

National Theatre Collection



Peter Pan

Cross-Curricular Learning Guide

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Introduction to the Production

Recommended Age Group: KS2

The National Theatre's adaptation of *Peter Pan* provides ample room for comparison between the staged version and the original text. Directorial choices have created a modernised version of the children's classic. Captain Hook is played as a strong and defiant female character, Peter Pan as a somewhat vulnerable character, Tiger Lily as a dynamic member of the cast and Tinkerbell as a man who loves Peter almost as a small child would love his father.

Clever and minimal staging ensures this production leaves room for audiences to imagine the world of Neverland and the Darlings' journey to get there. Whilst puppetry and acrobatic flying ensure young audiences are enthralled by a gigantic ticking crocodile and the ability to fly.

The play is thought provoking and provides ample opportunities for wider learning alongside core subject learning, including comparisons between the production and other versions of *Peter Pan*. Foundation subjects that could be explored using the National Theatre's *Peter Pan* are:

- English
- History
- Geography
- PSHE

This Cross-Curricular Learning Guide 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.

Plot Synopsis with Timestamps

Prologue

Wendy, as an adult, introduces the Darling family as they were when she was a child: parents Mr and Mrs Darling, her two brothers John and Michael, and the dog, Nana.

Act One, Scene One (0:02:23)

The children play with Nana. Humorously, she is able to speak but no one can understand her. Mrs Darling puts the children to bed before she and Mr Darling leave for a party. Mrs Darling tells her husband how a week ago she awoke to see a boy in their children's room. She screamed and he escaped, but not before his shadow was caught in the window. She now believes the boy will return for it and wants Nana to stay in the room to protect them. Mr Darling dismisses this idea and insists Nana sleeps outside. They exit and the children go to sleep.

Scene Two (0:11:15)

A small light - Tinker Bell - flies across the room. Peter Pan flies into the room looking for his shadow. He catches his shadow but can't reattach it. Wendy is woken up by Peter crying. They introduce each other and Wendy offers to help him sew his shadow to himself. She reattaches his shadow but rebukes him for his arrogance. They reconcile, and exchange "kisses" in the form of a thimble and a small acorn.

(0:18:22)

Peter introduces Wendy to his fairy Tinker Bell who takes a dislike to her. Peter reveals that he often visits the Darling house to listen to Mrs Darling tell stories to the children before bed, to tell them to his friends - the Lost Boys - in Neverland. Hearing that Wendy knows stories he asks her to come back to Neverland with her. Wendy wakes her brothers and Peter teaches them how to fly. Wendy is at first reluctant, but Peter convinces her and the others to fly out of the window towards Neverland.

Scene Three (0:27:45)

Mr and Mrs Darling arrive just in time to see the children flying off. They travel past clouds, planets and birds, before arriving at Neverland. As they approach, the pirates, led by Captain Hook, fire their cannons at the children.

Act Two, Scene One (0:31:40)

At Peter's camp the Lost Boys are playing and singing. Tiger Lily appears, telling them to run as Hook and her pirates are coming. They flee.

(0:34:40)

Hook, her first mate Smee and other pirates burst in, looking for Peter Pan. She vows to defeat Peter, and even kills one of her crew when he shows softness towards a teddy bear. Hook is spooked when she hears the ticking of a clock, indicating the Crocodile is near, which ate her hand following a battle with Peter. They exit.

Scene Two (0:44:02)

Once the coast is clear, the Lost Boys come out of their hiding places. Tinker Bell enters telling them Peter has instructed them to shoot down the "Wendy bird". They oblige and Wendy falls to the ground. They realise what they've done just before Peter arrives. At finding Wendy unconscious he is furious with Tinker Bell. Peter is about to kill one of the Lost Boys when Wendy recovers; the arrow hit her "kiss". Peter banishes Tinker Bell at first forever, but changes it to a week.

(0:50:24)

The Lost Boys go about building Wendy a house, hoping she will stay and be their mother. John and Michael arrive and are welcomed by the others. They play "mummies and daddies" and insist Wendy tell them a story before going to sleep with Peter keeping watch.

Scene Three (0:57:18)

Tiger Lily approaches in the night and challenges Peter to a "death match". Wendy enters while they're fighting and meets Tiger Lily. Wendy and Peter exit together.

Act Three, Scene One (1:00:28)

Wendy hears Tiger Lily's wolves howling in the distance; they've been captured by pirates. John and Michael join them to go and rescue her. They travel across the island before coming to the Mermaid's Lagoon.

Scene Two (1:03:06)

The mermaids welcome Peter and his friends. John is lured in by the mermaids and is almost drowned before Peter saves him. The pirates arrive, and they hide.

(1:06:44)

Smee enters with the imprisoned Tiger Lily. Peter impersonates Hook, instructing Smee to let her go. Once she's escaped, Hook enters with news that the Lost Boys have found a mother. She realises Tiger Lily is gone and Peter is tricking them.

(1:11:33)

Peter flies above Hook, taunting her. Their fight is interrupted by the Crocodile, which causes Hook to panic and flee. Peter and Wendy are stuck on a rock and the tide is rising. Peter is wounded and Wendy exhausted. Wendy manages to escape on Michael's kite, leaving Peter stranded. He bravely accepts his fate, saying death would just be another adventure.



Act Four, Scene One (1:16:30)

Captain Hook sings about her hatred for Peter Pan while Smee dresses her. She instructs Smee to find the Lost Boys' den.

Scene Two (1:21:10)

Back at the den, Wendy tells the Lost Boys the story of their fight with Hook and how Peter was rescued by the Neverbird. Peter returns; they all eat and have a party together.

(1:33:54)

The Lost Boys settle down to sleep but Wendy wakes them up to tell a story. She tells the story of her, Michael and John coming to Neverland, leaving their sad mother behind. This makes Michael and John homesick and they ask to leave Neverland. Peter insists Wendy is wrong about mothers but all the Lost Boys prepare to leave with her.

Scene Three (1:40:20)

Peter fills a pram with blankets and toys and lies down to sleep, feeling frustrated and alone.

Scene Four (1:43:25)

Smee has the Lost Boys captured. Hook creeps up on Peter as he's sleeping. She puts poison in his bottle of medicine and leaves. Tinker Bell enters and wakes him. In order to stop him drinking the medicine she takes it herself. Dying, Peter enlists the audience to clap to bring Tinker Bell back to life.

Act Five, Scene One (1:49:45)

Aboard her pirate ship the Jolly Roger, Hook sings a triumphant shanty. She tells Wendy Peter is dead, but Wendy insists he will save them.

Scene Two (1:53:55)

Smee brings out the Lost Boys and they prepare to walk the plank. She offers to save one and to join her crew but they refuse.

(1:56:09)

Peter comes to save them in the nick of time. The remaining pirates on the chase the boys as Peter and Hook battle. The Lost Boys defeat the pirates, Hook is stranded and she loses her hooked hand. They make her walk the plank as the Crocodile swallows her.

(2:00:40)

The Lost Boys sing a victory song and sail off to the mainland.

Scene Three (2:01:55)

Back in England, Mr and Mrs Darling mourn, berating themselves for the loss of their children. The children return to surprise their sleeping parents and are joyously reunited. The Lost Boys enter and the Darlings agree to adopt them all. They all exit apart from Wendy and Mrs Darling.

(2:05:30)

Peter enters, and Mrs Darling offers to adopt him as well, but he rejects the notion of growing up. Wendy asks to go with him but Mrs Darling refuses.

Scene Four (2:07:10)

Adult Wendy returns with her daughter Jane, saying Peter never visited her again and she forgot how to fly. Jane reveals she hears Peter's crow in her sleep. Wendy dismisses this and sings Jane to sleep.

(2:10:07)

Peter enters, confused that John and Michael aren't there. He asks Wendy to fly away with him but she refuses, turning on the light and revealing herself to be grown up. Peter is devastated at the news and starts crying. Jane wakes and asks him why he's crying, mirroring the first scene. He teaches Jane how to fly and they go off together. Wendy promises she will always keep her window open for her return.

The End



Cross-Curricular Learning

English

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *Spoken Language; Physical; Linguistic; Cognitive; Social and Emotional*
- *Oracy (Leading to high-quality written outcomes)*
 - Whether using the play as part of an English unit of study or for the purposes of Foundation subject exploration (see Foundation subject learning suggestions), it is important to ensure that students have a full grasp of the narrative and are able to retell, discuss and question it with confidence.

The following activities can be used time and again for any narrative, ensuring your class possess a deep understanding of all events in the story.

WHY NOT:

- Follow a viewing of the production with the activity **And Then** (see Creative Learning Activities).
- Building on from And Then, invite students to use **Group Speeds** (see Creative Learning Activities), to form partners and to carry out **3-2-1** (see Creative Learning Activities).
- Gather outcomes from 3-2-1 and consolidate thinking by establishing a shared set of 6 story beats before inviting students to carry out **Six-Part Story Method** (see Creative Learning Activities).
- Invite students to work in small groups or partners and to carry out **Story Stones** (see Creative Learning Activities), illustrating stones they have gathered as part of home learning or a class trip to a local outdoor area.

They will now be ready to carry out a written English activity with confidence and/or to apply their thinking to any of the following Foundation subject areas.

Geography

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *Location Knowledge; Place Knowledge; Physical and Human Geography; Geographical Skills*
 - In the original text, the Darling family live in Kensington, London. With minimal staging used in the play, young audiences could be invited to explore the facts surrounding the original text and the exact location of the Darling family home, to develop a picture of the geographical features of this location.

WHY NOT:

- Explore the exact location of the Darling residence using maps and globes.
- Use ICT and information texts to establish the human and physical features of the location.
- Use the **World of the Story Mindmap activity** (see Creative Learning Activities) to bring this location to life using all senses and gathering images, textures, smells, sounds and tastes? These could be used to create a guide to the area, listing topographical features and land use patterns.
- Use **Dioramas** (see Creative Learning Activities) to recreate individual rooms in a Victorian or Edwardian house, assembling them on completion to create a multi-sensory house – your class' own self-made dolls' house.
- Draw comparisons between aspects of the above that might have changed between the late-Victorian and early Edwardian eras, when the story was first published and staged, and modern-day London.

- Neverland is a fictional location, surrounded by water and only accessible through flight. It is a magical island, featuring fairies and mermaids and is inhabited by 'islanders' and pirates. The National Theatre's staging allows for young minds to use their imagination to recreate the appearance of the island, its location and what each of the individual Neverland locations might be like. Students could be invited to consider where the island is and what it might be like.

WHY NOT:

- Use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate and plan the route that Peter Pan and the Darling children might have taken, referring to 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 the time zones (including day and night) they might have travelled through.

- Use the **Masking Tape World activity** (see Creative Learning Activities) to develop a map of Neverland, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle; using and applying use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to highlight key locations and characters from the play.

- Create a guide to Neverland, using locations referenced in the play (and text if you are also exploring this in class) and considering its environment, key physical and human characteristics, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, and food.

History

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *A local history study; A study of an aspect or theme in British history that extends pupils' chronological knowledge beyond 1066*
 - The Darling family lived in Kensington in Victorian London and lived there through to the Edwardian era. What was life like for them during those eras? Did they go to school? How did they travel? How did they live? Which aspects of national history would have been seen by the children? Which aspects are still in existence now?

WHY NOT:

- Carry out a depth study linked to the area of London using ICT and non-fiction research materials. Students could trace how several aspects of national history are reflected in the locality and explore an aspect of history or a site dating from a period beyond 1066 that is significant in the locality.

- Explore the history surrounding the reign of Queen Victoria and the succession to the throne of Edward VII. What was the country like during each of the reigns? What would life have been like in an area like Kensington during these moments in time? How did the local area change? – with particular focus on famous attractions such as the Royal Albert Hall and the Albert Memorial.

- Using the above, students could create **Role on the Wall** characters with **Character Statues and Thought Tapping** (see Creative Learning Activities), bringing to life key characters from the time and inviting them to consider life from their perspective.

- Students could also carry out **Paired Hot-seating** (see Creative Learning Activities) using **Open-Ended Questions** (see Resources), to interview each other as characters from the period and use responses to create newspaper articles.

- We see Mr and Mrs Darling at the start and end of the play. What do these scenes tell us about parenting in the era? Who is main caregiver for the children? The parents are going out: How do they dress? Where are they going? What evening entertainment might an affluent couple be planning to enjoy? What were typical pastimes for families during this time? How has this changed over time?

WHY NOT:

- Consider aspects of social history from the era of the play and use findings to recreate a Victorian or Edwardian family day, including parlour games, learning styles, methods of dress and of ways of speaking.

- Peter Pan takes children from their parents, including the Darling children. Is this right or wrong? Is he committing a crime? What would the punishment have been for Peter Pan during this time?

WHY NOT:

- Explore additional aspects of social history to include crime and punishment from the era. With the findings as a starting point, divide your students into teams of lawyers who are either defending or prosecuting Peter Pan for his crimes, using **Balanced Argument Sentence Starters** (see Resources) to scaffold dialogue.

- This exercise will link to the PSHE curriculum targeting the 'Living in the Wider World' learning outcome: **L1. to recognise reasons for rules and laws; consequences of not adhering to rules and laws.**

PSHE

Key outcomes of the curriculum targeted:

- *Health and Wellbeing; Relationships; Living in the Wider World*
 - In the Darling household, we see that taking medicine is an important part of the daily routine. Later, as Wendy settles into her role as the Lost Boys' mother, she is keen to ensure her knowledge of a healthy lifestyle is embedded firmly in island life: that they take their medicine and eat healthily. Her final words to Peter Pan include reminders to eat his egg every morning for breakfast.

WHY NOT:

• Invite your class to divide into pairs or teams, with each working on a specific area from the following list to create a guide to healthy living for Peter Pan once he is left without her guidance. Areas to consider could include the following (as listed in the Programme of Study for PSHE Education, PSHE Association):

- H1. how to make informed decisions about health
- H2. the elements of a balanced, healthy lifestyle
- H3. choices that support a healthy lifestyle, and recognise what might influence these
- H4. how to recognise that habits can have both positive and negative effects on a healthy lifestyle
- H5. what good physical health means; how to recognise early signs of physical illness
- H6. what constitutes a healthy diet; how to plan healthy meals; benefits to health and wellbeing of eating nutritionally rich foods; risks associated with not eating a healthy diet including obesity and tooth decay
- H7. how regular (daily/weekly) exercise benefits mental and physical health (eg walking or cycling to school, daily active mile); recognise opportunities to be physically active and some of the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle
- H8. how sleep contributes to a healthy lifestyle; routines that support good quality sleep; the effects of lack of sleep on the body, feelings, behaviour and ability to learn

- H9. that bacteria and viruses can affect health; how everyday hygiene routines can limit the spread of infection; the wider importance of personal hygiene and how to maintain it

- H10. how medicines, when used responsibly, contribute to health; that some diseases can be prevented by vaccinations and immunisations; how allergies can be managed

- H11. how to maintain good oral hygiene (including correct brushing and flossing); why regular visits to the dentist are essential; the impact of lifestyle choices on dental care (eg sugar consumption/acidic drinks such as fruit juices, smoothies and fruit teas; the effects of smoking)

- H12. about the benefits of sun exposure and risks of overexposure; how to keep safe from sun damage and sun/heat stroke and reduce the risk of skin cancer.

- The Lost Boys live without parents. They are independent, able to do as they please. The arrival of Wendy triggers something in all characters in Neverland, including Captain Hook – thoughts of a mother and the importance of the role of a mother. The Lost Boys are keen to abandon independence, in favour of being cared for. Why is this?

WHY NOT:

- Use **Role on the Wall** (see Creative Learning Activities) to develop the characters of the Lost Boys. Then, using **Statues and Thought Tapping** (see Creative Learning Activities), invite characters to answer questions regarding why they want a mother, how they feel about independence, how they think life will change if they have a mother again, whether it is possible for someone who is not your actual mother to feel like a mother

- Build on the above outcomes by inviting students to create **Dioramas** (see Creative Learning Activities) of students' own homes and to add **Puppets** (see Creative Learning Activities) of their own families. Invite them to reenact a range of familiar family scenarios and problem-solving moments, exploring who lives in the home and the roles they play

- The above can be used as stimulus for meaningful circle times exploring 'Families and Close Positive Relationships' (referring to the Relationships section in the Programme of Study for PSHE, listed by the PSHE Association).

- Peter Pan appears sad and lonely in several moments during the play, in particular, when he tells the story of his own mother and how he first became Peter Pan.

WHY NOT:

- Invite your students to think of strategies that could help Peter Pan when he is struggling with his mental health (referring to the Mental Health section in the Programme of Study for PSHE, listed by the PSHE Association) and to carry out a **Conscience Alley** (see Creative Learning Activities), with Peter Pan selecting the strategies he thinks would be most effective in dealing with his emotions.

- Peter Pan does not want to leave Neverland, even if that means being left behind by Wendy and the Lost Boys. He does not want to 'grow a beard' or go to school or work – he does not want to grow up. In the final scene, Wendy has grown up – she 'grew up a long time ago', she is supportive of Peter and even encourages her own daughter to take flight for her own Peter Pan adventures.

WHY NOT:

- Carry out **Paired Hot-seating** (see Creative Learning Activities) using **Open-Ended Questions** (see Resources), with partners representing either Peter or Wendy and discussing thoughts and feelings around:

- Growing and changing
- The new opportunities and responsibilities that increasing independence may bring.

- Neverland is home to many different inhabitants. It has a diverse community that consist of Peter Pan and the Lost Boys, Captain Hook and the pirates, mermaids, the islanders. Do they all work together to look after their island? Do they value the diversity in their community? Within each group, do they share responsibilities and influence each other positively?

WHY NOT:

- Invite students to create **Freeze Frames** of the different social groups and move around them as a **reporter** (see Creative Learning Activities), interviewing them as to how they live, who they interact with, who they respect, who they like/dislike, thoughts about other communities on the island (referring to PSHE Association framework, Living in the Wider World, L1,2, 4-10)

- Use outcomes from the above to discuss how each group interacts and to identify any positive changes that could be made or interventions that could be carried out to help all inhabitants to work together and to respect one another. Perhaps you could write a letter to the inhabitants, informing them of your thoughts and suggestions.



Linked Texts

Based on a classic text, this production lends itself to being viewed alongside exploration of the original text, encouraging students to compare characterisation, settings and events between the staged and written version. Discussion around the National Theatre's directional choices will develop cultural currency for all students and deepen their understanding of the narrative hugely.

You may want to opt for the original text, select one of the fantastic adaptations that are available or choose some of the other adventure-themed texts from the following list:

Picturebooks

- *Peter Pan*, by J.M. Barrie, Caryl Hart and Sarah Warburton (Nosy Crow)
- *Peter Pan and Wendy*, by J.M. Barrie and Robert Ingpen (Welbeck)
- *The Lonely Beast*, by Chris Judge (Andersen Press)
- *The Secret of Black Rock*, by Joe Todd-Stanton (Flying Eye)
- *The Wilderness*, by Steve McCarthy (Walker)
- *Mini Rabbit Not Lost*, by John Bond (HarperCollins)
- *A Stick and a Stone*, by Sarina Dickson and Hilary Jean Tapper (Moa)
- *The Hike*, by Alison Farrell (Chronicle Books)
- *Mabel and the Mountain*, by Kim Hillyard (Ladybird)
- *Flora and Nora Hunt for Treasure*, by Kim Hillyard (Ladybird)
- *To the Other Side*, by Erika Meza (Hodder)
- *The Journey Home*, by Frann Preston-Gannon (HarperCollins)
- *The Tale of a Toothbrush*, by M.G. Leonard and Daniel Rieley (Walker)
- *I Can Catch a Monster*, by Bethan Woollvin (Two Hoots)
- *Constance in Peril*, by Ben Manley and Emma Chichester Clark (Two Hoots)
- *Wild*, by Emily Hughes (Flying Eye)

- *Wild*, by Sam Usher (Templar Books)
- *Ratty's Big Adventure*, by Lara Hawthorne (Big Picture Press)
- *Grandad's Island*, by Benji Davies (Simon & Schuster)
- *How to Find Gold*, by Viviane Schwarz (Walker)
- *Beyond the Fence*, by Maria Gulemetova (Child's Play)
- *Lost in the City*, by Alice Courtley (Hodder)
- *Anthony and the Gargoyle*, by Jo Ellen Bogart and Maja Kastelic (Walker)
- *Our Tower*, by Joseph Coelho and Richard Johnson (Frances Lincoln)
- *The Zebra's Great Escape*, by Katherine Rundell and Sara Ogilvie (Bloomsbury)
- *Arthur and the Golden Rope*, by Joe Todd-Stanton (Flying Eye)
- *Journey*, by Aaron Becker (Walker)
- *When Mino Took the Bus*, by Simona Ciraolo (Flying Eye)
- *The Pirates Are Coming!*, by John Condon and Matt Hunt (Nosy Crow)
- *Pirate Stew*, by Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell (Bloomsbury)



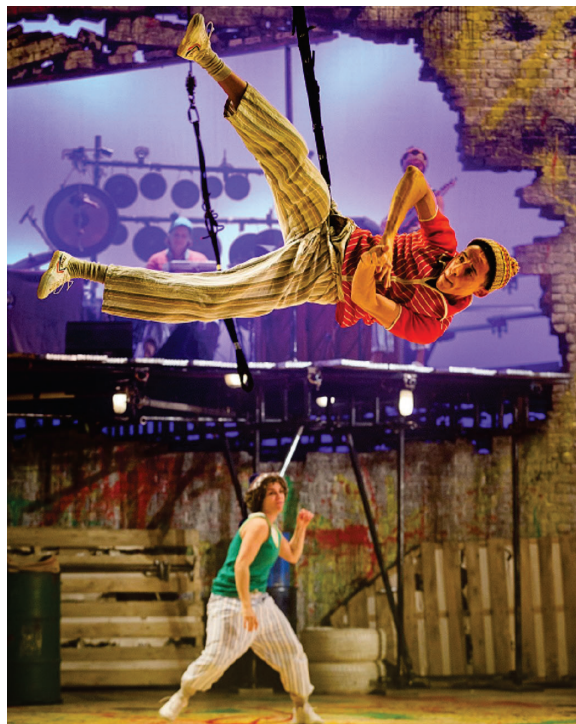
Novels

- *Bumble and Snug and the Angry Pirates*, by Mark Bradley (Hodder)
- *Adventuremice: Otter Chaos!*, by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre (David Fickling Books)
- *Varjak Paw*, by SF Said and Dave McKean (Corgi)
- *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, by Kate DiCamillo (Walker)
- *The Wild Robot*, by Peter Brown (Piccadilly)
- *Super Happy Magic Forest and the Humongous Fungus*, by Matty Long (Oxford University Press)
- *Pugs of the Frozen North*, by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre (Oxford University Press)
- *King Coo*, by Adam Stower (David Fickling Books)
- *Monster Slayer*, by Brian Patten and Chris Riddell (Barrington Stoke)
- *Aziza's Secret Fairy Door*, by Lola Morayo and Cory Reid (Macmillan)
- *The Last Kids on Earth*, by Max Brallier and Douglas Holgate (HarperCollins)
- *Clifftoppers: The Arrowhead Moor Adventure*, by Fleur Hitchcock (Nosy Crow)
- *Dragon Storm: Tomas and Ironskin*, by Alastair Chisholm and Eric Deschamps (Nosy Crow)
- *Space Blasters: Susie Saves the Universe*, by Kevin and Katie Tsang and Amy Nguyen (HarperCollins)
- *Greta Zargo and the Death Robots from Outer Space*, by A.F. Harrold and Joe Todd-Stanton (Bloomsbury)
- *Escape Room*, by Christopher Edge (Nosy Crow)
- *Fortunately, The Milk*, by Neil Gaiman and Chris Riddell (Bloomsbury)
- *Mr Penguin and the Lost Treasure*, by Alex T. Smith (Hodder)

Reading Corner Themes

WHY NOT

Select one of the events or locations from the play and use it to inspire a pirate's ship, Lost Boys' den, mermaid's cove-themed reading corner? Or you could use History lessons and exploration of Victorian or Edwardian homes to design a reading corner in the style of the Darling children's bedroom.



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