

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

This pack has been compiled to provide information and stimulus around Pantomime.

It can be utilised with or without a trip to the theatre (but obviously we would love you to join us this Christmas!) – *Oh yes we would!*



**sunderland
empire**
The West End of the North East

Fri 8 – Sun 31 Dec 2023

atgtickets.com/sunderland

Groups and Schools: 0207 206 1174

Calls to 02 numbers are charged at standard geographic rate and included in any call plan minutes

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRITISH PANTO

Pantomime is a wonderful (if a little eccentric!) British theatrical institution.

Pantomimes take place around the Christmas period and are nearly always based on well-known children's stories such as Peter Pan, Aladdin, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and not forgetting, of course, our own Beauty and the Beast!

Pantomime comes from the ancient Greek words 'Pantos Mimos' – meaning it 'reflects life, politics and fashion'. A good example of this is the Ugly Sisters, where times and fashion have dictated their names over the years.

They originally started out as Clorinda and Thisbee, Daisy, Hysteria and Hydrophobia, moving more recently to Alexis and Crystal (Dynasty), Sharon and Tracey (*Birds of a Feather*), Eugenie and Beatrice (*royal sisters*), and Amnesia and Magnesia!

Q. What would you call the Ugly Sisters to reflect today's society?

With the decline of the Greek civilisation came the rise of the Roman Empire, but unfortunately that also brought Constantine, the first Emperor to convert to Christianity. Constantine did not approve of theatre and banned it!

There was no formal theatre in Britain for centuries until the church realised that it could teach the uneducated masses about the new religion of Christianity. Performances started in churches, then moved as they grew, out into the churchyards and then onto village greens. This is where the first element of panto started and it is still done today: if you represented evil you came in from the left hand side and if you came in from the right you represented good. In Panto, the Villain enters stage left first and the Hero or Heroine enters stage right.

Q. How many Panto Villains and Heroes/Heroines can you name?

Q. Who is your favourite Panto Villain or Hero/Heroine, and why?

Commedia Dell'Arte is the true ancestor of Pantomime. It was a fusion of clowning, acrobatics, dance, music, slapstick, satire, farce and love stories – just like any modern Panto! It originated in Italy, crossed France and came to Britain in the 1600s, introduced by a man named John Rich.

In 1642 civil war broke out, Oliver Cromwell took over and theatres closed for 18 years! Cromwell considered them places where Royalists would meet and plot against him.

Charles II restored theatre during his reign and by the Victorian era Pantomime had become traditional Christmas fare. Scripts now told stories of Robinson Crusoe or fairy tales, with a witty rhyming style that included topical content.

This period saw stars cross over from variety, bringing with them topical comedy and popular songs. More recently Christopher Biggins played a Panto dame for 23 years straight!

The father of modern pantomime, Augustus Harris, encouraged lavish productions and competition between theatres across the country.

Pantomime has always had the capacity to adapt and move with the times. Above all it has the capacity to offer children and adults a magical encounter with live theatre!

Q. How many words can you make using the letters in the word PANTOMIME. You can only use each letter once! (e.g. mime, time, ant)



LA FRANCE!

The story of **Beauty and the Beast** is set in France.

Q. Can you provide the English for the following French words:

Bonjour.....

Amour.....

Belle.....

Français.....

Oui.....

Château.....

Noël.....

Cadeaux.....

La Bête.....

Papa.....

Answers: Hello, Love, Beauty, French, Yes, Castle, Christmas, Present, Beast, Dad

THE ROSE

In the traditional fairy tale of **Beauty and the Beast**, the wilting of the rose symbolizes Beauty leaving the Beast, making us wonder if their love is going to last or not.

Q. Can you plant a rose and keep it from wilting?

Planting

Here are some steps to planting roses in the garden:

In the area where the rose or roses are to be planted, mix in at least one bucket of farmyard manure per square metre, mixing it in with a fork in the top 20-30cm of soil.

Apply general fertiliser over the surface of the planting area and mix it in with a fork.

For each rose dig a hole roughly twice the width of the plant's roots and the depth of a spade's blade.

Place the rose in the centre of the hole. Fill the hole gently around the rose, with the excavated soil, manure and fertiliser.

Pruning

Prune your rose(s) in the first winter after planting. Do this in late winter or early spring. With all roses, first remove dead, damaged and weak growths.

Watering

Water well in dry spells for at least two summers after planting.



THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

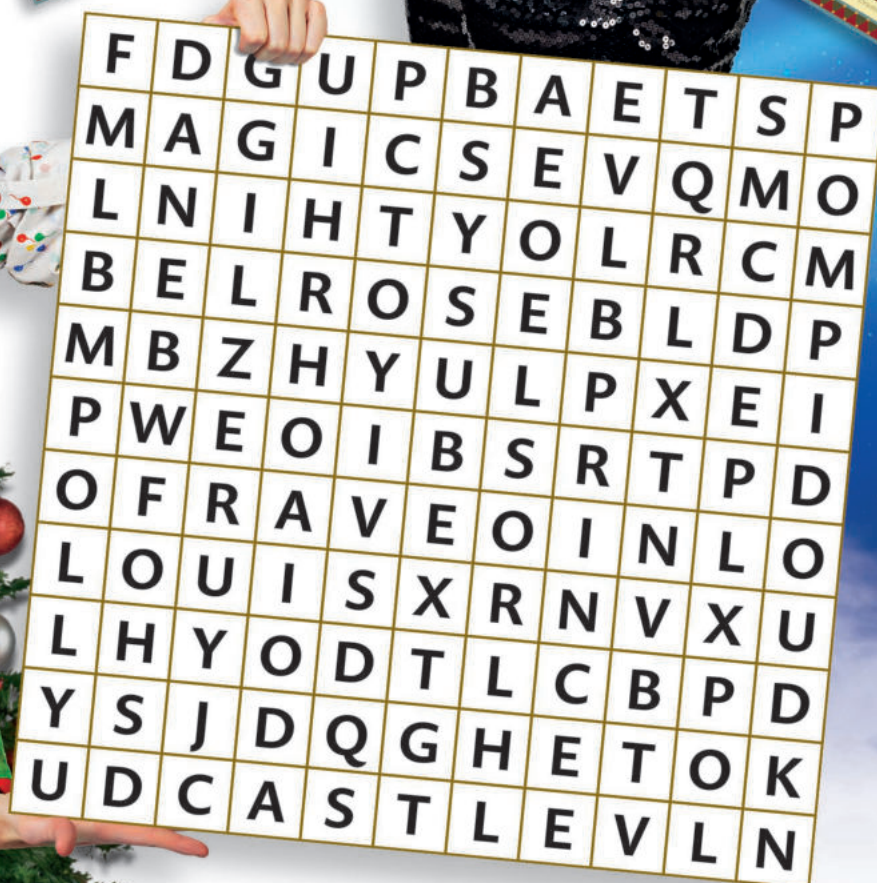
The 12 Days of Christmas is a traditional Christmas carol first published in the children's book *Mirth without Mischief* around the year 1780. No one is entirely sure of the song's origin but evidence suggests it first appeared in the North East of England during the early 18th century.

Q. Can you name all of the items featured in the 12 Days of Christmas?

Answers:

1. A partridge in a pear tree
2. Two turtle doves
3. Three French hens
4. Four calling birds
5. Five golden rings
6. Six geese a-laying
7. Seven swans a-swimming
8. Eight maids a-milking
9. Nine ladies dancing
10. Ten Lords a-leaping
11. Eleven pipers piping
12. Twelve drummers drumming

Q. What traditions does your family have at Christmas?



Q. Can you find these words hidden in the grid?

Belle • Beast • Prince • Rose • Castle • Magic
Louis • Polly • Pompidou • Fairy Bon Bon



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The canniest panto in all the land has been given a beastly makeover, with an enchanting story and magical savings that'll make you go ooh la la with excitement!

North East actress **Charlie Hardwick** (Emmerdale, Ackley Bridge) brings the festive magic as Fairy Bon Bon, alongside children's TV favourite **Olivia Birchenough** (Channel 5's Milkshake) as Belle.

Back by popular demand is the North East's Queen of Comedy, the fabulous **Miss Rory** (Boulevard) as Rorina La Plonk and hilarious local comic **Tom Whalley** as Louis La Plonk, plus West End star **Samuel Wyn-Morris** (Les Miserables) as the Beast.

Beauty & The Beast

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Group concessions apply to selected performances and price bands and are subject to availability. Call or email for details.

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