Human People how to feed the fire sticks and wood to keep it from dying, how to keep the fire safe in a circle of stone so it couldn't escape and hurt their homes. She also taught them pottery and about weaving and spinning at which Grandmother Spider was an expert.

The Choctaw remember. They made a beautiful design to decorate their homes, a picture of Grandmother Spider, two sets of legs up, two down, with a fire symbol on her back. This is so their children never forget to honour Grandmother Spider, Firebringer!



with us." So it was decided that the Bird and Animal People should steal the fire.

But who should steal it? Grandmother Spider volunteered. "I can do it! Let me try!" But Opossum spoke at the same time. "I, Opossum, will go to the East and since I am a great hunter, I will take the fire and hide it in the bushy hair on my tail." It was well known that Opossum had the furriest tail of all the animals, so he was selected.

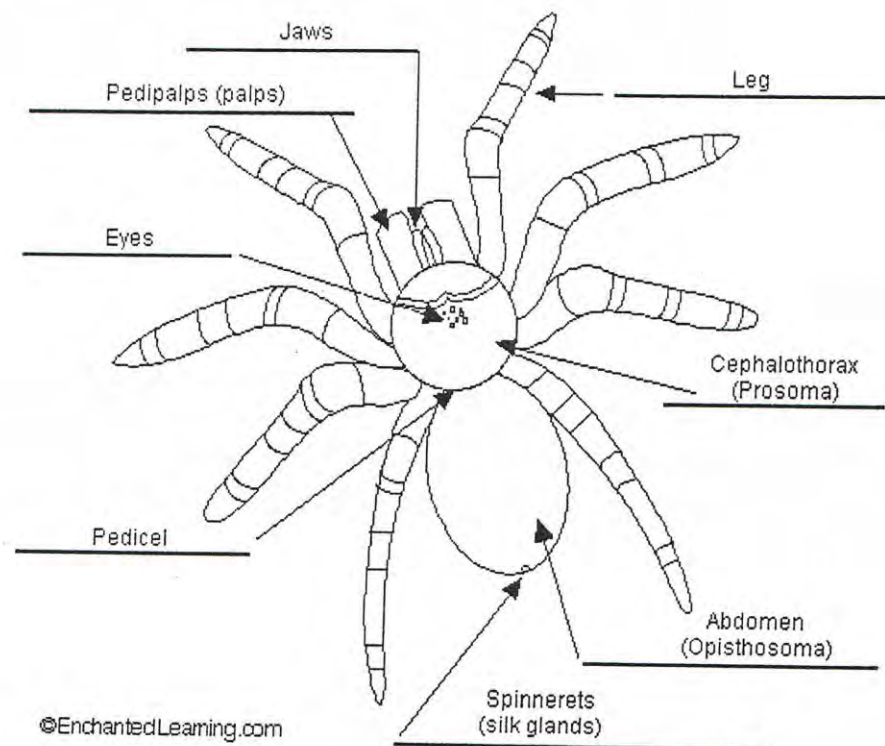
In the East, he found the beautiful red fire, jealously guarded by the people of the East. Opossum got closer and closer until he picked up a small piece of burning wood and stuck it in the hair of his tail, which promptly began to smoke, then flame. The people of the East said, "Look, that Opossum has stolen our fire!" They snatched it back and drove Opossum away. Poor Opossum! Every bit of hair had burned from his tail, and to this day, opossums have no hair at all on their tails.

Once again, the powwow had to find a volunteer. Grandmother Spider again said, "Let me go! I can do it!" But this time a bird was elected, Buzzard. Buzzard was very proud. "I will fly to the East and hide the stolen fire in the beautiful long feathers on my head." The Birds and Animals still did not understand the nature of fire. So Buzzard flew to the East, swooped past those defending the fire, picked up a small piece of burning ember, and hid it in his head feathers. Buzzard's head began to smoke and flame! The people of the East said, "Look! Buzzard has stolen the fire!" And they grabbed it back.

Poor Buzzard! His head was now bare of feathers, red and blistered looking and to this day buzzards have naked heads that are bright red and blistered.



SPIDERS

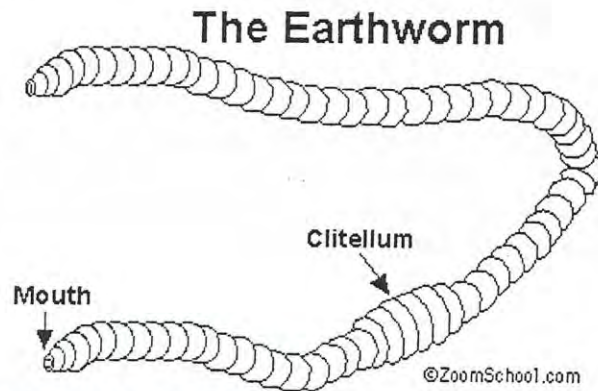


We spiders are very beneficial because we feed on small insects and other arthropods. We live outdoors and like to hang upside down from them. We have perfectly round abdomens excellent vision to see things with and some of us can jump too! Nearly all of us have poison glands which connect to our fangs which sounds dangerous but out of the 300,000 of us there are in the world only a few of us have venom harmful to humans. The black widow and the brown recluse are two scary spiders that spring to my mind! But anyway in Britain you are likely to find harmless spiders such as those common *GARDEN SPIDERS* who are either Black or brown with white markings. They live in gardens, woods or Heaths, or those *CRAB SPIDERS*, whose crafty females can change their colour to match whatever flower they live on. I myself am one of the sophisticated *COBWEB SPIDERS*. I build irregular cobwebs inside and on our hind legs we have a row of small bristles to help wrap our prey in silk. Our webs are cleverly located in the corner of windows or doors. The most famous and deadly Black Widow Spider is a member of our family.

EARTHWORMS - "THE UNDERGROUND FARMER"

GAME

Count the number of segments on this worm.



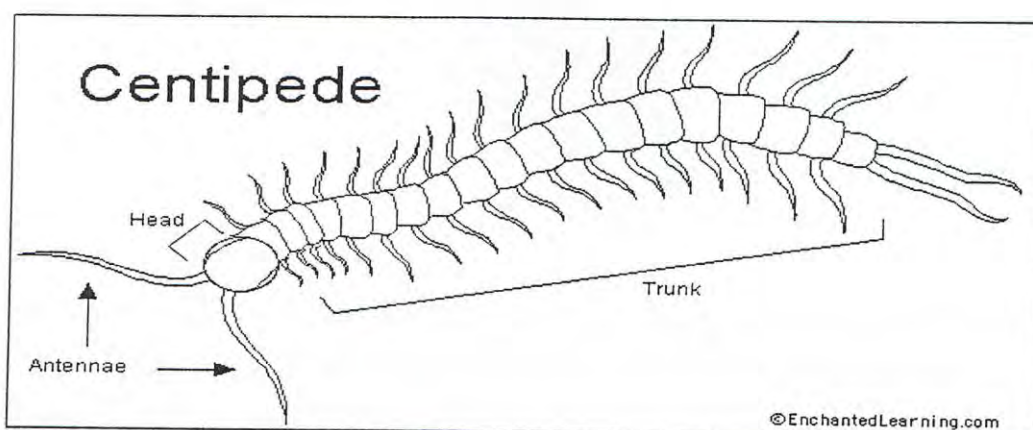
EARTHWORMS BIOGRAPHY

Us Earthworms have a very bad time with you humans you step on us quite frequently and some of you younger ones really treat us badly by doing no I can't mention those things as they are just too awful to think about. But, did you ever think that actually we help you quite a lot? If it weren't for us you would all be living underground! We feed on the layer of living and dead plants, stems and organic matter that gathers on the soils surface. If we didn't exist then all the dead plants and animals would stay where they fell, which would mean that eventually YOU would be living underneath them! We are known as "The Underground Farmer" for a number of reasons. Firstly, we aid decomposition and recycle nutrients in the soil using our castings (poo to you!) to enrich it! In one acre of land there can be up to one million worms busily working by eating ten Tons! Even our tunnels help the earth as they help water and oxygen to enter the soil. We are definitely one of the most sophisticated but underestimated things on this planet and we were here long before you humans. In fact we have been around for 120 million years - beat that! We take a rest in the winter months and as the soil thaws in the spring we become active and then move deeper in the ground in the summer because the soil starts to dry out. Our bodies may look very simple to your eyes but actually they are quite complicated. We have segmented bodies and we need to keep moist with mucous as we need it to enable us to breathe through our skin. Where you only have one heart we have five pairs! Of course we have to be careful of you humans with your big clumsy feet, but we also have to avoid moles and shrews because moles eat three times their weight in worms a day and shrews eat every hour and their favourite snack is Us!

CENTIPEDES

GAME

Count the Centipedes legs how many does this centipede have? Is he really a centipede?



A CENTIPEDES BIOGRAPHY

Some people get us centipedes confused with our cousins the millipedes but we are different, you know. We have one pair of legs on each segment of our body and millipedes have 2 pairs! We also have longer antennae than them and we have poisonous jaws, they don't. Not only are we related to the Millipedes, but also, our distant relatives include Lobsters, Crayfish and Shrimps - we have a very big family!

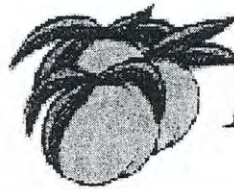
I shall tell you a bit about my life. Firstly, I was laid as an egg in the summer and then grew up to be an adult in the winter. I spend my days eating other insects, so I am very beneficial to all the farmers and gardeners, although some people don't like it when I try to stay in their houses. I can't think why because I don't carry any diseases that are harmful to man, animals or plants but I have been known to nip people with my jaws sometimes!

I am quite a small centipede but my cousin "Scolopendra Gigantca" (What a name!) lives in the tropics of South America and he can grow up to 12 inches! That's nothing compared with what I can do. I can glow in the dark! It's true! I hope that I will live as long as my uncle, he is very old. He will be six years old next month and he is my oldest living relative. Once he told me one time a bird cut his leg off trying to catch him but luckily it grew back. I hope that I don't get attacked by birds, toads or shrews as they love to eat us. Well I suppose I will just have to curl up if I see one coming towards me! Do you know that I have heard that some people like to eat us as a tasty snack! How disgusting!

We are delighted that our production of "James and the Giant Peach" is supported by CAPE.

FRUIT

THE JOURNEY TO YOUR FRUIT BASKET!!!



Can you put in the right order the journey you think the fruit might take to end up in your fruit basket?

Buying from the shelf in the Supermarket

Arrives at the packing house

Being picked from the tree in South Africa

Quality Checks and information fed back to Capespan in Cape Town

Loaded onto the Ship

Washed, dried, graded and packed.

Held in Holding Chambers near the Quay or loaded onto Lorries

A Two-Week Journey

GEOLOGY

James and the Giant Peach spend some time floating on the sea. One of the questions a lot of students ask about the sea is "Why is the Sea Salty?"

A simplified answer is that the salt comes from the rocks on the land. Rain washes over them and carries the ions that make salt into the rivers and streams and then into the sea.

Did you know that 3.5% of the weight of seawater comes from dissolved salts?

EXERCISE

I haven't tried this experiment myself but it looks good!

You will need:

Rock Salt, water, containers, and strainers.

- Pour water over the rock salt, which is contained in a strainer. The water plus dissolved salt will be collected in a plastic cup. Students will taste the water sample.
- Allow the water to evaporate, observing that the salt remains.
- Repeat the above procedure over a 3 or 4 day period.
- Observe that the salt increases each time new water is added.

EXERCISE: SALT WATER PAINTING

This exercise can be again used to observe the evaporation process.

- Mix warm water, salt, and food colouring.
- Paint pictures with the mixture on white paper. Let dry.

The water evaporates but the salt remains creating an amazing picture!

THE FIVE SENSES

Next to sense write a description of where in James and the Giant Peach you can find a reference to these senses.

TASTE

SIGHT

SMELL

TOUCH

HEARING

EXERCISE: TASTE TESTING!

Get a tray of varying food taste sensations. Get each student to describe each flavour verbally to the class (sour, bitter etc.)
TAKE THE TASTE TEST!

Here is a picture of where the taste buds on your tongue detect the different tastes! Everyones sense of taste is different. As a baby you have a lot more taste buds on the roof and sides of your mouth which makes them more sensitive to taste. As you grow older they gradually disappear meaning that you will start to like foods that you thought were too strong before!



Using the book “Me and My Face”

EXERCISE: FROZEN IMAGES

Read the book together as a class.

This exercise works well to promote teamwork within mixed ability groups; everyone's ideas are encouraged to be listened to.

- Split the class into groups of four or five.
- Give each group a section of the book to look at and read again. E.g. the section where the person wants to hide away or the part it discusses about the media.
- Give the groups three minutes to create a frozen picture from the piece they have been given which includes all of the group (they all have to be characters no objects!)
- Regroup and explain that each group will now show their pictures and they have to remain frozen. Discuss each picture with the rest of the group i.e. what is happening in the picture? What do you think they are feeling etc.
- After the brief discussion, touch each character in turn on the shoulder this character then comes to life to explain in one word or sentence, how they are feeling, or what they are saying in that scene or just do a movement in connection with their character. (This method is called Thought Tracking.)
- If this works well the groups can then have two minutes to put words and actions to their picture to act out their scene.
- Discuss each scene and how practical resolutions could be made.
- Give the groups 3/4 minutes to prepare their “solution” scene.
- Perform it for the rest of the group.

EXERCISE: INITIAL REACTIONS

This is an excellent exercise to promote discussion on initial reactions to others.

- Get the class to draw a picture of their face.
- Then ask them to draw a picture of one of the faces of Insects from the peach – The Earthworm, Centipede, Ladybird, Spider or Grasshopper.
- Compare and state the differences between the two faces.
- Get them to ask themselves how they would feel if they met this face for the first time. Scared, embarrassed, frightened? Get them to list their feelings and then consider and list the feelings of how the other face would feel if they met them for the first time!
- Discuss how others can look different and what reactions people give.

Variations: Can be done with photographs and newspaper or magazine cuttings.

EXERCISE: JOKER IN THE PACK

Another active exercise to promote discussion about feelings of exclusion is the JOKER IN THE PACK exercise. (Please note that this exercise can cause high emotions in certain groups as you are asking them to “exclude” someone you need to be aware of the social or personal politics of the group.)

- Using some playing cards which contains 1 or 2 Jokers give each student a card
- Ask them NOT to look at it but put it on their forehead so that everyone else can see what they are.
- Ask the group to move around the space without talking
- They are told to keep their distance from anyone who has a joker.
- Do this for a few minutes and then swap cards and repeat the exercise.
- Directly after the exercise seat the group in a circle and discuss their reactions and feelings to the exercise. How did those who were ignored feel and how did the rest of the group feel?
- It may be necessary straight after this exercise to do another exercise where the entire group is working together as a team so that no one leaves with negative feelings!

Variations: The group could progress and carry out the exercise using speech (if you know that the group won't abuse this!) and then prepare a scene where they feel someone may be treated differently because of the way they look.

FEELINGS

Why did James feel sad in "James and the Giant Peach"?

Is it always children who are sad?

Get the class to talk about some of the things that can make us feel sad:

- E.g.
- Being lonely
 - Having someone in the family who is sick
 - Losing a pet or something we are fond of
 - Feeling different from others, being left out
 - When nobody seems to care how we feel
 - Missing someone who has gone away

Ask the children to imagine that they are James at the beginning of the story and talk about how they feel being with Aunt Sponge and Spiker. Why do they think that Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker are so unkind to James?

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to act out a scene from the beginning with James, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker.

When did James begin to feel happy? Why do you think this was?

Ask the children to prepare a scene where James is happy; include some other characters from the play.

BEING A NEWCOMER

Sometimes you are completely new to a situation. Sometimes being a newcomer isn't easy. Get the class to think of some situations where they have been newcomers. Ask them:

How did it feel to be the newcomer?

What did you say or do to get to know the other people you were meeting for the first time?

How can a newcomer let other people know that they want to join in?

What can the people in a group do to make a newcomer feel welcome?

In small groups act out situations where someone is joining a new group, take turns in being the newcomer.

THEATRE ARTS

COSTUME DESIGN

Before your class sees the play get them to try to imagine what the costume for one of the insects could be like. Ask the children to design their own costumes for one of the characters.

Remember that their designs have to be quite practical as the costume has to be easy to move around in, light and cool as the actors have to wear them for a long time under very hot lights! If you want them to they can also research and describe what types of materials they would use.

After seeing the production what did you class think of the costumes? Did they think that they were realistic or abstract?

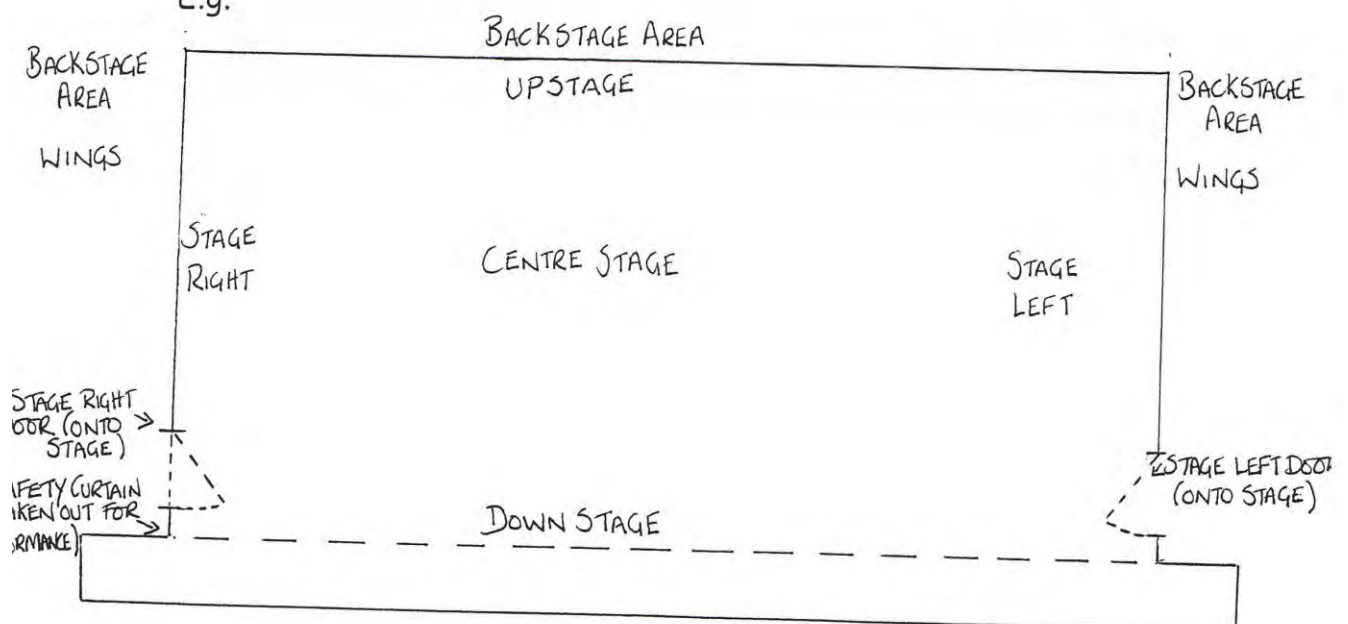
STAGE DESIGN

Get the class to choose a section of the book to create a stage design and plan for.

The design can be from the view of the audience and in colour.

The plan can be a simple line drawing from an aerial perspective With each aspect labeled.

E.g.



EXERCISE – OCEAN VOYAGE

This is a fun exercise to promote co-operation and teamwork!

You will need two gym mats per group (small size for small group, larger for bigger group)

A Large room (preferably a gym or hall)

- Split the class into groups of 5 – 8 students
- Stand them at one side of the room with their two mats
- Tell them that they are in England and they have to cross the Atlantic to get to America.
- The problem is that each group has two rafts (mats) for taking the group across the ocean.
- In their groups they need to find a way to travel across without your group members touching the water (gym floor).
- If a group member does touch the water the entire group must go back to the line and start again.

Having the entire group standing on one mat while they move the other mat to the front and then transfer themselves can complete the exercise. Teamwork is the key!

Variations: Again divide the class into groups of 5 - 8, stand them in a line, tell them the same story but only give the entire class 2 large mats - see how long it takes them to work out that the whole class must work together not the individual groups, to be able to get to the other side. (Obviously stop the exercise if it is likely to turn violent!)

About the Author

Roald Dahl started writing in earnest for children in the 1960's. He wrote around thirty books for children, which have been published around the world. James and the Giant Peach was first published in 1961 in America and 1967 in the UK.

Why don't you find out more about this amazing man and his works at the fantastically flabbergasting website www.roalddahl.com It is well worth a visit for teachers and kids alike! Do some research on the man himself and write a page on the things that you find most interesting about his life (there are a lot to choose from!)

Get the class to think of other Roald Dahl Children stories. Give each child one of the stories from the list and get them to research / read / watch their chosen story and tell the class about it.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	The Magic Finger
The BFG	Matilda
The Witches	The Minpins
Georges Marvellous Medicine	
The Twits	My Year
Boy	Quiz Books
Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator	Revolting Recipes
The Vicar of Nibbleswicke	Revolting Rhymes
Danny The Champion of the World	Rhyme Stew
Skin and Other Stories	Dirty Beasts
The Enormous Crocodile	The Umbrella Man
Esio Trot	Going Solo
The Fantastic Mr. Fox	
The Great Automatic Grammatizator	
The Mildenhall Treasure	
The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me	
The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar	

Were all of Roald Dahls books written in the same way? Were all of them based in fantasy or were any of them very realistic? (E.g. compare James and the Giant Peach to Danny the Champion of the World.)

