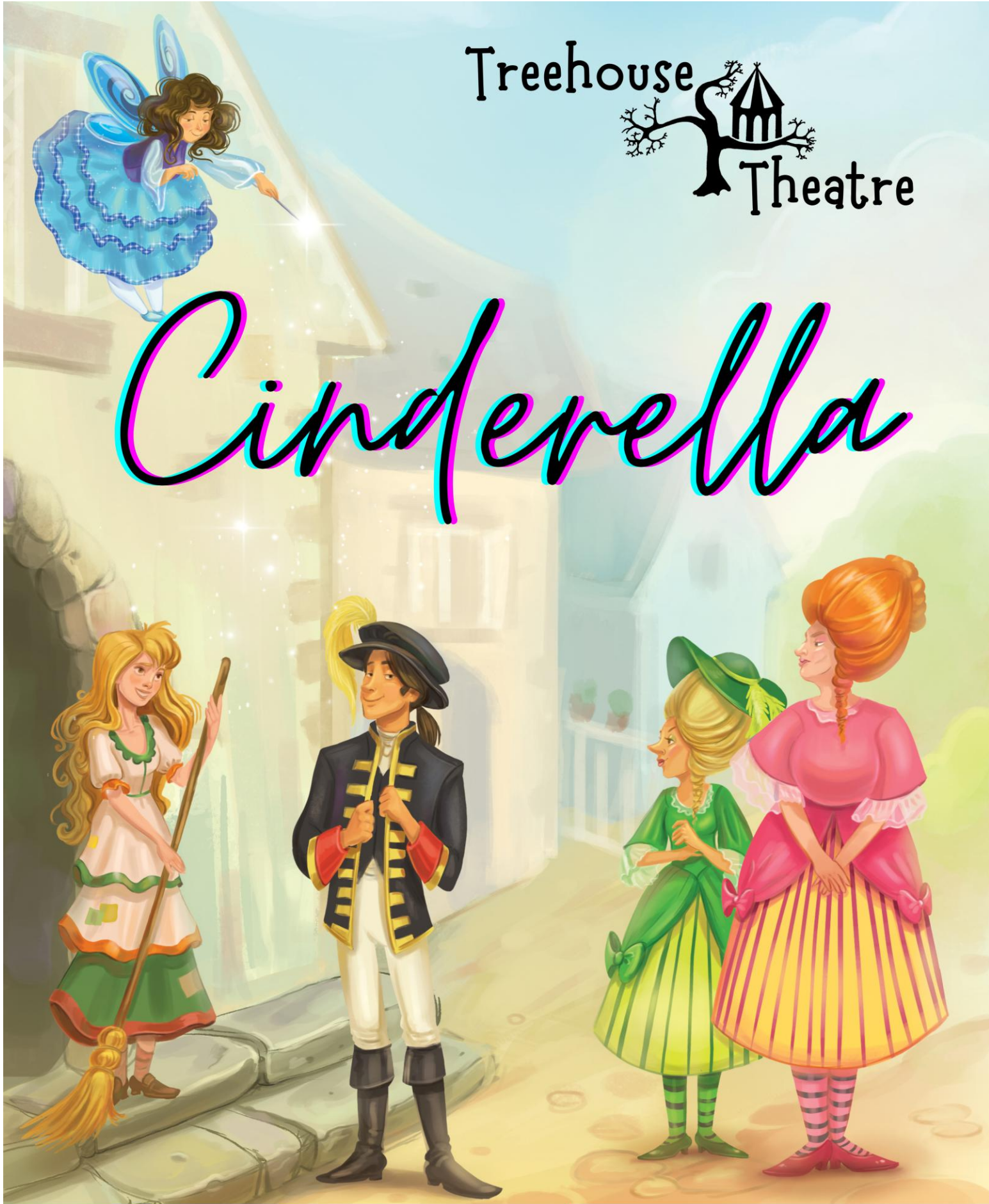


Treehouse
Theatre



Cinderella



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Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Introduction

A Treehouse Theatre Pantomime can, of course, simply be used as an entertaining event for everyone to enjoy, and why not? But when an audience are thoroughly engaged with something, as they tend to be with these performances, group leaders may well be tempted to harness that enthusiasm towards achieving further creative activity.

This Activity Pack contains lots of ideas for ways in which you can do so.

Our hope in providing this Pack is that it gives our audiences opportunities to do creative work of their own, having been inspired by the show.

We hope too that audiences enjoy the process of making things, rather than it necessarily simply being about results.

If the emphasis is about the process rather than some imagined perfect result then fear of failure becomes obsolete. Expression is king. And any “error” is merely part of the process of improvement and learning, or not even an error at all but simply part of the expression. Fear of failure is, of course, an enemy to creativity. It can stop a pen from ever writing the first word, if it’s allowed to get set in.

So we hope you find these materials useful, and that our audiences enjoy the chance to play a bit more!

Ben Lindsey-Clark
Creative Director

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Contents

Watch the filmed opening scene here: <https://youtu.be/gTKRz6GAh1s>

1. Writing Poetry
2. Writing Prose and Non-Fiction
3. Writing Drama - Play writing and scene work
4. Visual Art and Colouring pages
5. Music
6. Pantomime Creation – try it yourself
7. Drama Games
8. Accessibility

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Writing: Poetry

Love Poetry

Imagine you are one of the characters in the story who is in love with another, eg. Charming with Cinderella. Write a love poem that describes your feelings for that person.

Try to use:

- Similies, descriptions using “like” or “as” eg. *“My love is like the touch of sunlight on my upturned face”* or *“My heart is as full as my plate for Christmas dinner”*.
- Metaphors, descriptions where you say something is something, for effect, eg: *My love is a raging fire in my heart*
- Personification. Describe your emotions as a person capable of doing things. *“My love drags me to your door”*

Poetry about events

Use the same kind of techniques, and any others you know, to describe a chosen characters feelings and experience of a moment in the story. Eg. Cinderella arriving at the Ball, or one of the Ugly Sisters seeing the glass slipper fit perfectly onto the foot of Cinderella.

A Limerick

Use the structure of a limerick to write a new one about a character in the story. Limericks are usually amusing and fun, they are part of what we call nonsense poetry. They follow the pattern, with this same rhythm:

There once was a man from Peru	ta-da ta-ta-da ta-ta-da
Who dreamt that he swallowed his shoe .	ta-da ta-ta-da ta-ta-da
He woke up in a fright	ta-ta-da ta-ta-da
In the mid of the night	ta-ta-da ta-ta-da
To learn that his dream had come true!	ta-da ta-ta-da ta-ta-da

Notice that you get the first second and fifth line to rhyme with each other, and the third and fourth to rhyme with each other.

You can swap out bits of the one above and put things from the story in instead, making up any details if you need to.

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A Haiku

Try writing a haiku about an important object or event in the story.

A haiku is another kind of poem with a special structure.

Normally, the first line of haiku has 5 syllables, the second line has 7 syllables, and the third has 5 syllables.

Eg.

Your pink frilly dress

Lace layered up like lettuce leaves

Tickles the dancefloor

Notice it doesn't have to rhyme, it just tries to capture a moment as perfectly as possible.

An Acrostic

An acrostic is a kind of poem where you write a word down the page then start each line with one of its letters. Lines can be just single words or several words:

Graceless

Really miserable

Actually misses her Dad

Can't see the bright side

Endlessly moaning

Again it doesn't have to rhyme, but it can if you want.

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Writing: Prose and Non-Fiction

Recall and recount

Synopsis

A synopsis is a brief recounting of the story. Maybe somebody is finding out about it but cannot see it themselves. They need to know the whole story but quickly. So you don't say what people said, just write the events in the write order, so we see the "plot". For this spoilers are allowed!

Blurb

Imagine the story is going to be published in a book. Write the blurb for the back of the book. It will give a little information about the story, just enough to hook in the reader. NO spoilers!!

Newspaper Report

Imagine you are a reporter from the local newspaper. Write a report on an event in the story, such as what happened at the Prince's Ball. Make sure you think of a good catchy headline!

Creative Writing

Alternative Endings

Imagine and write a different ending to the story. What if...

- The shoe fitted one of the ugly sisters?
- The Prince fell in love with someone else after the fitting?
- The fairy godmother decided she wanted to marry the Prince?
- Something else?

Loose Ends

A good story has few loose ends, but if you look at the more minor characters you could imagine and write about what happened to them, away from the main story. For example:

- Where did the fairy godmother go? Did she watch what was happening? Who was she with?
- What happened with Giant Tortoise that ate the girls' parents?
- What do you think the transformed animals had to say to their friends after what happened? Would their friends believe them? How would it change their lives?

Critical Thinking

Review

Write a review of the play for the school newsletter. You should think about:

- Which characters did you like, or dislike?
- What did you think of the actors? Did they help you believe in the characters? Did they have any other talents that you think were special?
- Was there anything you didn't like? What would you have done differently to make the play better?

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Play Writing and Drama

Dialogues

Objects and Animals

List some objects or animals in the story. Imagine two of them having a conversation about a character or an event in the story. If you do this in pairs, you can each imagine you are talking for one of the objects or animals.

Before writing, decide what the conversation will be about.

Using the template with speech bubbles, the first person says the first line, and both write it down. Second person says their line, and both write that down. Just run with what your partner has said. But make sure you pay attention to what has just been said, so that your line responds to it, like a real conversation.

Write 3 lines each, or more if the plot requires it. Have a short rehearsal, then you can act it out!

New Situations

Choose two characters from the play. Imagine them having a conversation in a completely different, or unseen situation. It could be anything, but for example:

- Grace and Patience want the same face cream in the shop, but there's only one left
- Cinderella's nose is accidentally turned into a carrot by the fairy godmother
- Imagine the death scene of the girls' parents (eaten by a giant tortoise).

Decide on what will happen first: give them a problem to sort out, and decide how they can solve it.

Using the template with speech bubbles, the first person says the first line, and both write it down. Second person says their line, and both write that down. Just run with what your partner has said. But make sure you pay attention to what has just been said, so that your line responds to it, like a real conversation.

Write 3 lines each, or more if the plot requires it. Have a short rehearsal, then you can act it out!

Monologues

The Weirdest Thing Happened!

Think of a small character, or an animal in the story.

Imagine you are that character. Tell us what happened on the day you were involved in the story, from your point of view.

Make creative decisions about:

- What happened to the character or object immediately before the entering the story.
- What happened to the character in the story and how they felt about it.
- What happens to the object or character straight after its involvement in the story.

This can be a speaking exercise; a writing one, followed by a speaking one; or even a speaking one, followed by writing. While you are speaking as the character, think about:

- How they speak
- Do they have any mannerisms, or little habits that make them special and recognizable?

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Mini-scripts

The Weirdest Thing Happened!

In pairs, think of a small character, or an animal in the story.

Write a script, about what happened on the day this character was involved in the story. Make sure you know what other characters are involved.

Make creative decisions about:

- What happened to the character or object immediately before the entering the story.
- What happened to the character in the story and how they felt about it.
- What happens to the object or character straight after its involvement in the story.

One of you write the words of the 'main' character, the other providing the words of all the other characters. Run with each other's ideas, but make sure you respond to what has just been said, as you take turns writing the things they say.

If you have trouble writing this many words, perhaps you can record what you want to say instead, and it can be written down later. You can learn your parts by hearing them and saying them lots of times, rather than reading them off your script if that suits you best, but your teacher will need to give you a bit of time for this.

This can be followed up by the script being briefly rehearsed and then performed, or rehearsed and performed in collaboration with other pairs, taking turns to play parts in each other's scripts.

Improvisations

Improvisation is when you make stuff up on the spot, either with or without some discussion first.

Interviews

Imagine the play has just been performed at a local theatre.

As a group, come up with a list of questions that a local journalist might ask when interviewing a character.

In pairs, choose who will be a journalist for the local paper, and who will be one of the characters from the Play (in character).

The interviewer should write 3 questions to ask the character then do it. Write down what they said.

Then swap places (and maybe choose a different character this time).

You could write up the interview, as if it was in a celebrity magazine.

Hotseating

An alternative to this is that the whole group interviews someone from the play, a "hotseating" of that character. Sometimes leaders might play a role!

Dialogues

As above, with written dialogues. But you make it up as you are doing it. Decide what will happen briefly, but then make up the characters words as you are acting it out.

Monologues

As above but as a speaking exercise, making it up as you go.

Improvisations can always be filmed. Then you watch them back and decide what you want to keep, get rid of, or improve upon. So you can then make a rehearsed scene that started as an improvisation.

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Visual Art

Comic Strip Story Boarding

In groups, draw the story as a storyboard of pictures. People do this when they are making a movie - when they are deciding what to film. Each picture shows a scene of the story. You will need to remember what the scenes were, and then decide who will draw which scene. They can be comic style, with characters perhaps saying important lines in speech bubbles.

Or, you can do this as a whole group, with small sub-groups doing a picture together, so the whole group ends up with the whole story.

Illustrating scenes

In art, we often look at the different styles of well-known artists Picasso, Monet, Van Gogh, Georges Seurat etc. Perhaps you have done this before, or you are studying one now. Choose a scene from the story, and illustrate it in the style of your chosen artist.

Pop Art

One famous artist, Andy Warhol, had a style now known as Pop Art. Here is an example:



Notice that he has the same picture coloured in different ways.

You can do this either by:

- Doing a line drawing of a character or an object from the story, photocopying it several times, then colouring it in different ways and arranging it on the page like above.
- Or by cutting out a character from the line drawings of the panto poster, photocopying that several times, and then colouring and arranging.

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Portraits

Simply draw or paint a portrait of a character from the story, as if they had sat down to be painted, like Kings and Queens used to be.

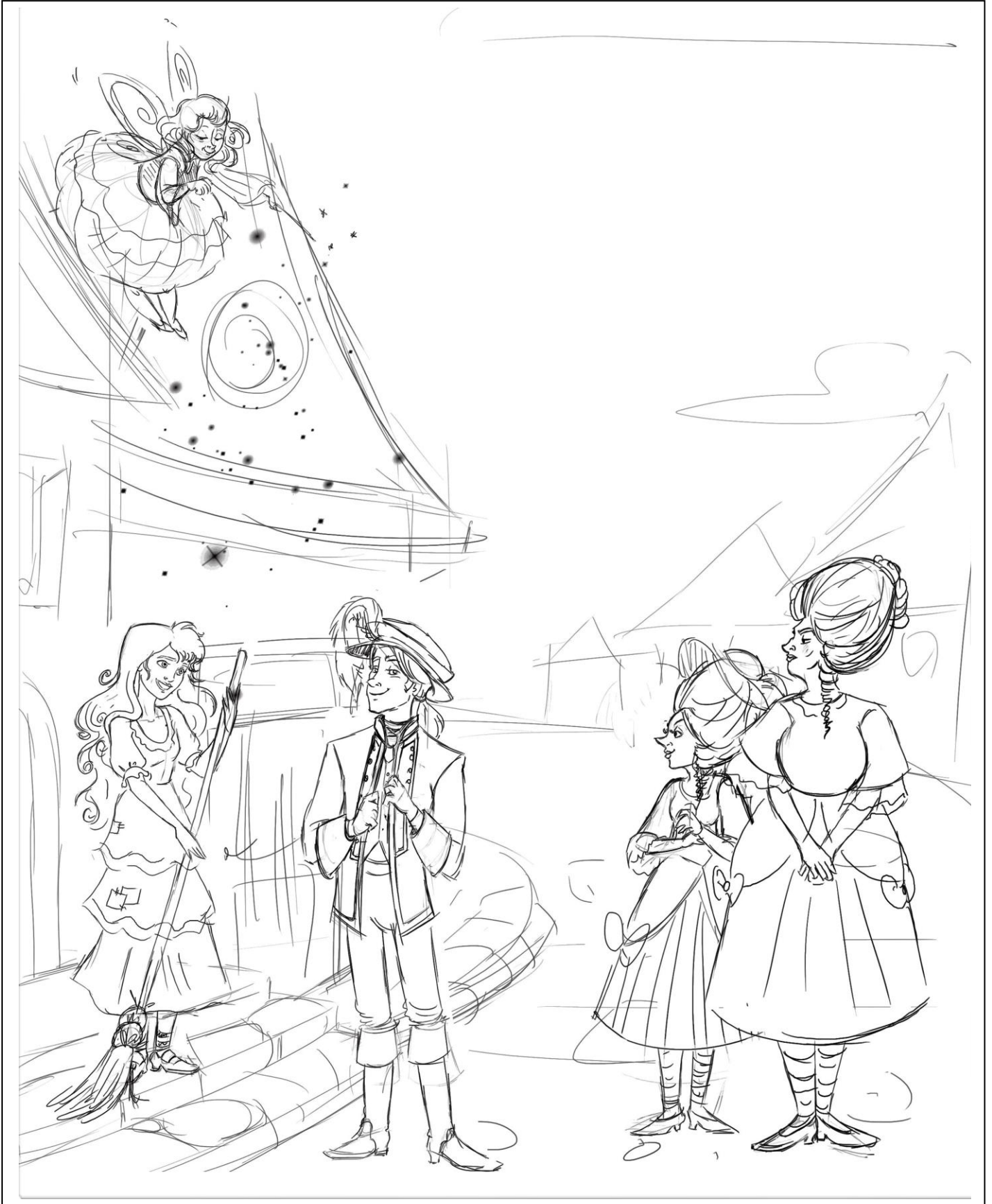
Colouring

Using the provided line drawings of the pantomime poster, colour colour colour! Give us different colour dresses, if you like, make it your own!

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Colouring pages

Image credit: Rositsa Vangelova



Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Colouring pages

Image credit: Rositsa Vangelova



Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Colouring pages

Image credit: Rositsa Vangelova



Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Colouring pages

Image credit: Rositsa Vangelova



Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Music

Making Musical Choices

Matching music to character

Different characters could have different theme tunes that feel right for them. For example, a baddy might have something that feels a bit spooky or sinister, The hero might something energetic and positive, and a funny character might have something light and quirky. Using an online collection of music (Spotify or Youtube or whatever), choose theme tunes for different characters. Using a search engine might also help, to give you a start. Perhaps different people/pairs could search for tunes for different characters, so you end up with themes for all the main characters across the group.

Matching music to emotional intent in drama

In a similar way, what feel does a particular moment have? What tunes would you choose or for a chase, a romantic scene, or a moment of tension?

Choosing music for an audience

Why did we pick the songs we had in the show? If you did your own panto, but for a different group of people what would be a enjoyable and familiar song to use for them? As above, choose music for a group such as:

- Pre school children.
- Elderly people in a care home.
- Middle aged teachers in a staff room.

Hint: If they are older, look at what was popular with those people when they were in their mid to late teenage years. If they are younger, think about what TV shows or current movies are aimed at them.

Performing Music

Using what you learnt by finding music to fit different moods and characters in the story, see if you can compose a short piece, trying to capture one of those moods. It can be a theme for the bad guy, or the hero, or the soundtrack for a chase scene.

Use whatever instruments you have available, and if you a finding it hard to make the right sounds with an instrument, you can sing or hum a tune instead.

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Pantomime Creation

How to use the filmed opening scene to create your own panto

Watch the film here: <https://youtu.be/gTKRz6GAh1s>

Background: Instant Theatre

Instant Theatre was created in the 1980's by poet and dramatist RG Gregory. It is a form of theatre that gives creative ownership of a theatrical story to the audience.

'Pantomime Creation' performances (and our festival version called 'Tale Enders') are Treehouse Theatre's version of this form, which we developed after training with RG Gregory in 2006.

It is traditionally performed in the round because this form symbolically reflects the audience's ownership, and an intended lack of hierarchy. We often stage 'Pantomime Creation' performances in a three-quarter round, or even face on, because of the staging limitations in the venues we go to, or indeed in video format as we are discussing here. But the underlying wish to make sure the story is owned by everyone present at a performance is very much alive and central to the process.

If you see a 'Pantomime Creation' performance live, you will observe that after a 10-15 minute scene performed by the actors, the action stops and the Questioner (one of the performers) then begins a process of gathering the story by asking the audience questions that lead naturally from the scene they watched. When enough plot detail has been collected, some of the audience as well as the actors are then cast as the required characters in the next part of the story and they perform it together for the benefit of the rest of the audience.

This process is repeated several times until an hour in total (including the starter scene) has been reached, when the story should reach a satisfactory conclusion.

It is riotous, chaotic and hilarious, but the ownership of the story by the audience is so central to the enjoyment of its performance that it is always hugely enjoyable despite its lack of artistic precision. It can also say a lot about the group, through the symbols embedded in the story, just as a dream says things about the dreamer and their current challenges in life.

Get Questioning!

So, how can you use this process to create your own story with a group?

Start by watching the filmed opening scene to inspire your own audience, then follow the process of Questioning to gather more scenes and encourage your children to take on all the roles, including those originally played by the cast.

Watch the film here: <https://youtu.be/gTKRz6GAh1s>

Questioning takes a bit of practice and it's a skill that you will improve the more you do it, but it is nonetheless hugely fun right from the start and with a few guidelines to follow and a bit of blag and confidence, you can leap right in.

So how does it work?

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

Gathering your first scene

Here's the aim: to gather a story that represents the audience as much as possible, but also has the pattern of a story based on your instincts as a story teller, or reader, yourself. So you will take answers as truthfully as you can, even to using the wording the respondents use, and keep the questions as open as possible, while also being specific to the needs of the story. Before starting, you should say to the audience something along the lines of:

To begin, I am going to ask you questions. If you want to answer any of them, put your hand up. You must try to answer the question asked, and not provide an answer to a previous question we already have an answer to. Then we end up telling one story all together. However, I will take all the answers that you give me. You do not have to say anything. But I'll always be looking for new hands to share it out as evenly as I can.

Then as Questioner you must bear in mind certain rules:

1) When a question is asked, and a response is gathered, every answer given has to be accepted and goes into the play. The only exception to this is an attempt to change a previous response, or you may need to "shelve" a response that bears no relation to the current question. Rejecting answers should be avoided, as this will undermine trust and creative response from your audience, and besides there may be a way for what seems like a strange answer to become important a little later. If someone has tried to change a previous answer, the questioner can throw the two contradictory answers back to the audience and ask how the situation can be resolved in such a way that both answers are true. This can produce very creative responses but if it isn't resolved properly can lead to confusing narratives. You may need to remind the audience to 'answer the question' from time to time.

2) The Questioner can ask only neutral questions; that is, questions that do not demand a particular answer. Strictly speaking, leading questions are forbidden in this format because they are a device for keeping the power of the decision-making with the questioner. If your audiences have no responses at all, you may need to throw out the occasional list of possibilities. This is a last resort however.

3) Questions are asked quickly so that there can be no discussion of the answers. There is no attempt at consensus. Whoever answers, answers on behalf of the group. Once spoken out loud and accepted by the questioner, an answer cannot be denied by anyone. New answers must be checked against all previous answers. Contradictions between answers must be referred back to the audience for resolution. However answers have to co-operate with, not compete against, each other. So, the audience has to be invited not to choose between answers awkward to each other but to show how both answers can be true. Not **yes OR no** but **yes AND no**. Enthusiastic acceptance of all answers is vital for the creative confidence of your group; there is no judgement of ideas.

4) Every so often the questioner recapitulates, retelling the information gathered from the answers in such a way that the audience becomes aware a story is being developed. As soon as sufficient information has been gathered to supply an actable scene - the questioning stops, there is a recap, and preparations are made to have the scene acted out. A Questioner quickly learns the extent the story-gathering can go on before it becomes too complex to remember. If you need to stop to perform short scenes quite often, that's fine!

Treehouse Theatre Resources

Pantomime Activity Pack

The First Question?

Having watched the opening scene together, you will have an obvious question or two come to mind that you can start with. In the case of Cinderella:

“What other spells will the fairy godmother cast?”

This could lead to anything. It may follow the original, or fly immediately to somewhere completely different. Your job is to remember to say “YES!!” (effectively if not literally) to whatever the answer is. And then, with formula being impossible, just ask the next natural question that occurs to your storytelling instincts. And the next, and so on...

Closed and Open Answers

Your answers will be of two kinds. CLOSED and OPEN answers.

A CLOSED answer is one that completely satisfies the question, in relation to the **logic** of the play at that moment.

An OPEN answer is one that leaves that **logic** begging. And therefore needs to be followed up by supplementary questions until the **logic** has been restored. (Each story has its own unique logic! Logic in Pantomime Creation is rather different from standard logic. Each story grows its own sense of the logical, and it is to that sense that the two definitions of answers relate.)

CLOSED answers provide the drama's bone-structure; OPEN answers supply its continued growth. Basically, anything that does not add up in the mind of the questioner constitutes an OPEN ANSWER.

Beware! Confusion between OPEN and CLOSED answers can cause the story-gathering to collapse. If the questioner treats one as the other, somewhere along the line the story will lose its plausibility, and he will get tied into knots by his own failure to check each piece of information he receives against all that has been previously offered by the audience and accepted into the story.

So either move on with the story if it's CLOSED. Or continue to ask questions to satisfy the logic, if its OPEN, until it becomes CLOSED.

Carry On...

Recap as necessary until you have enough material to perform a scene. Avoid making it too long, seeing it come to life is the fun bit.

Cast the play with willing volunteers. Populate the scene with cast playing any specified props or bits of relevant scenery as well as people. Objects and animals can all talk if they like!

Direct - You need to give some guidance to performers as to how to do any important action in the scene, as simply and quickly as you can, using assistants, if you have them. Sort participants into the right formations (if they are playing vehicles or large beasts, machines or anything that isn't obvious) and think briefly about how they will move, sound etc. Make this as quick and easy as possible, but make it part of the entertainment. If anything seems a good whole audience role, (eg the sea, a tempest, a lava flow) you could give them a try at making the sound or motion that would accompany that moment.

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Pantomime Activity Pack

Then...

Perform the scene!

Your role during the scene is to narrate it. This reminds everyone what they are supposed to perform and keeps it true to the gathered story. Make sure it doesn't fly off because the contributions from audience members matter to them, they will be waiting for all those details! You can also help people say what they need to say, by either whispering behind them for them to copy out loud, or just by saying out loud what the character says before they repeat it, copying you. You can add in sound effects, and help larger group roles by joining in and encouraging them to make noises at the right times etc.

Repeat until times up!

Once scene one is over, repeat the whole '**question, recap, cast, enact**' procedure, until you have hopefully brought the narrative to its necessary conclusion in the last scene. We normally have 3 or 4 scenes. More is fine! If you only have 1 or 2 scenes, its is a sign that the questioning between scenes is going on too long.

Celebrate everything at the end of each scene, and enjoy the buzz of its completion. Hopefully your story will have been recorded in some way, and you can refer back to it, and use it as much as you want.

A story of the audience's making means something to them, and related work will have real engagement and enthusiasm from them as a result. You can use the ideas for follow up work in this pack, but applied to your own story, or come up with your own activities. The possibilities are endless.

(Ref: The World of Instant Theatre by RG Gregory)

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Drama Games

Drama games are a brilliant way to build skills, creativity, imagination, confidence and teamwork – as well as great fun!

Each page that follows outlines a drama game, including what you'll need, curriculum links, and suggested evaluation questions.

Games list:

1. Adverbs (aka In the Manner of the Word)
2. Categories
3. Circle Silly Walks
4. Fruit Bowl
5. Hot Seating
6. Last Lines
7. Name Game
8. Spot the Leader
9. Time Travel
10. Wink Murder

Drama Games

Adverbs (aka In the Manner of the Word)

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- Enough space for the participants to sit in a circle.
- Displayed word bank of adverbs.

Aims of the game

For a member of the group to guess the adverb chosen by the group, due to the portrayal of that word by the group.

How to play

A member of the circle is chosen by the leader or at random to leave the room. The participants then suggest an adverb that can be acted out in a given situation. It works well for three suggestions to be made and a vote to be made to decide the word to be used, although if a word bank is used, this may not be necessary, and first suggestions can usually be accepted. (In order to use this activity as an aid to increasing vocabulary, adverb word banks can be visibly displayed as preparation to the game, and if the game is played regularly, changed occasionally.) When a word has been decided upon, the 'guesser' returns to the room. Willing actors are then chosen to mime or improvise simple actions or scenes in the manner of the word, in the centre of the circle. For example, brushing one's teeth **hesitantly**. The guesser is allowed three attempts to guess the word, after which they are told the word and a new guesser is chosen.

Variations

The guesser can be encouraged to think of scenes or mimes whilst they wait outside for the word to be chosen, members of the group can suggest things (if chosen by the guesser to do so), or a combination of these can be used.

The scenes can be restricted to simple mimed actions involving one actor for younger or less confident children. For more confident children, improvised scenes involving dialogue (e.g. buying bread from the local shop) with a central character exhibiting the word (identified beforehand), or all participants behaving in the manner of the word (specify).

Situations can be also be prepared beforehand, on cards.

Evaluative questions

What acting skills are you using in this game? (E.g. Improvisation, characterisation, mime, spontaneity) What thinking skills are you using? (E.g. Imagination, creativity, language development.) What words have you learned playing in this game, and do you have a better understanding of what they mean?

Drama Games Categories

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy / Science / Humanities

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- Enough space to stand in a circle

Aim of the game

To remain in the game for as long as possible, to be the last person left.

How to play

Players stand in a circle. A category is chosen for this round of the game. This category could be anything that has enough things within that category to make it possible for everyone playing to think of at least one thing each. Let's say, mammals, for example. Going around the circle clockwise, the players must clearly state a member of that category: cat, dog, bear, lion, etc. They must do this without repetition, hesitation or deviation (including inaccuracy, such as saying 'snake' if the category is mammals.) If they break one of these rules, they are out and must step back from the circle. The game continues until one person is left, or a different number of winners (decided on beforehand, e.g. the last six people).

Variations

The game can be used to support different curriculum areas by choosing specific categories: countries, reptiles, invertebrates, chemical elements, British monarchs etc.

This game is very challenging for younger children, and can be made easier by allowing longer hesitations or by using only very simple categories, like colours or boys' names.

Evaluative questions

What was difficult about the task? What are you learning by playing? (Concentration, listening, vocabulary, thinking quickly.)

Drama Games

Circle Silly Walks

Curriculum Links

PHSE

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- Enough space for the players to stand in a circle.

Aim of the game

To successfully copy someone's silly walk and then provide a new one for someone else.

How to play

One member of the circle begins by doing any silly walk across the centre of the circle and touching another member of the circle. The person who has been touched must copy the walk, and half way across the circle change it to a new one, before touching someone else. That person copies the new walk, changes it, and so on, until the last person to be touched is the person who was the first to cross the circle. Children can put off thinking of a new walk if they are struggling by walking around the inside of the circle until they've had time to demonstrate the new walk adequately.

Variations

Music could be used to inspire different expressive walks, with the children walking around the room at random (all children simultaneously), to come up with ideas for the game above or to work on gaining confidence at moving expressively in a group situation.

Circle silly walks can be used for children to demonstrate or work on walks that, silly or not, suit a character they may be playing in another current drama project.

Evaluative questions

How did you feel doing this activity? Has it help you overcome any shyness? What else have you learned? (Thinking quickly, observation skills, using body movement expressively.)

Drama Games

Fruit Bowl

Curriculum Links

PHSE / PE

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- A circle of chairs, one for each participant minus one chair which is placed in the centre of the circle.

Aims of the game

To avoid the centre chair.

To warm up bodies and minds.

How to play

All participants sit on the chairs provided and are allocated one of three different names of fruit, for example, apples, pears or bananas. The person in the centre chair then calls out either one of the types of fruit or says 'Fruit Bowl!' If 'apples' was called, all the apples have to move to a new chair (warn children to be aware of others to avoid collisions!); if 'bananas' was called all the bananas move, and so on. If 'Fruit Bowl!' is called, then **all** the participants need to find a new chair. Whoever is left without a chair in the circle has to sit in the middle and call the next fruit.

Variations

An extra element of fun and dramatic potential is added to the game by forfeits being given to whoever ends up in the centre. Ideally, these can be prepared beforehand, and they should be to encourage lowering inhibitions and drama skills like recitation, singing, dancing, mimicking etc. With older children, (KS3 upwards) the children can make suggestions on the spot, but younger ones may need time to come up with ideas, from which a set of forfeit cards can be prepared.

Evaluative questions

How do you feel after playing this game? What is important about warming up before doing any drama or PE? What does doing the forfeits help you to do?

Drama Games

Hot Seating

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- This works best with one chair set either in front of an audience, or with the audience in a semi-circle around the front of the chair.

Aim of the game

The work on characterisation, or allow children opportunities to communicate with characters to further their knowledge.

How to play

Either the leader or children who have been allowed time to prepare themselves with other exercises and research take up the 'hot seat' and are questioned about their character by members of the audience. The responses will be either created spontaneously or in keeping with what the hot-seated actor knows already about the character. In this way it develops and cements characterisation if the children are working on that, or provides them with a fun way of finding out about, say, a historical character, if played by the teacher.

Variations

This can be used in conjunction with a Play-in-a-Day to explore characters involved in the play in more detail. The children can play their own characters, and create whole back stories for their characters in the process, or teachers can play characters to provide more detailed information about them.

The hot seating can be done in pairs or groups with children taking turns to be the hot-seated character. This is far less intimidating for less confident children and can build towards sitting before the whole class later on.

Evaluative questions

What new things have you found out about your/my/your partner's character? How can knowing this help you to play your character better?

I told you to keep your dog on a lead!

I'll never pick my nose in public again.

My real name is...David Attenborough!

Where did you get all that money from anyway?

Never mind. I always preferred standing up in any case.

I wonder what happened to all the washing up?

That's the last time you'll ever catch me on a boat!

OK, bye then. But can I have my shoes back, first?

Drama Games

Last Lines

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- A large space.
- A set of last lines (One possible set is provided).

Aim of the game

To develop and perform an improvised short play given the last line as a starting point.

How to play

Divide children into groups of five or six. Provide each group with a last line card, explaining that they are going to make up a short play which they are going to perform to the class, and that the play must finish clearly with the line on the card. Provide 10 or 15 minutes for the to prepare their play, having established any ground rules you feel appropriate. They should be told that the play cannot be more than 3 minutes long. It should move in a logical sequence of events making sure the audience are shown enough of the action for it to make sense, but not to dwell on unnecessary detail. Actors should concentrate on staying in role, showing some development of their character in the course of events and making sure they speak slowly, clearly and loudly, to ensure the audience can follow the action. They should reach a clear and believable ending. After each performance children can reflect on their performance and receive constructive criticism from their audience.

Variations

This game can use an infinite number of possible last lines. They could be tailored to inspire plays about particular historical events, or to explore pertinent topical issues or social relationships.

Evaluative questions

What was good about the play? What did you think of the acting? Did they stay in character? What changes did we see in this character? Were there any events that were not needed to move the story on? Was there anything they could have shown us that they didn't? How could the play have been improved? Could you hear everyone? What can we do to improve this?

Drama Games

Name Game

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy / PE

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- Enough space for a circle.
- A beanbag or cuddly toy, or for a PE link, a basketball, football, tennis ball can be used to practice passing or catching at the same time.

Aim of the game

For everyone in the group to have had a turn as quickly as possible.
To warm up, and learn names.

How to play

Whilst being timed, standing or sitting in a circle (depending on the variation), one player (who we shall call Ted) has the beanbag and speaking across the circle to someone (who we shall call Sam) calls 'Hello Sam!' and throws the beanbag to that person across the circle. Sam catches it and calls back 'Thank you Ted!' Sam then calls 'Hello, Deirdre!' to a third player, throws the bag to Dierdre, who calls 'Thank you, Sam!' and so on. There are to be no repeats, everyone must call and pass to someone who has not yet had a turn. It therefore helps if children are encouraged to have more than one name in mind. At the end, the beanbag is passed back to Ted, who finishes the game by saying his thank you to the person who passed him the bag. If the game is repeated for a given group, the group should try to improve upon their time.

Variations

The person holding the beanbag at the start can run around the circle, back in through their place to the centre of the circle, and simply call out the name of another player before placing the beanbag in the centre on the floor. The child who's name was called then jumps up, grabs the bean bag from the centre, circumnavigates the circle, and calls the name of another player before placing the beanbag in the centre again and so on. Rules about non-repetition and when the game ends are the same. This variation works as a more physical warm-up, the other as a mental warm-up.

Evaluative questions

Why do we need to know each other's names? What is important about warming up before doing any drama or PE? What thinking skills did this help you with? (Memory, concentration.)

Drama Games

Spot the Leader

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- Enough space for the players to stand in a circle.

Aim of the game

To copy the leader without giving away whom the leader is, or to guess whom the leader is (if it is your turn to be the guesser).

How to play

With the players standing in a circle, it is explained to them that one person will be the leader and that he or she will perform simple repetitive movements which everyone else will have to copy, without letting on who the leader is. One person is chosen to be the guesser, and they leave the room. The leader is then chosen, and he or she clearly identifies themselves the benefit of the other players. The guesser is called back in as the game commences (not before, or guessing is too easy!). The leader can do things like clapping hands, crossing and uncrossing legs, hand gestures, scratching heads, etc. Each movement should continue for about 15 or 20 seconds before changing. Avoid jumping movements (tiring and noisy). The guesser watches from the centre of the circle and has three chances to guess before being told who the leader really was.

Variations

The leader could perform simple mimes as the movements: brushing hair, getting dressed etc.

Evaluative questions

Did you enjoy the activity? What did you learn from it? (Using body movement effectively, looking carefully at movement, reading body language, communicating without talking.)

Drama Games

Time Travel

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy / History (Periods can be chosen to suit current topics, possibly as an out of the ordinary assessment activity).

Preparation and Equipment

You will need a good large space.

Aim of the game

To use drama to imaginatively support learning about different historical periods.

How to play

The children sit in a space. Having explained that they are going to imagine they are travelling back in time, you (the leader) then narrate them through a sequence of events to help them. Ask rhetorical questions to stimulate their imagination as much as possible, rather than tell them everything they see:

You are your time machine. What does it look like? Does it have windows or not? Find the door. How does it open? Do it. Step inside and have a good look around. Where are the controls? What else is there to look at in here? Are there any screens? What do they show? Make yourself comfortable, and set the controls to the date we are going to – this could be pre-established, or you may take suggestions from the children – now press the start button and 3...2...1...off we go! Experience the ride! What can you see in the windows and display screens? How does it feel!?

And...we've landed! Open the door and step slowly out. Have a good look around. What can you see?

Now, you need to report in to your headquarters and describe what you see. What kind of place are you in? What are the buildings like? What are people wearing? What are they doing? Make sure you describe things carefully – your headquarters can't see what you see because the time difference interferes with cameras. What's happening? Is there a story to tell here? Do you need to get involved?

Allow the children time to play and explore in this new world, before instructing them to return to the present.

Variations

Children can describe things to the leader rather than to themselves through their imaginary communication equipment, but they will have less immediacy with their imaginative play and less opportunity to talk. A good oral feedback session afterwards or some written work to follow up will allow more opportunity to explore things that were missed through a lack of attentive audience.

This can be used as a jumping off point for paired work and then group work (in that order) using the same ideas. When this more polished improvisation develops, children can check historical accuracy with the teacher as they progress, but they should be allowed space to develop their own ideas.

Evaluative Questions

Did you enjoy that? Was it difficult? In what way? Was that acting? Why?

Drama Games

Wink Murder

Curriculum Links

PHSE / Literacy

Preparation and Equipment

You will need:

- A circle of chairs (or sit on the floor in a circle) with clear space in the centre.
- A hat full of scraps of paper, one for each participating child. Most will have nothing on them at all, but one has an M (for Murderer) and one has a D (for Detective).
- A mat could be used to aid safe falls.

Aim of the game

If you are the murderer, to remain undetected for as long as possible. Everyone else should try to die as dramatic a death as possible when murdered whilst trying to guess whom the murderer is (without giving it away to the detective).

How to play

Sit in a circle. Pass the hat of scraps around. The murderer and the detective having been thus notified, the detective leaves the circle. He is free to walk around the circle as the deaths start to occur.

The murderer gets to work by winking at selected members of the circle, who then walk to the centre and die as dramatically and as imaginatively as possible. If the game is played for no longer than twenty minutes or so, then nobody should have to die the same death. If necessary, short monologues could be encouraged to help the children explain how they are dying (e.g. “No...don’t push me off this cliff...no...I can’t fly! NOOOO!). After their death, the murdered victims leave the circle, either by standing behind their chairs or moving back from the circle (if played on the floor.)

Play continues until either all the potential victims are dead (in which case the murderer has done very well!) or the detective guesses the murderer. The detective can be allowed 3 guesses.

The process is repeated to select a new murderer and detective.

Variations

Multiple murderers can speed things up but children will still need to wait for each other to die for safety purposes, and to keep attention focussed on one person at a time, unless they work out joint deaths!

Evaluative questions

Which deaths did you enjoy? What makes this game fun to watch? (Good deaths)

What does it encourage you to do and get better at? (Performing in front of others, thinking creatively, overcoming self-consciousness.)

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

Accessibility

The following signs, based on Widget symbols, can be printed off and used to enable non-verbal audience members to be part of the audience responses. We have laminated copies available to borrow on the day too.

These 5 responses would be ideal to pre-program into voice pads too.

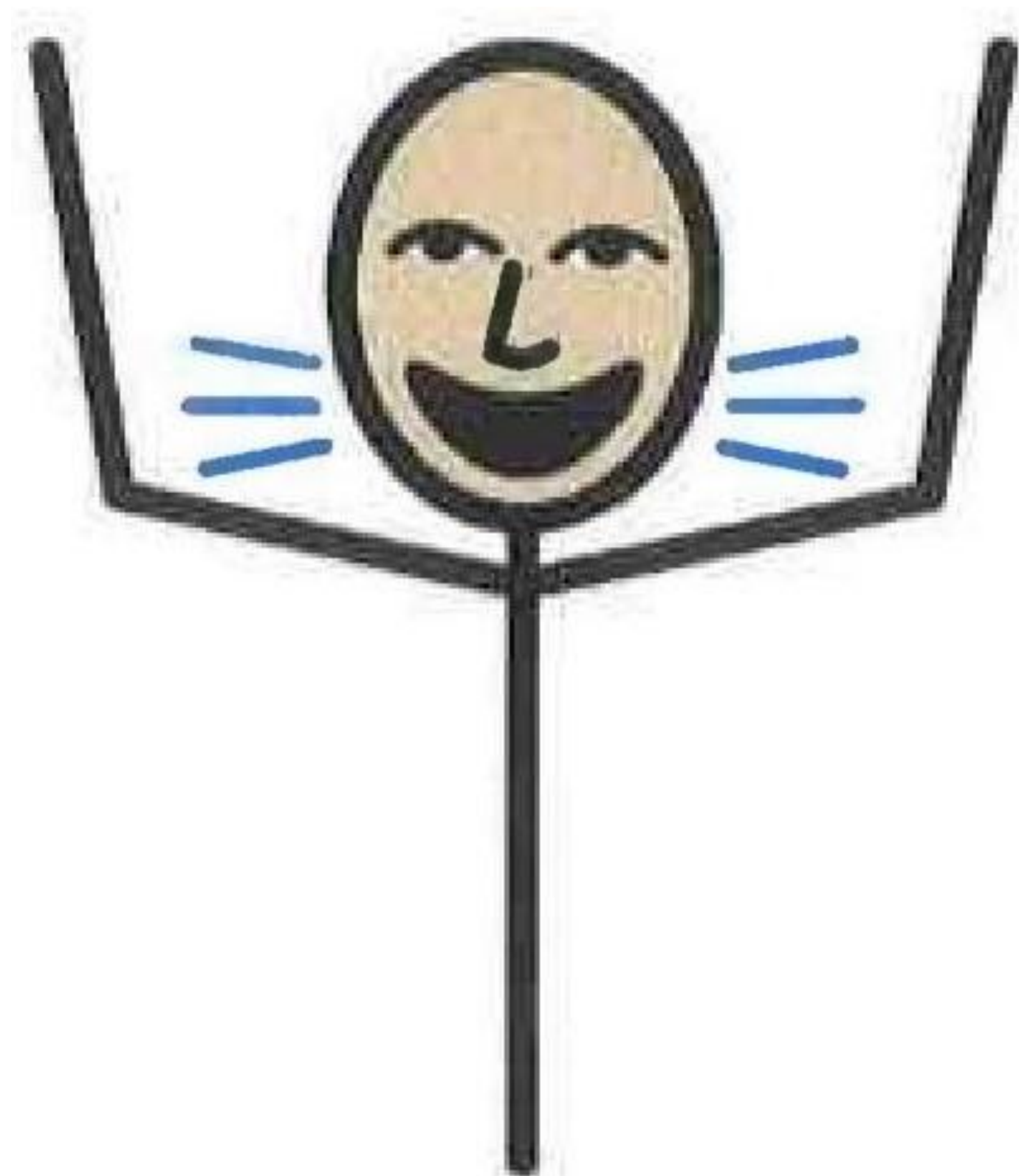
The performance includes some simple embedded sign language, aimed more as an aid to understanding the story and supporting the action and dialogue, than as a complete translation. We use makaton rather than BSL.

We have large print scripts available to borrow on performance day to aid anyone hard of hearing.

There is a sensory bag available for this performance, to provide a tactile input for those with visual impairment. Its designed to be used with support from a sighted person.

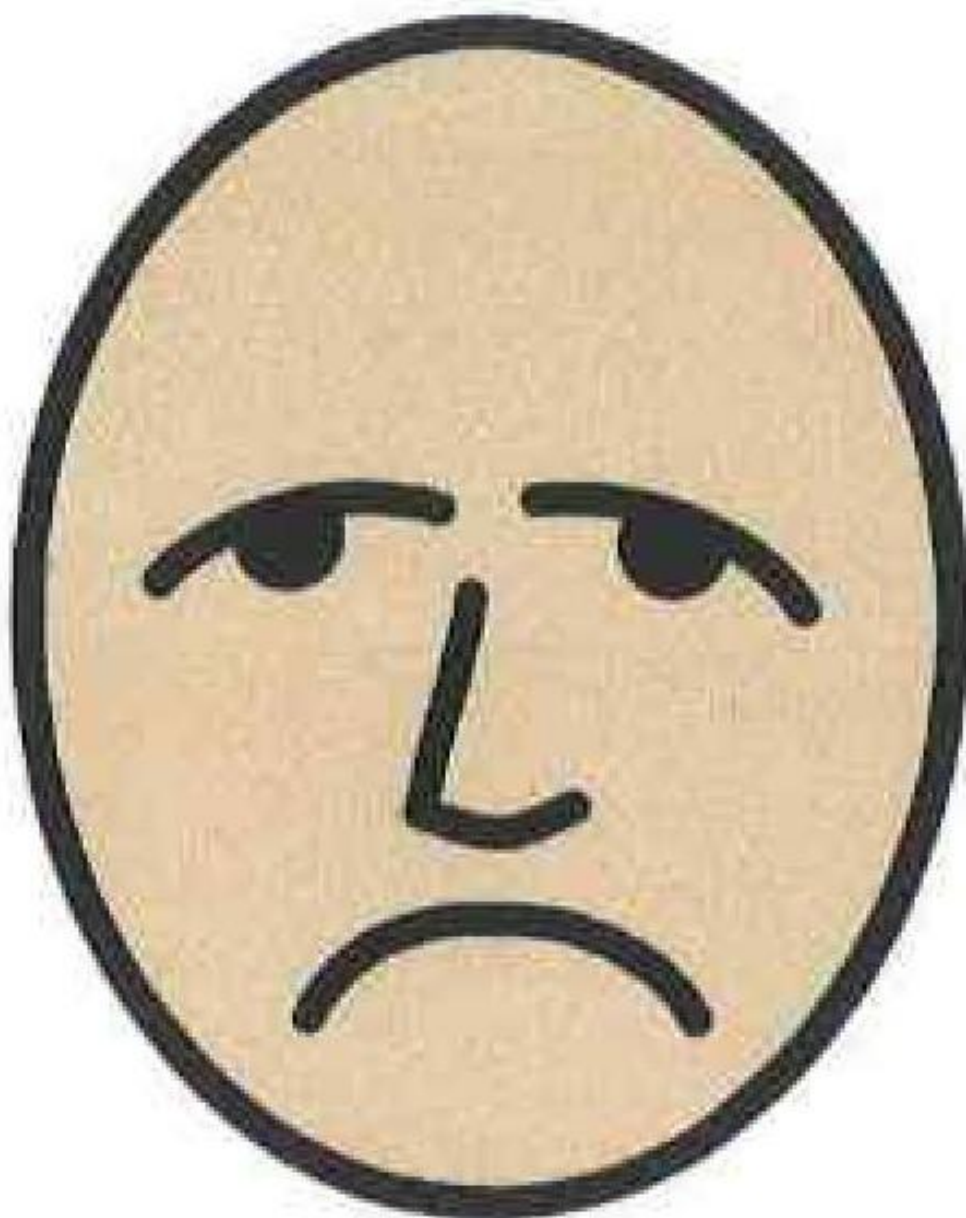
We want our performances to be as accessible as possible and would welcome any other suggestions.

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack



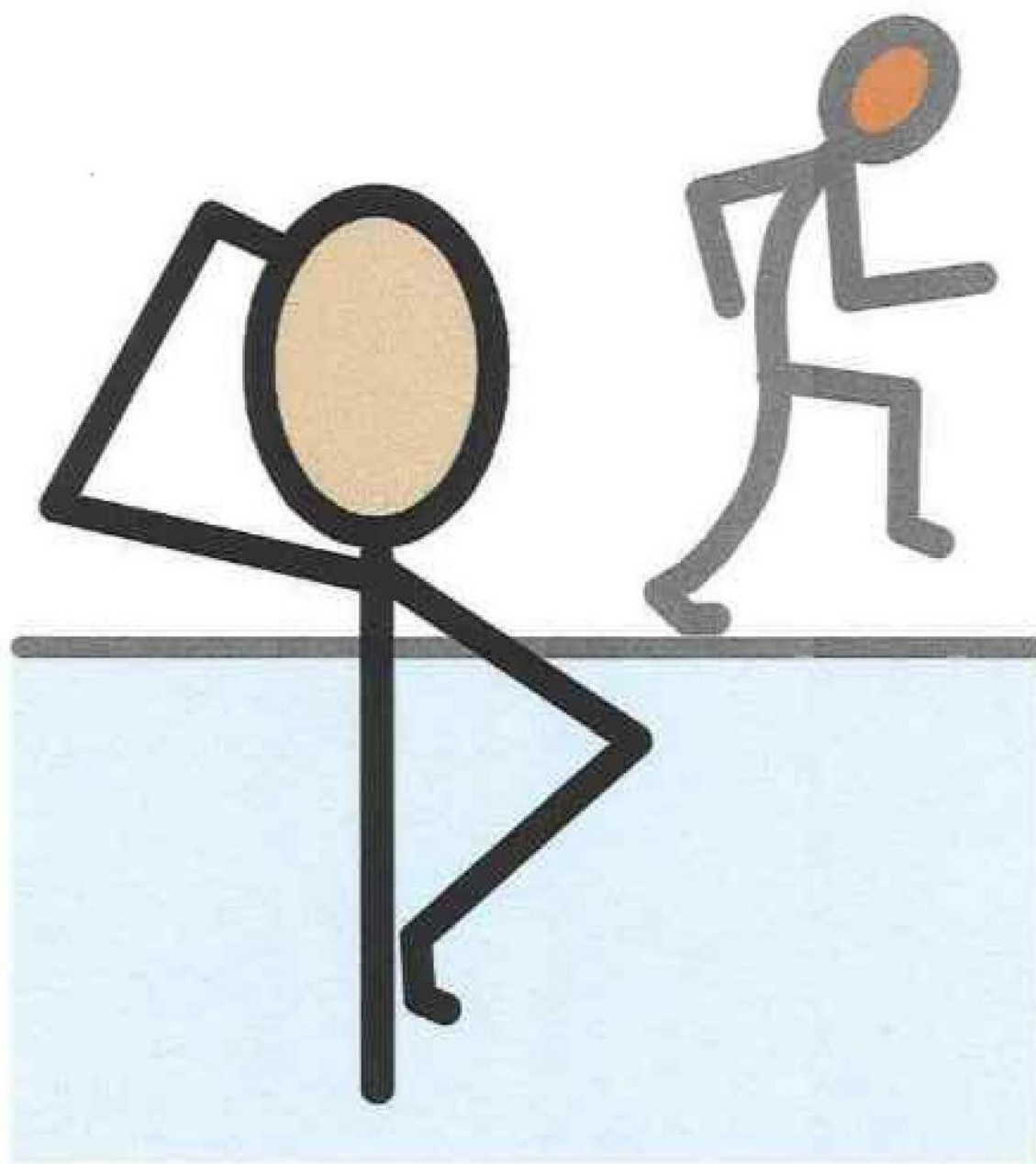
Hooray!

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack



Ahhhh

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack

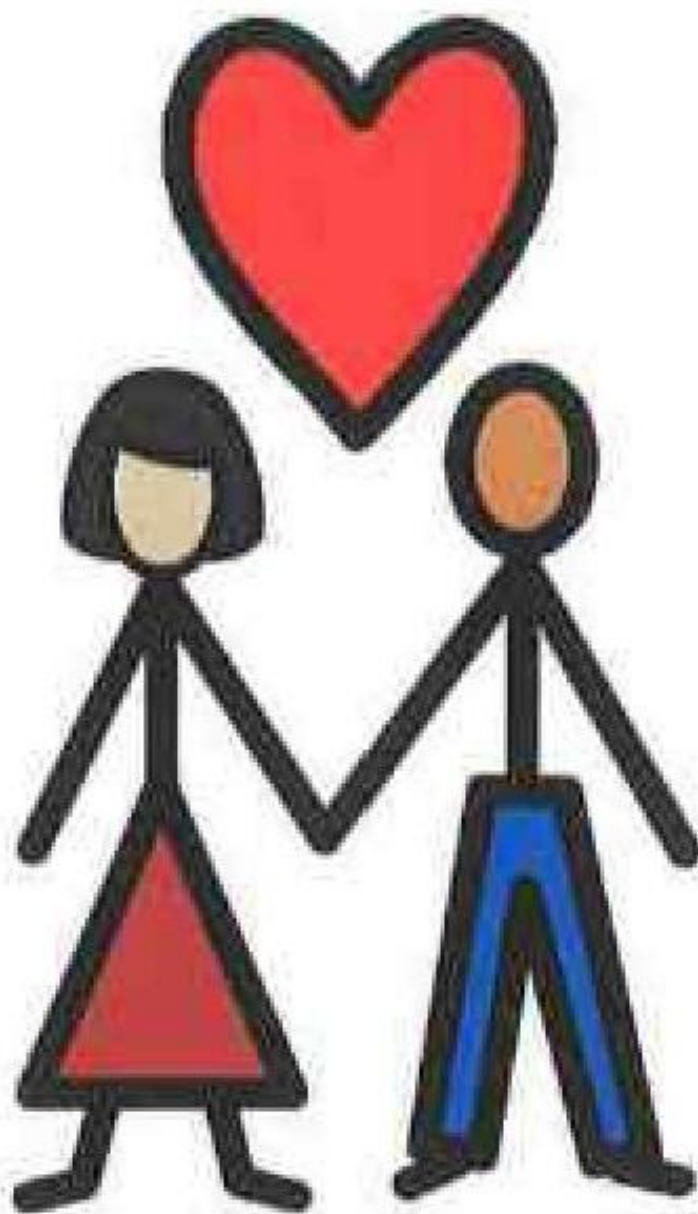


Behind you

Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack



Treehouse Theatre Resources
Pantomime Activity Pack



Happily ever after