



THE  
ADVENTURES OF  
ALICE IN  
WONDERLAND

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A new adaptation of Lewis Carroll's magical story

DEvised & DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER BROOKES

**'By your fur and whiskers, don't be late!'**

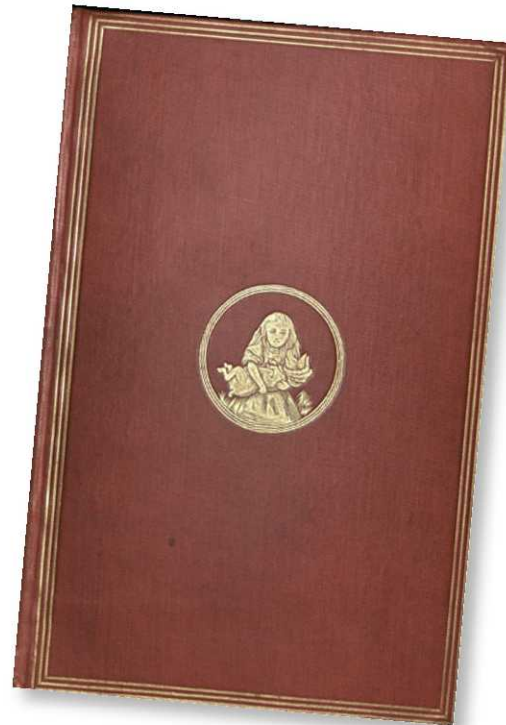
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## Introduction

**Alice and her adventures in Wonderland is a classic example of literacy nonsense genre. Originally published in 1865 at the height of the Victorian age of improvement, the whimsical tale of a young girl facing the reality of growing up shows us not all children had to work for a living. Lewis Carrol, penname for Charles Dodgson, a mathematics lecturer from Oxford university, spun a tale on a boat journey along the Thames to entertain some children of friends. Begged by the children to commit it to paper, a legend was born, often quoted, and referenced in the papers second only to Shakespeare at the time.**

Coupled with the distinctive illustrations of Sir John Tenniel, a political satire artist for Punch Magazine, the tale has captured the imagination of generations in books, films, and the stage.

New for the 2020's, Wise Owl Theatre have brought the story to life for the modern audience telling, a dynamic story including original songs and puppetry.



original book cover 1865

*“Imagination is  
the only weapon  
in the war  
against reality”*

LEWIS CARROLL



**Wise Owl's adaptation of Alice and her adventures in Wonderland sprung to life as an afternoon tea party, during the gloominess of lockdown 2020. Theatres were still closed but the team at Wise Owl were desperate to bring theatre back into people's lives and hearts. What better way to do this, than transporting families to Wonderland?**

This quirky novel has never been out of print. The many faces of the Wonderland characters are iconic and, most of all timeless.

Transporting this to the big stage has, by no means, been an easy task! Wise Owl Theatre Company would like to thank all the cast and creative team, the theatres who have given us the opportunity to share this wonderful production and, of course, Lewis Carroll, for writing this timeless classic in the first place.

## Q&A Christopher Brookes (Director) and Matthew Forbes (Puppetry Designer)

**How does your adaptation of Alice in Wonderland differ from the traditional story that everyone knows?**

**CB:** We stay loyal to Lewis Carroll's original storyline with the odd tweak here and there. There is a different take on the characters, purely because an actor's interpretation is never the same. We very much encourage the cast and crew to experiment and come up with their own take on things. The journey to Wonderland is a fresh take, as it's filled with movement, music, lights and a revolving set.

**MF:** This wonderful new adaptation has a great mix of songs, movement sequences, and stunning puppetry. The audience get to follow Alice on her journey, meeting the fabulous residents, and discover the magic of Wonderland. This new adaptation is a fun-filled, visually spectacular show that will appeal to all.

**The synopsis suggests that Alice is an intruder of the peace somewhat! Is your adaptation a little dark and twisted?**

**CB:** There is an eerie element to our take on the story. It starts in a dark attic during a storm as opposed to a summer's day in the garden. Alice discovers strange and mysterious characters along the way who give her opportunities to learn and grow. She soon realizes that her actions have consequences, and she should learn to choose her path and tread carefully.

**What makes this adaptation special to you?**

**CB:** There are lots of special moments. However, the Cheshire Cat's scene is one of my favourites. It's very much an ensemble piece and all of the cast unite during this segment of the show.

**MF:** The puppetry in the show really helps to bring the world of Wonderland to life. There's some really detailed sequences, especially during the Tea Party where the majority of guests are puppets, all brought to life by our incredibly talented performers. It's really fun to watch!

**Are there any surprises (or not) that you'd really like the audience to know about and come for?**

**CB:** I don't want to give away any spoilers but keep your eyes peeled for The Caterpillar!

The reveal of the world of Wonderland is stunning, it's like watching the black and white opening of The Wizard of Oz blend into technicolor.

**Do you have any favourite puppets, and how long does it take to make a puppet from start to finish?**

**CB:** My personal favorite is the White Rabbit. Firstly, because I can identify with his nervous energy and lack of ability to arrive anywhere on time. Secondly, because his design was the first of the characters to come to life from cardboard cut-out over Zoom. He was a product of lockdown and he brought spark and creativity back into my life.

**MF:** The process of puppet making is ever changing and never-ending. A puppet can be made in seconds for a bedtime story (a sock on the end of your fingers) or could take months of planning. Bits and pieces of a puppet are chopped off or added on during the creative process to become moldable to the people that bring them to life.

**Are there any differences in creating puppets for shows like War Horse and The Lion King and Alice in Wonderland and if so, what are they?**

**MF:** When using puppets in a show I always ask myself, "Do we need them?". A puppet should only be used if it's the best way of telling the story, and we've certainly made sure that is the case in this production. I always approach any puppetry in the same way, what does the character (whether that be an animal,

## Teachers Notes

This teacher's pack aims to give you ideas to extend the themes and background behind Alice in Wonderland and the Victorian Era.

Helping to balance the school curriculum with the world of theatre, feel free to adapt and amend to suit the needs of your students.

### Subject fields covered:

Literacy  
Numeracy  
History  
Art and Design  
Design and Technology  
PSHE

More info on Alice- [www.alice-in-wonderland.net](http://www.alice-in-wonderland.net)



Original illustration by John Tenniel

## History

**KS2: Study an aspect of British History that extends pupils chronological knowledge beyond 1066. E.g., an aspect of social history, leisure, or entertainment.**

The Victorian age of improvement shows a vast change in ideas, class and working ideals.

Alice was published 5 years before the Education Act. A great many children of the time were either working or, if they came from upper class families were home schooled or at private school. We've all heard the Victorian adage 'Children should be seen and not heard'.



Queen Victoria

### Timeline of Alice

- 1819** Queen Victoria Born
- 1832** Lewis Carroll Born
- 1833** Factories Act: no under 9s in mills. 9–13-year-olds 48-hour week
- 1837** Queen Victoria on the throne
- 1842** Mines and collieries Act: no under 10s or females in the mines
- 1851** The Great Exhibition
- 1855** Lewis Carroll becomes an lecturer at Oxford University.
- 1862** Lewis Carroll's boat trip along the Thames
- 1865** Alice in Wonderland published
- 1870** Education Act: national system of schools for all children
- 1871** Through the looking glass published
- 1886** 1st Alice west end musical
- 1898** Lewis Carroll died aged 65
- 1900** 180,000 copies of Alice in Wonderland sold

### Key features of Victorian era:

Rise of middle classes, growth of democracy, expansion of empire, idealisation of family, growth of leisure pursuits.

## Group Activity

Split class into 2 groups. You are going to hold a much Victorian parliamentary debate imagined before the Education Act of 1870.

**Team for the Education Act.**

**Team Against the Education Act**

- Lots of upper class in parliament who would own mills and mines and were big employees of children. How would you feel about losing cheap labour?
- Others would only have their own children or their children to draw experience on. Why should the poor be educated? What's the point? Would they challenge the upper classes?
- Session 1 hour long. Introduce the ideas, set the task, bring together for debate- teacher as judge to oversee and draw the debate a conclusion.

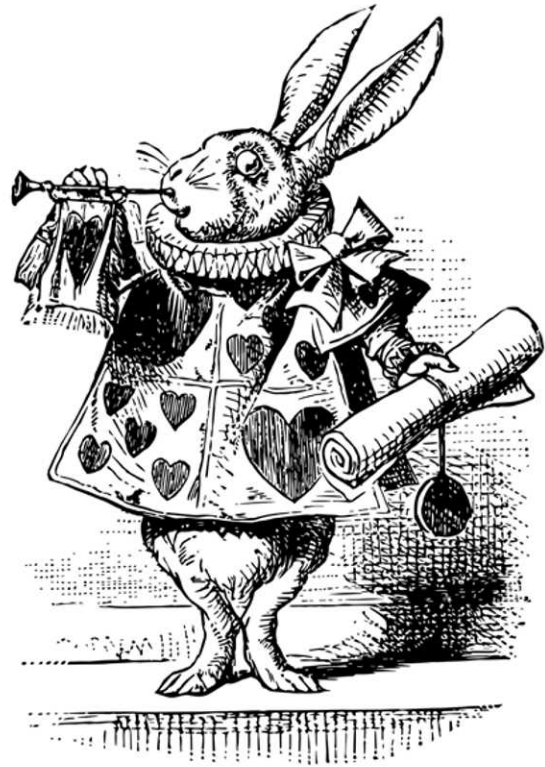


Illustration by John Tenniel

## Art and Design

**KS2: Artists, designers in history**

**Sir John Tenniel (1820- 1914) was a political satire artist for Punch Magazine. He took a lot of persuading to illustrate a children's book like Alice in Wonderland. His designs were transferred onto wood blocks for printing- mass production in books. He works alongside Lewis Carroll to ensure the designs matched his intended representation.**



John Tenniel

## Activity

### Activity (1)

- Look at examples of Sir John Tenniel's work for Alice. How does he portray her and her companions?
- What about his work for Punch Magazine? How does he capture the mood of the Victorian Era?

### Activity (2)

- Compare Tenniel's work with Walt Disney 1950's portrayal of Alice- how has she been made more appealing for the audiences of the 50's?

### Activity (3)

Try to design and make a print block

- Polystyrene block
- Lino Cut

Aim to get good quality repeating print of your design.

## Literacy

### Poetry

During the play and reading of the book, you'll hear a variety of poetry references.

Lewis Carroll re-wrote famous poems that many Victorian schooled children would learn by heart.

- Isaac Watts (1647-1748) wrote divine songs for her children (1715) – warned children not to be sinful; warned of disobedience and sloth.

*'Tis the voice of the sluggard'*

became *'tis the voice of the lobster'*.

*'Against idleness and mischief'*

became *'How doth the little crocodile'*.

- Robert Soutany wrote the poem 'The old man's comforts and how he gained them' Carroll edited to become 'You are old Father William'.
- 'Twinkle Twinkle little bat, is clearly the most relevant/known to a modern audience.

## Activity

### Activity (1)

Analyse the poems used above and how the meaning was altered to amuse the audience.

### Activity (2)

Take a well-known nursery rhyme or poem and alter it to amuse the audience today.



## Language

Alice's adventures in Wonderland marks, the shift in Victorian ideals of childhood from work, discipline, and sinfulness to education, play and innocence. Carroll uses a great deal of figurative language to make jokes, engage the reader and explain complex ideas. It allows an emotional connection with the reader, with examples of simile, metaphor, and Hyperbole.

### Simile

A figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind.

Queen stares at Alice **“for a moment like a wild beast”**.

Queen **“frowns, like a thunderstorm”**-

Shows Queen is untameable, unreasonable, and moody.



## Activity

### Activity 1.

Can you write similes to describe?

**Hatter**

**Alice**

**Dormouse**

**Hare**

**Cheshire Cat**

**King**

### Metaphor

Qualities of one thing carried to another, a comparison between two things, otherwise unrelated.

Rabbit hole - metaphor exploring new, an unknown

food - metaphor - growing up, physically unpredictable, appetite - metaphor - curious appetite for life and growing up.

Telescope - wish to remain a child and shut up like a telescope.

### Activity 2.

Can you think of metaphors to describe your school day: Lessons, playtime, lunchtime, PE?

### Hyperbole

Figure of speech, to which conscious exaggeration, based on truth - an overstatement! For example, “well! Thought Alice to herself, after such a fall as this, I shall think nothing of tumbling downstairs! How brave, they’ll all think of me at home! Why I wouldn’t say anything about it, even if I fell off the top of the house! “

### Activity 3:

Write some hyperbole “overstatement” from Alice’s point of view about

**1. Growing so big**

**2. Growing so small**

**3. Crying a flood of tears**

**4. How the Queen rules Wonderland**

## Design technology KS2: Food

Understand, seasonality, how variety of ingredients are grown and processed.

### Jam tarts!

1. Why do we make jam? So we can eat strawberries out of season! a fantastic way to preserve the summer flavour for a winters day.
2. How do we preserve? Using sugar and heat (105°C) killing nearly all spoilage microbes
3. How long will jam last? In a clean sealed jar one to 2 years after opening.

### Easy jam tarts:

Use ready, roll pastry, cut out a circle, using the top of a glass or cup  
Place in a muffin tray, spoon jam into each.  
Cook in the oven and enjoy.



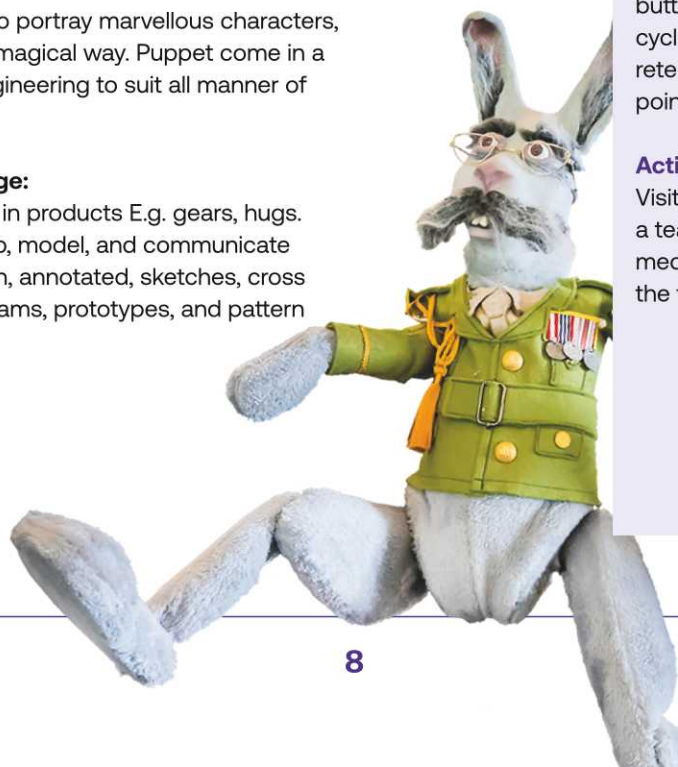
## Design technology

### Puppets

Our story uses puppets to portray marvellous characters, bringing them to life in a magical way. Puppet come in a range of designs and engineering to suit all manner of requirements.

### KS2: Technical knowledge:

Use mechanical systems in products E.g. gears, hugs.  
Design: generate, develop, model, and communicate ideas. Through discussion, annotated, sketches, cross sections, exploded, diagrams, prototypes, and pattern pieces.



## Activity

### Activity (1)

Create a marionette caterpillar butterfly, to show caterpillars life-cycle to a younger audience, or retelling a story from caterpillars point of view..

### Activity (2)

Visit Victorian, automaton create a teapot dormouse with a gears mechanism to allow him to “pop up the teapot “



## Literacy

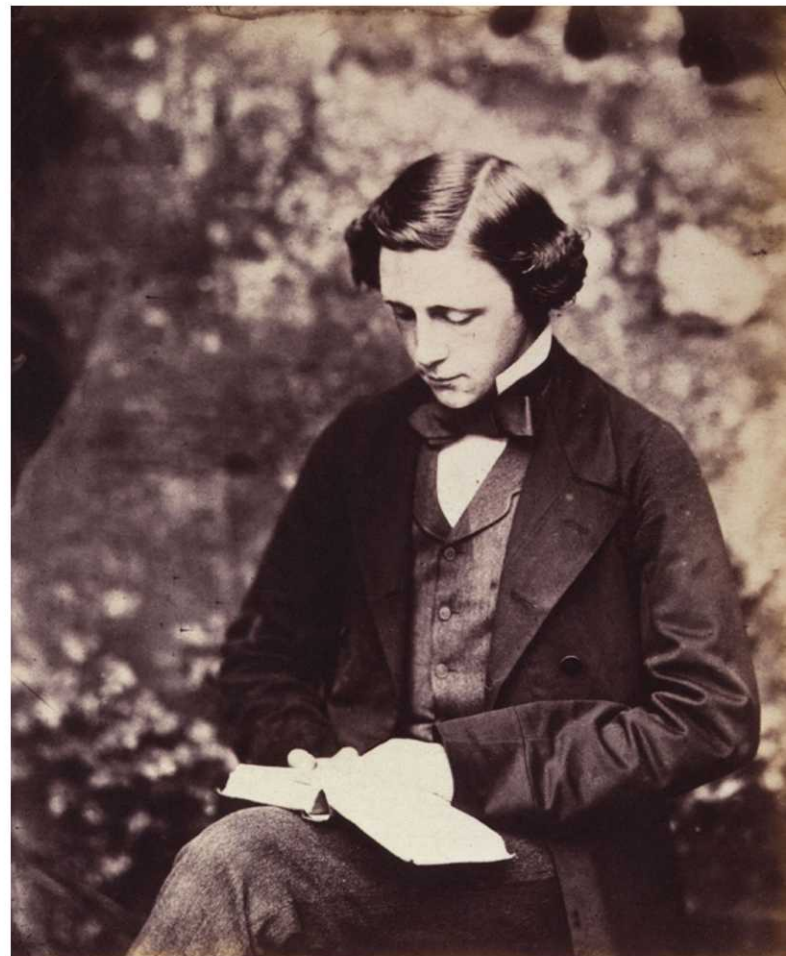
### Discussion writing

Growing up is hard and we have to make many choices along our journey of life.

Consider after Alices, first experience with the “eat me” cupcake – should she drink their “drink me drink?”

1. Clear, introductory statement
2. Right in present, tense
3. Third person
4. Rhetorical questions
5. Views supported with evidence
6. Abstract nouns, (e.g. truth, justice)
7. Varied conjunctions
8. Impartial (no side, taking until the end)
9. State, both sides of the argument, clearly, and fairly
10. End, give a recommendation

This also covers aspects of PSHE and could bring up sensitive issues.



Lewis Carroll



Tea Party illustration by John Tenniel

## Numeracy

**Year 5:** solve problems converting units of time.

**Year 6:** use, read, write and convert between standard units of time from small units to larger and vice versa.

Analogue clocks feature heavily in Alice in Wonderland – a mark of time and era the story is set.

The white rabbit is constantly late.

Why not create timekeeping problems? e.g., if the Queen wishes to see the white rabbit at 4 pm and he lives 30 minutes away. What time would he need to leave?

The Queen demands all the time in Wonderland to be recorded in seconds.

**How many seconds in...**

Three hours 45 minutes?

Six hours 20 minutes?

Three days?

Five weeks?

**KS2: Fun with the four operations**

Playing cards feature heavily in Alice

**1. Have a pack of cards**

**2. Select 2 cards at random**

**3. Depending on the ability of your class, can they add 2 cards? Multiply?**

**4. Can they create a series of sums using the four operations?**

**KS2: Calculating area**

The Queen wishes to plant a field of red roses.

10 roses need one square metre.

**How many for 100 roses?**

What dimensions for the patch?

