

National Theatre Collection



Treasure Island

Cross-Curricular Learning Guide

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Introduction to the Production

Recommended Age Group: Upper KS2

This Cross-Curricular Learning Guides illustrates how primary school teachers can use this production to support teaching across curriculum subjects such as English, History, Geography and PSHE. This guide offers sequences of activities and suggested lesson structures.

Any activity highlighted in red can be found in the Creative Learning Activity Guide, a separate document found on the [National Theatre Collection](#) and [National Theatre Learning Hub](#). That guide offers step by step instructions on how to deliver the exercises.

The National Theatre's adaptation of Stevenson's classic novel, *Treasure Island* provides young audiences with an opportunity to travel back in time to the 18th century, to the 'golden age of piracy'. In a modern twist, the story's hero, Jim Hawkins, is now a girl, Jemima Hawkins, who guides the viewer through the narrative and invites us to empathise with events as see them through her innocent eyes.

The narrative adheres to Stevenson's original text, the historical time period of the 18th century and the geographical locations of Bristol and the Caribbean. It therefore offers plentiful opportunities for cross-curricular learning prior to and after viewing the play.

Introduction to the Production

Cross-curricular learning opportunities:

- Geography
- History
- English

It might be useful to divide learning in each of the above areas in the following way:

Prior to viewing:

- Geography
- History

After viewing

- English

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act One

Scene One: Jim Hawkins enters and introduces the story. Black Cove, South-West England in the 18th Century. Jim and her Grandma run the Admiral Benbow Inn, a perilously precarious place to drink.

Scene Two (0:02:02): An old sailing captain, Bill Bones enters the Inn with a large sea chest, warning Jim to keep a lookout for a “seafaring man with one leg”. Time passes, and Jim has nightmares of the one-legged man.

Scene Three (0:06:47): Bones is tortured by singing voices in his head and doesn’t pay his way at the Inn, angering Jim’s Grandma.

Scene Four (0:07:25): A former shipmate, Black Dog, arrives and confronts Bones, demanding to know the location of “Flint’s Fist”. They fight and Black Dog is chased off. The panic causes Bones to have a stroke; Dr Livesey treats him and he recovers.

Scene Five (0:12:13): Jim withholds drink from Bones to get answers out of him. He speaks vaguely about a ship called the Walrus and a terrible island where sailors went and vanished.

Scene Six (0:14:01): Blind Pew arrives demanding to see Bones. He delivers the black spot to Bones, who immediately drops dead. Pew leaves, promising to return at 10 o’clock. Jim and Grandma open Bones’ sea chest where they find a cask of gold coins and a book.

Scene Seven (0:18:33): Pew returns with a crew of accomplices but Jim and Grandma escape. The Cavalry arrive but Pew orders his accomplices to stay to look for Flint’s Fist. They kill Pew and flee.

Scene Eight (0:20:34): With the help of Dr Livesey and Squire Trelawny, Jim discovers that the chest belonged to Captain Flint, a notorious pirate. They also find a map, Flint’s Fist, with directions to a point on a mysterious island.

Scene Nine (0:24:44): The Company sing a sea shanty.

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act One

Scene Ten (0:25:56): Jim, Livesey and Trelawny are in Bristol with a schooner: the Hispaniola. Trelawny has acquired a Captain: Smollett and assembled an assorted crew including Red Ruth, Lucky Micky, Job Anderson, Silent Sue and Grey. The others leave and Trelawny meets a one-legged man, Long John Silver, who tricks Trelawny into giving information about their trip and the map. The one-legged man whistles and summons an experienced but menacing crew of seamen: Killigrew the Kind, Dick the Dandy, Joan the Goat, Israel Hands, Black Cat and George Badger. Oblivious to the danger, Trelawny hires them all.

Scene Eleven (0:35:06): The crew board the ship and sing another shanty.

Scene Twelve (0:37:27): In the kitchen, Jim meets Long John Silver and his Parrot, Flint. She notices he has one leg, but he calms her fears and they become friends.

Scene Thirteen (0:42:30): A large storm hits the Hispaniola, delighting Silver, who appears to have the ability to command it to cease.

Scene Fourteen (0:43:50): Jim and Silver observe the stars together, with Silver teaching her how to navigate via astronomy. Jim confesses Silver has become her best friend.

Scene Fifteen (0:47:55): That night Silver's sailors take several of the other seamen hostage, interrogating them on the location of Flint's Fist. Jim hides in a barrel and overhears that Silver was only befriending her to acquire the map. Silver and the sailors were pirates on the Walrus and Silver murdered Captain Flint in his sleep to take the treasure for himself, but Black Dog escaped with the map. The Hispaniola arrives at Treasure Island.

Scene Sixteen (0:52:25): Trelawny, Livesey, Smollett and Jim discuss what to do. Smollett wants to turn back, recognising Silver as too dangerous. Jim insists she keep the map as Silver trusts her. They make a plan to strand Silver and his crew on the island until they starve to death.

Scene Seventeen (0:54:29): While placing the Walrus crew into the jolly boat, Jim lets slip that she knows Silver has previously been on the island. He and his crew attack the others. In order to save Trelawny, Jim reveals she has the map. Parrot Flint steals it from her. As she rushes to retrieve it Silver orders Killigrew to shoot her. Blackout.

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act Two

Act Two, Scene One (0:57:44): Jim managed to escape with the map. The crew arrive on the Island with Trelawny and the rest of the crew captive. They are interrogated for the map's coordinates but are either ignorant or refuse. Silver orders them to be left out in the sweltering sun to 'bake'. Killigrew and Black Cat are ordered to guard them, but they become distracted by drinking.

Scene Two (1:01:41): At another location on the island, Jim swims ashore. She managed to save the map but there's now a hole in the centre. Ben Gunn, a lunatic man, suddenly appears. He reveals he was the cabin boy on the Walrus given the task of writing the clues to the location of the treasure before being betrayed by Silver. Jim and Ben make a pact to work together to defeat Silver.

Scene Three (1:07:50): Back with the others, the guards have fallen into a drunken stupor. The Hispaniola crew manage to escape before Silver and his pirates return. In a fury Silver kills Killigrew, and the crew fearfully swear allegiance to him.

Scene Four (1:12:19): The Hispaniola crew set up a stockade on another part of the island. Jim and Ben enter and the crew resolve to find the treasure. Trelawny ill-advisedly hoists a British flag, alerting the Walrus crew to their location and Red Ruth is killed. Jim and Ben hide as Silver enters, pretending to surrender. He gives them until the morning to hand over Jim. Smollett stands up to him and is shot dead.

Scene Five (1:18:00): Alone, Ben resolves to be brave and help take down Silver.

Scene Six (1:19:15): Jim returns to the Hispaniola, manages to fight off Israel Hands, and sails it round the island and help the others.

Plot Synopsis with Timecodes

Act Two

Scene Seven (1:23:10): She arrives at the Hispaniola crew's camp only to be ambushed by Silver, who tells Jim the others have deserted her. Desolated, Jim vows to instead be a pirate and begins helping them find the treasure. Following the clues they find a hole in the ground and the crew climb in.

Scene Eight (1:29:31): On the surface, Silver conspires with Jim to kill the others and take the treasure for themselves. Alone, Jim remembers the lessons of honesty Grandma taught her and resolves to not be a pirate.

Scene Nine (1:31:45): Underground, the crew fail to find treasure. Jim confronts Silver to arrest him, but he disarms her. Just as he is about to shoot her, the voice of Trelawny pretending to be Captain Flint calls out, naming the crew one by one to seize Silver. Terrified, they oblige. Ben suddenly appears as a "ghost", leading them away to the "treasure". The Hispaniola crew appear and Ben re-enters, telling them the treasure is not under the island but inside it. Inside the tunnels, the Walrus crew stab the island looking for the riches. The island cracks and the treasure crushes the pirates. The Hispaniola crew gather the gold and board the ship home.

Scene Ten (1:39:00): Jim arrives back home with Ben Gunn. Jim reflects that they now have food and gold, but her nightmares about the island still haunt her dreams.

The End

Cross-Curricular Learning

Geography

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *Locational knowledge*
- *Human and Physical Geography*

The worlds in which the story take place will be foreign to all students, not only because they include a ship (the Hispaniola) and a Caribbean island but because the story's events occur in the mid 1700s. Whilst the story begins and ends in the UK, in Bristol, the city will have changed dramatically. This offers a great opportunity to use the locations in the play as a foundation for a Geography unit that studies the changes in the human and physical geography of the city and to use maps, globes and ICT to develop locational knowledge.

It is because of the unfamiliar nature of the worlds in this story, that we suggest exploring the geography first: unlocking the world and developing a clear picture of what and where they were/are, to ensure your students can fully engage with the play and can access and understand the staging choices made. This will enable your students to appreciate the play fully when they get to watch it and to discuss set design, etc after viewing the show.

WHY NOT

- Use globes and atlases to find Britain and the Caribbean. Invite students to map out a route between the two, the route a ship like the Hispaniola might have taken
- Whilst looking at globes and atlases, explore the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circles, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones (including day and night). Increase your focus on latitude as it will support students greatly when they watch the play
- Divide your class into two teams: Bristol in the 1700s and Bristol in modern day. Use Information texts and ICT to research these areas and to find images of the specific areas. Ask students to save all images for use in a later activity

- Use World of the Story Mindmap (see Creative Learning Activities) to bring Bristol in the contrasting time periods to life, using all senses
- To add further detail, you could use Masking Tape World (see Creative Learning Activities) to create a bird's eye view of Bristol in the 1700s. Once completed, students can use all vocabulary to create a guide to Bristol in the 1700s
- Explore Caribbean islands and identify an island that might be suitable for pirates to bury their treasure; an island with a range of natural/physical features that might make identifying a treasure burial site challenging for other pirates
- Use Masking Tape World (see Creative Learning Activities) to map out the island. Highlight all physical features of the island and layer it with descriptive language, as explained in the activity description. Students can now use the large-scale map to decide where they would bury treasure and then to design their own treasure map. They could use the vocabulary to add clues to help their fellow pirates to find the treasure.

Note: The play references latitude alongside the constellations and explains that knowledge of both could ensure a ship was never lost at sea. You may want to expand your class' learning to include a study of the constellations and the role of the North Star.

Students are now ready to watch the play!

Cross-Curricular Learning

History

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066: 18th century Britain*

Treasure Island brings the 'golden age of piracy' to life and takes audiences back in time to the mid 1700s. Ship design had progressed, resulting in ships that could withstand more challenging weather. With rapid growth of colonial economies, maritime trade increased greatly and European ships laden with large amounts of wealth and goods frequently navigated the seas between Europe and the 'New World'. These ships were a prime target for pirates who used the bays and ports in the Caribbean islands to evade capture and to sell stolen goods.

It was a time of frequent wars between European powers and, as wars came to an end, there was a large pool of unemployed sailors who considered piracy to be a tempting option. They sailed in ships that flew the Jolly Roger flag as a signal to trade ships to surrender their cargo

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Use the activities below to build up to writing newspaper articles with setting descriptions from the 1700s.

WHY NOT

- Take a visit to your school or local library to source all information texts linked to this period in history
- Divide your class into groups, representing either the British monarchy and Court of Admiralty or the famed pirates from the 'golden age of piracy'.
- Use ICT and information texts to gather key information linked to the time period, with a particular focus on the key historical figures and constitutions at this time: George II; George III; Edward 'Blackbeard' Teach, Bartholomew Roberts, Henry Morgan, Anne Bonny, Edward Low, William Kidd, 'Calico' Jack Rackham, Israel Hands, Court of Admiralty (John Russell 4th Duke of Bedford, John Montagu 4th Earl of Sandwich, George Anson 1st Baron Anson, Richard Grenville-Temple 2nd Earl Temple)
- Allow time for students to gather facts regarding their chosen historical figures and to decide on the most interesting/influential
- Use **Role on the Wall with Statues and Thought-Tapping** (see Creative Learning Activities) to bring these characters to life
- Now invite students to partner with someone from the opposing side i.e. a student from the monarchy team with a student from the pirate team
- Use **Paired Hot-Seating** (see Creative Learning Activities) to allow for characters to be interviewed in depth about their role, actions and the reasons behind them during the 'golden age of piracy'
- To add an extra layer of detail for your final written piece, you might want to consider what life was like living on a ship, such as the Hispaniola. You could use **World of the Story Mindmap** (see Creative Learning Activities) and then either build a **3D Word Bank** (see Creative Learning Activities) or use **Dioramas** (see Creative Learning Activities) to bring the ship and specific rooms on the ship to life
- Collate all descriptions and thoughts from **Role on the Wall with Statues and Thought-Tapping**, answers from **Paired Hot-Seating** and setting descriptions from **World of the Story** and **Diorama activities** to create an interview write up with setting description for a newspaper article from the 1700s. You could use photos of statues formed during **Role on the Wall with Statues and Thought-Tapping** and of **3D Word Banks** or **Dioramas** to add visuals to your final, published piece.

English

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *Reading: word reading*
- *Spoken Language: Physical; Linguistic; Cognitive; Social and Emotional Oracy (Leading to high-quality written outcomes)*

The National Theatre's adaptation of *Treasure Island* offers an accessible and entertaining introduction to a classic text. It brings the characters and worlds to life and delivers the narrative in a clear and linear fashion. There is much for young audiences to engage with and themes to discuss. However, prior to focusing on specific themes, it is crucial that all students have a clear understanding of the narrative and the characters, to understand why events occurred.

WHY NOT

Consolidating the Narrative

- Follow your viewing of the play with **And Then** (see Creative Learning Activities)
- Now, invite your students to move around the space using **Group Speeds with Stop/Go** (see Creative Learning Activities), to form partners and to carry out **3-2-1** (see Creative Learning Activities)
- Next, invite your students to sit in a semi-circle facing a row of 6 chairs. Carry out **Six-Part Story Method**
- Now, work with your students to consolidate the six main story points. Write each on a separate piece of paper
- Use **Group Speeds with Stop/Go** (see Creative Learning Activities) to rebalance your class and ask them to get into six groups
- Give each group a story point and carry out **Freeze Frames with Reporter** (see Creative Learning Activities).

Engaging with Characters

- Work with your class to create a list of characters from the text
- Divide the class into groups of four or six (dependent on the number of characters you want to explore, you should have smaller groups to allow for more to come to life. Group sizes should be even numbers for partner work)
- Ask each group to select a key character
- Carry out **Role on the Wall with Statues and Thought-Tapping** (see Creative Learning Activities)
- Use **Group Speeds with Stop/Go** (see Creative Learning Activities) to rearrange your class
- Ask students to partner with a student from a different character group and carry out **Character POV** (see Creative Learning Activities)
- Now, invite students to sit in their newly formed partnership and use **Paired Hot-Seating** (see Creative Learning Activities) to gather answers to key questions regarding events and actions carried out by the character.



Writing: Composition

WHY NOT

Use outcomes from the previous activities to:

- Rewrite the narrative (you could create an alternative ending)
- Write a diary entry by one of the characters detailing how they feel at the end of their journey in the story, whenever that might be
- Create a published interview piece in the style of Hello magazine, detailing characteristics, demeanour, the character's story from their viewpoint and answers to key questions.

Reading: Composition

WHY NOT

- Visit your school or local library and select information texts that link to the historical time period alongside fiction texts that link either to Treasure Island or sit in the 'classic text' category (see text recommendations)
- Create a themed reading corner and populate it with the texts you have selected for wider reading opportunities. You could provide paper and pens and encourage students to write reviews and/or to make recommendations
- Read Stevenson's Treasure Island as your class text or for Guided Reading
- Select other, linked texts, for home reading and/or in-class shared reading
- Students may enjoy starting a book club and sharing thoughts about the different classic texts they have read, or texts that link to Treasure Island.

Reading Corner

WHY NOT

Select one of the events or locations from the play to inspire a ship or desert island themed reading corner? Or you could use one of the **World of the Story Mindmaps** or **Dioramas** created in your geography sessions to inspire your exciting reading world.

Linked Texts

The following list of texts may be used to populate your class reading corner, as texts for research and/or shared reading, as a guided reading text or for carpet time reading sessions at the end of the day.

This list is by no means exhaustive but should provide some useful suggestions for texts students will enjoy.

Treasure Island Texts

- *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson: Annotated Edition. (Alma Junior Classics)
- *Treasure Island: A classic graphic novel pirate adventure! 'An old book by Robert Louis Stevenson with new doodles by Jack Noel'.* (Comic Classics)
- *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson (Puffin Classics)

Link to Treasure Island

- *Oliver and the Seawigs* (Reeve and McIntyre Adventures) by Philip Reeve
- *The Puffin Keeper* by Michael Morpurgo
- *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundelle
- *Brightstorm* by Vashti Hardy
- *Lost on Gibbon Island* by Jess Butterworth
- *Skeleton Island: Book 1: 01* (Sam Silver: Undercover Pirate) by Jan Burchett

Link to *Treasure Island*

- *Five on a Treasure Island: Book 1* (Famous Five) by Enid Blyton
- *The Green Ship* by Quentin Blake
- *The Boy Who Met a Whale* by Nizrana Farook
- *Captain Vlad and the Mary Rose* (A Flea in History) by Kate Cunningham (Author)

Classic Texts

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain
- *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe
- *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens
- *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne
- *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift
- *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
- *Moby-Dick or, The Whale* by Herman Melville

Information Texts

- *Adventures in Time: Nelson, Hero of the Seas* by Dominic Sandbrook
- *The Penguin Book of Pirates* by Katherine Howe
- *Spin to Survive: Pirate Peril* by Emily Hawkins
- *Amazing History of Pirates* by Philip Steele
- *Great Expeditions: 50 Journeys that Changed Our World* by Mark Steward, Alan Greenwood, Collins
- *What Was the Age of Exploration?* by Catherine Daly, Who HQ, Jake Murray
- *Crusoe's Island: A Rich and Curious History of Pirates, Castaways and Madness* by Andrew Lambert

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