

National Theatre Collection

Peter Pan

Key Stage 3 Resource



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These activities are designed to support Key Stage Three students as they watch *Peter Pan*. They include research, discussion, writing and creative tasks, most of which can be carried out in isolation or via a digital platform if required.



Research J.M. Barrie's Original Play and Novel

This production of *Peter Pan* was devised by Sally Cookson (Director) and the company, based on J.M. Barrie's original novel, *Peter Pan and Wendy*. Barrie first wrote it as a play (which premiered in 1904) and then as a novel in 1911. There are many theories about who and what exactly inspired Barrie to create the character of Peter.

Research the background and history of Barrie's play and novel. You might like to look in particular at:

- The Llewelyn Davies family.
- The death of Barrie's brother at the age of 13 and their mother's response to the event.
- Barrie gave the copyright (permission to use and reproduce the story and characters) to his works featuring Peter Pan to the Great Ormond Street Hospital (Britain's leading children's hospital) and since then they have used the income from this to fund their important work.
- Research the lasting relationship between Peter Pan and Great Ormond Street.
- Why do you think Barrie gave the rights to the hospital?



Create Your Own Junk Puppet

In the production, you'll notice that props and puppets are created using bits of junk that the characters find around the stage. The Lost Boys pick up bits and pieces to use as telephones or binoculars and the crocodile is made up of lots of bits and pieces, including a series of linking buckets making up his head. Children often pick up objects and use them in play to create something else, using their imagination. The production plays on that idea and the Lost Boys' world is created from whatever is around them.

Design and create your own puppet made from things you can find around your house that would otherwise be discarded - bits of rubbish and recycling or something that has broken and can no longer be used for its original purpose.

- **Watch this short film** about the principles of puppetry and how to make a simple paper puppet.
- You might like to create your own version of the crocodile puppet or choose a different animal or character to make.
- Think about how your puppet will move and how it will be operated (you could watch some film footage of a real animal or human to help you with this). Is it a small



puppet which can be operated by one person, or will you need multiple operators (like the crocodile in this production)?

- Think about the colour, materials, shapes and textures of your puppet. Remember that your puppet doesn't have to be naturalistic.
- If you can, work in a group to test your puppet in a short devised scene. Think about how it might interact with actors or with other puppets, using the principles you saw in the short film.

Discuss Childhood

There is a very famous quote from *Peter Pan*:
"All children, except one, grow up."

Peter Pan is the "eternal boy" who never grows up. In this production he is played by someone who is clearly a grown man, but who acts in a childish way.

Discuss the idea of childhood and growing up:

- When, in your opinion, does childhood end? At what point should we be expected to "grow up"?
- What do children need to ensure they have a positive childhood? What responsibilities to parents and the wider society towards children?

You might like to look at the work of the charity **UNICEF** and the resources they have which explore the rights of children across the world.



Create Magic and Fairies on Stage

Back in 1904, when the original stage production of *Peter Pan* was performed, there was little technical wizardry available to create magic on stage. The original Tinkerbell was created by light reflected from a small mirror held offstage and the shaking of bells.

In this production, Tinkerbell is played by a male actor who wears fairy wings on a harness, fairy lights around his head and speaks a strange fairy language that is reminiscent of a Mediterranean language.

Imagine that you are putting on a production of *Peter Pan* in your school hall or drama studio. How would you present fairies and magic on stage? You could think about using puppetry, technical wizardry, exciting costume elements or sound and lighting. You might like to experiment with different ways of presenting fairies and magic in a scene.



Discuss the doubling of characters

In many productions of Peter Pan, the character of Mr Darling and Captain Hook are played by the same actor. In this production, Mrs Darling and Captain Hook are both played by the same actor, Anna Francolini.

Examine how the actress plays each of the role and how she differentiates between them.

- How does she change her physical and vocal acting style to play each of the different roles?
- How does her costume help her to create each of the different characters?

Discuss what the impact is of having the same actor play these two roles:

- How does it affect the audience's perception of each of the characters?
- How does it affect the audience's view on the role of a mother?

Research different adaptations of Peter Pan

Over the years there have been many adaptations of Peter Pan on stage, from traditional pantomime, to dance, musicals and straight plays.

Research other stage productions of Peter Pan. You might like to begin with:

- The original 1904 stage production, written by J.M. Barrie, with Nina Boucicault in the title role.
- The National Theatre's 1997 production, directed by John Caird and starring Ian McKellen as Captain Hook and Daniel Evans as Peter Pan.
- The 2010 National Theatre of Scotland production, adapted by David Grieg.
- What do stage productions have in common with one another?
- What stands out as different in each of these productions?
- Are more modern productions very different from those that were presented a long time ago? Have writers and directors made the story more relevant to their contemporary audience? And if so, how?