

# EDUCATION RESOURCES FROM CROSSROADS PANTOMIMES



**CROSSROADS**  
PANTOMIMES

To find your nearest Crossroads Pantomime visit [www.pantomime.com](http://www.pantomime.com)



# Welcome

## TO PANTO LEARNING!

Pantomime is a magical experience for all of those who get the chance to experience it. From the cheering and jeering of audience participation, to the beautiful sets and dazzling costumes. The long-standing festive tradition is the perfect way to get lost in a magical adventure and this education pack is the perfect way to bring a sprinkle of that panto magic to your learners.

This education pack features a variety of activities that lend themselves to independent creative tasks that can be done from the comfort of a school desk, to activities that will get the whole class up on their feet and moving.



# Contents

- ★ 1 HISTORY OF PANTOMIME
- ★ 3 WELCOME TO THE THEATRE
- ★ 4 SETTING THE SCENE
- ★ 5 SORCERY SCHOOL
- ★ 6 POTION RECIPE
- ★ 7 WE SHALL GO TO THE BALL
- ★ 8 WALK THIS WAY
- ★ 9 MAKE A WISH
- ★ 10 OH YES IT IS,  
OH NO IT'S NOT!
- ★ 11 12 DAYS OF PANTO
- ★ 12 COMEDY CORNER
- ★ 13 MASK - CHARADE
- ★ 14 WHO'S BEHIND YOU?
- ★ 15 ACTIVITIES



Content written by Chase Demmers



# Panto TIMELINE

Pantomime, often referred to as 'panto', is a form of musical comedy and theatrical entertainment that is primarily performed during the Christmas seasons in the UK and other English-speaking countries. It is a unique genre characterised by its combination of slapstick comedy, music, dance, audience participation along with a well-known storyline. The history of pantomime dates back several centuries and has evolved significantly over time.

Due to a change in the law, theatres were able to put on plays using the spoken word. There was a flurry of pantomime productions and they were adapted to be more fairy tale like.

Amateur theatre was created with many pantomime productions produced by local groups.

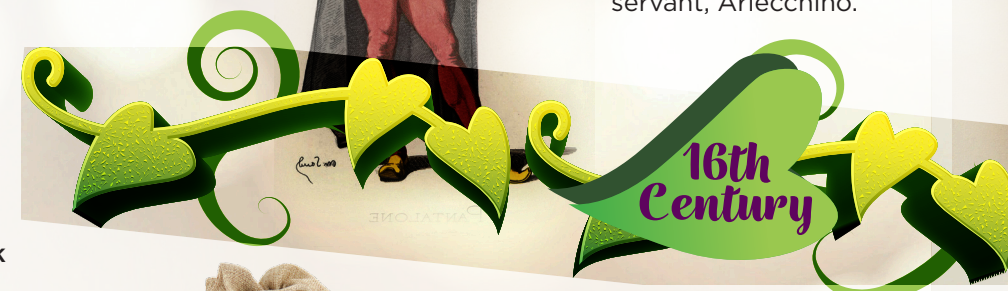
With a glittering array of star names headlining spectacular, lavish productions, Crossroads Pantomimes is the world's biggest pantomime producer – producing 24 pantos each year including The London Palladium.

Pantomime is born in Italian street theatre and included stories featuring an old man, Pantalone, the comedy from Pierrot, and Columbine – the girl who fell in love with the servant, Arlecchino.

Commedia spreads across Europe and starts to become popular in England.

Theatre impressionist John Rich first introduces comedy in plays via comedic actors.

The first recorded performance of *Aladdin* was at Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden.



The first pantomime of *Jack and the Beanstalk* at Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden.



The first recorded pantomime version of *Dick Whittington*.

The first pantomime version of *Sleeping Beauty* was at Theatre Royal Drury Lane, Covent Garden and was called *Sleeping Beauty - A Grand Legendary Melodrama*.

Many of the gags seen in panto today, were created by Joseph Grimaldi in his role as the Clown.



Victorian star, Dan Leno, plays the first Dame in pantomime.



The character, *Mother Goose*, was created.

*Dick Whittington and his Cat* was the first ever panto at The London Palladium.

After the release of the film in 1938, the pantomime version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was created.

1806

1801

Mid 1800s

1886

1902

1914

1938

During the 1970s there was a strong revival of traditional pantomime stories like *Cinderella*, *Aladdin* and *Jack and the Beanstalk*, adapted to include contemporary humour and topical references.

The first ever Principal Boy to be played by a non-female was in *Aladdin* at The London Palladium with Norman Wisdom taking on the role.



Pantomime returned to The London Palladium for the first time in 30 years, with a record-breaking production of *Cinderella*.

2024

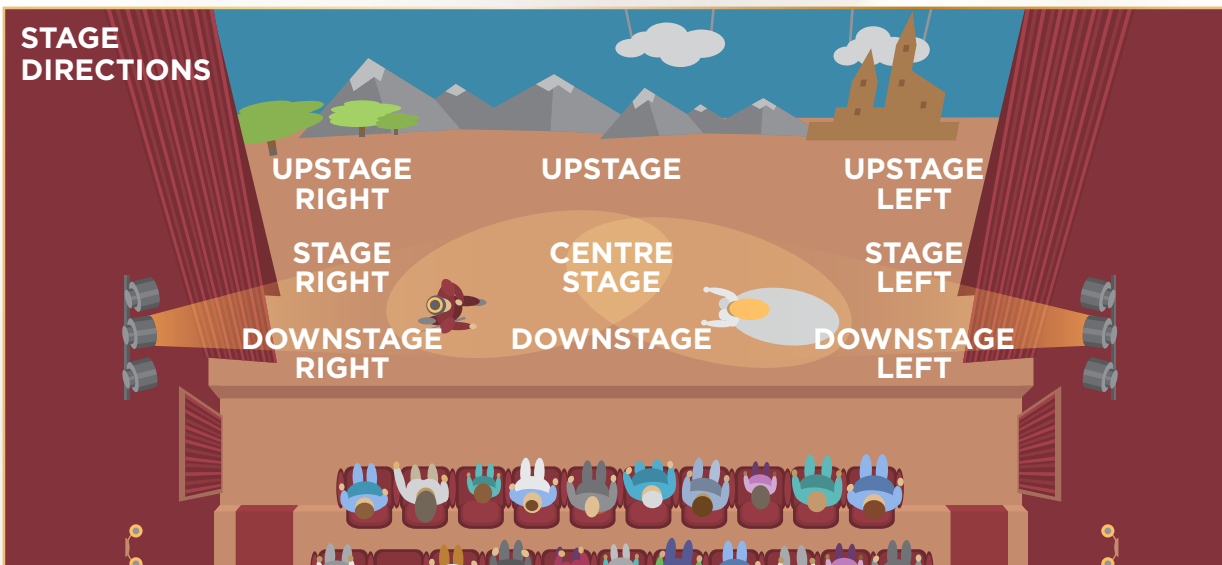
2016

1970s

1956



# Welcome TO THE THEATRE



## ACTIVITY

In a clear space such as your school hall or playground, clearly communicate to your learners the different areas of the stage and ask them to travel to the different areas, when you call them out.

### STEP 1

Start with marking out the 5 most simple areas of the stage

- ★ STAGE RIGHT
- ★ STAGE LEFT
- ★ UPSTAGE
- ★ DOWNSTAGE
- ★ CENTRE STAGE

Call each area out and when you do your learners will need to move to the correct area. You can do this until you feel your group/class have retained the areas.

### STEP 2

In addition to the first five areas now add in a further 4

- ★ UPSTAGE RIGHT
- ★ UPSTAGE LEFT
- ★ DOWNSTAGE RIGHT
- ★ DOWNSTAGE LEFT

### STEP 3

Add in a gesture, movement or phrase that your learners need to do or say when they arrive in each area. For example when arriving at centre stage, your learners could hold their hands up in a v shape as if they are embracing a spotlight shining on them.

### STEP 4

Now that your learners are feeling confident with the areas of the stage, ask for volunteers from your group of learners who would like to have a go at calling out the areas of the stage.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ DIRECTIONS
- ★ INDEPENDENT THINKING
- ★ LISTENING
- ★ BEING ALERT
- ★ DICTION & VOICE PROJECTION

## TEACHING TIP

Teacher in role... to make the activity more fun and engaging, why not step into character as an eccentric theatre director who is directing the performers around the stage. You could enhance this even more by wearing a beret or a shawl that you keep tossing over your shoulder. Then when you get to Step 4 your learners can have a go at doing this too.

# SETTING THE Scene

The opening scene for a pantomime usually consists of the audience being transported to a village, town, or market square where they are presented with an upbeat, colourful and vibrant set along with an uptempo opening number that will include singing, dancing, movement and mime.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ TEAMWORK
- ★ USING IMAGINATION
- ★ CHARACTERISATION
- ★ LISTENING
- ★ MOVEMENT & MIME
- ★ DICTION & VOICE PROJECTION
- ★ PEER REVIEWING
- ★ DEVISING
- ★ CREATIVE RESPONSE TO STIMULI

## TEACHING TIP

To help create an atmosphere for Step 4, you could use these great sound effects. You can then play these while the learners are performing to enhance the effect of setting the scene. It would be good to also let the learners listen to this as part of Step 3 as this will allow them to get used to the sound but also may inform their devising.

## ACTIVITY

Using the instructions below create your own bustling village scene for the opening of a pantomime.

### STEP 1

Ask your learners to sit in groups and come up with a list of the different types of people and scenarios you would find in an idyllic fairytale village. You may want to get the groups to use a pen and paper to make a list.

### STEP 2

Once your learners have completed their lists, it's now time for them to think of a movement or mime that represents each character from their list. For example: a baker might mime kneading bread or a villager may mime putting items in their shopping basket.

### STEP 3

Split your class into two groups (group A and group B) and within these groups ask them to get into pairs or threes. Give each pair (or three) one of the characters from the list below and they will need to devise a small repetitive sequence of mime/movement that lasts about 10 seconds that they can repeat over and over again.

### STEP 4

Ask group A to sit and make an audience. Then, referring back to the Stage Direction activity, assign each pair (or three) from group B a different part of the stage. This is where they will perform the sequence they devised in Step 3. While group A performs, ask group B to watch group A and try to guess what characters they are portraying. Then switch groups So Group B can perform and Group A can be the audience and guess.

## STIMULUS

If your learners need a bit of support to get started, please see some stimuli below.



Example of village scene

Characters we may find in a village

- ★ Butchers/Bakers
- ★ Candlestick Makers
- ★ Hairdresser/Wigger
- ★ Market Sellers
- ★ Police/Guards
- ★ Villagers Shopping
- ★ Florist
- ★ Teacher
- ★ School Children
- ★ Farmer



# Sorcery SCHOOL

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ CREATIVITY
- ★ READING
- ★ RESEARCH
- ★ CREATIVE WRITING
- ★ IMAGINATION

### TEACHING TIP 1

Add a level of challenge - when your learners are writing the spell, challenge them to make the spell rhyme.

### TEACHING TIP 2

A nice thing to do is to get an old ring binding folder and decorate it like a spell book then put all the spells inside the folder and your class will have their very own spell book.

Pantomime is full of magical beings from Fairies and Fairygodmothers to Genies and evil Sorcerers. All of them had to learn to master their magic skills by learning spells and recipes for potions.

In this activity, your learners will be creating some spells and potions of their own.

## ACTIVITY

### STEP 1

All learners will need a piece of paper, notebook or access to a device to make some notes. They will then need to think of what they would like to create a spell for. For example; run really fast, disappear, fly.

### STEP 2

Use a thesaurus to make a list of synonyms or words that are related to what they are aiming to achieve with their spell. For example, if they want to create flying spells they may make a list of words such as; light, high, wings, air.

### STEP 3

To create a spell, write a sentence for each word.

### STEP 4

After drafting your spell, write or type it up neatly. If typing you may want to use a magical looking font.

### STEP 5

To make the spell look authentic, you could soak the page with a brewed tea bag. Once the paper has dried, cut randomly around the edge of the paper to make it look jagged. Then go around the jagged edges with a black marker or felt tip, to make them look burnt.



# POTION RECIPE

This activity can be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class. The aim is to create a recipe for a potion. The purpose of your potion could be a remedy/cure, have a silly effect like making someone turn into a sausage or even make somebody disappear. The possibilities are endless.

## STEP ONE

Your learners should think about what they would like the purpose or the outcome of the potion to be. Once they have decided this should be written down or typed at the top of the page. Encourage your learners to elaborate for example, instead of simply putting "to be able to fly" they could put "to grow four wings - two of which will resemble wings of an eagle and the other two will resemble those of a dragon".

## STEP TWO

Your learners should list at least ten items that they would use as ingredients for their potion.

## STEP THREE

Using full sentences, learners should come up with an amount of each item to be added or how each item could be added - EG; Amount - 12 pieces of cotton from a giant's smelly sock.

How - all dropped in one at a time from a meter above the cauldron.

## STEP FOUR

Like with the Sorcery School, learners should tea stain the paper and make it look like old parchment.

## TEACHING TIP

To make this activity quicker or to work on this as a whole class, you could create a whole class potion. Each learner could think of something very random that they are able to bring in from home to add to the potion and you could physically act out making the potion with you class.

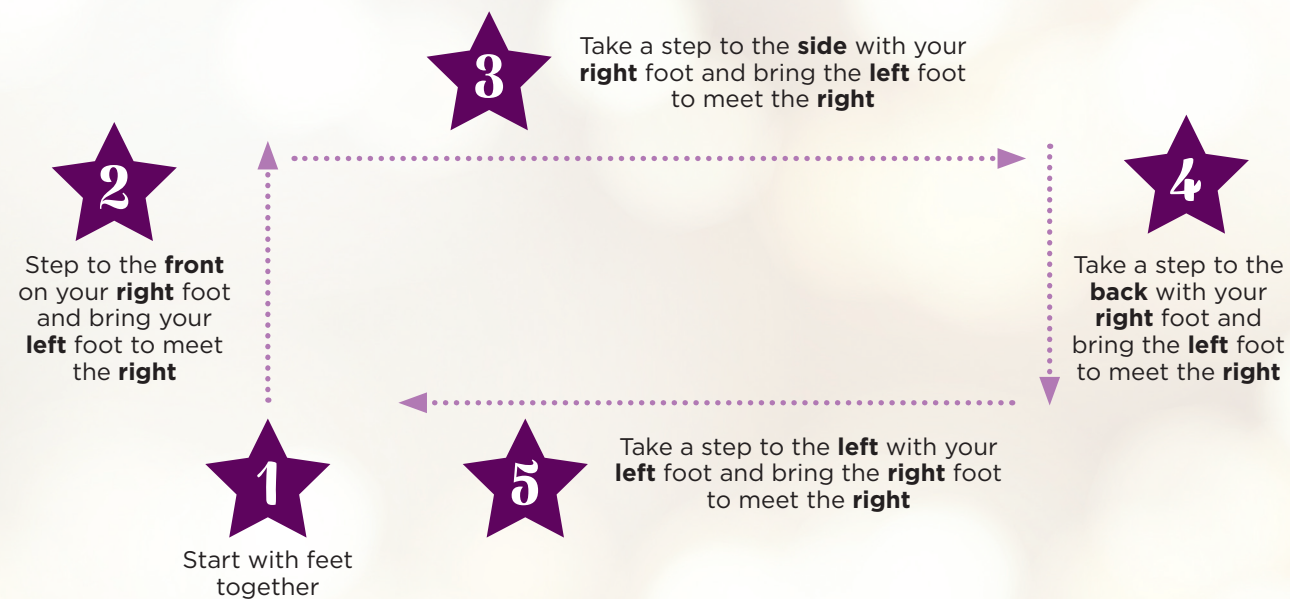
## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Creative thinking
- Creative writing
- Confidence
- Speaking & Listening
- Presentation
- Imagination





# WE SHALL GO TO THE *Ball*



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ CO-ORDINATION
- ★ POSTURE & POSITIONING
- ★ PARTNER WORK
- ★ SPACIAL AWARENESS
- ★ MULTI-TASKING
- ★ STAMINA
- ★ RHYTHM

## TEACHING TIP

Alternate between demonstrating the steps and movements between having your back to the learners and by facing them (mirroring - when they move their right you move your left etc). This will enable your learners to see your positioning from both sides and will support their accuracy of positioning.

## ACTIVITY

In several pantomime stories, there is a party which is often in the form of a ball. Use the steps below to teach your learners some basic steps so you can create your own royal ball.

### STEP 1

Using an open space such as your school hall or playground, ask all of your learners to find a space (not close to anyone) facing you.

### STEP 2

Using the diagram above talk your learners through the basic steps.

### STEP 3

Once you have been over the steps enough times for your learners to feel confident doing it, ask your learners to join the movement together and add fluidity. Also, add some waltz music for the learners to keep in time with.

### STEP 4

Now that your learners feel confident with the steps, ask them to put their arms in "hold". This would mean putting one arm out to the side and one arm curved inwards bringing the hand in line with the centre of the chest but still keeping the space between the hand and the chest as though you are resetting it on a partner's shoulder.

### STEP 5

Once your learners have mastered the "hold", now ask them to keep their arms in their position as well as doing the steps we learned earlier.

# Walk THIS WAY



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ PROBLEM SOLVING
- ★ TEAM WORK
- ★ STUDENT LED WORK
- ★ CREATIVE THINKING
- ★ MOVEMENT
- ★ CHARACTERISATION

## TEACHING TIP

You could encourage more student-led learning by asking for volunteers from the class to choose or call out the flash cards.

## ACTIVITY

This activity is to encourage your learners to confidently physicalise different panto characters using their bodies and traveling around the space.

### STEP 1

Using the flash cards provided, get your learners to discuss in small groups what words they would use to describe each character.

### STEP 2

Ask each small group to feedback to the whole group one of the words they came up with for each character on the flash cards.

### STEP 3

Ask the groups to now think of a movement, gesture and stance that represents the word that they have come up with.

### STEP 4

Ask your learners to move around the room with their usual everyday walk and when you call out the characters on the flash cards they have to move around the space using the physicalities that they came up with. Keep doing this until you have called out each character several times.





# MAKE A Wish

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ MIME
- ★ CREATIVE THINKING
- ★ MOVEMENT
- ★ CHARACTERISATION
- ★ INDEPENDENT THINKING
- ★ COMMUNICATION

## TEACHING TIP

Once the learners understand the game, you could split the group into smaller groups and have multiple games going on at the same time in order to make sure that all learners have more of a chance of getting a turn and it may also feel less exposing. To add a layer of challenge, the game can be adapted so that the sorcerer only has one guess.



## ACTIVITY

Let's imagine that we are entering a magical cave and as we reach the deepest point which is covered with riches, we find a magic wand.

### STEP 1

Ask all your learners to sit at one end of a space. One volunteer will need to sit facing the rest of the group and they will be the sorcerer.

### STEP 2

Place a magic wand or another "magic" item in front of the sorcerer (this can be any object) and explain to your learners that the object is magic and possesses a sorcerer who lives inside the object.

### STEP 3

All learners will need to think of something they would like to wish for and how they can mime their wish. When they have thought of their wish they will come up one at a time when chosen by a teacher/adult in the room and move the magic wand/object and say "Oh sorcerer, Oh sorcerer please make my wish come true" - all the other learners should create an atmosphere by using their hands to create a drumroll. They will then put down the wand/object and start acting/miming out their wish.

### STEP 4

The learner who has been selected as the sorcerer will have to stand up and watch the learner who is making the wish whilst they act/mime their wish out for the sorcerer. If the sorcerer guesses what the learner is miming then the sorcerer will say "your wish is my command! Please come through to the land of dreams". The learner will then go and sit at the opposite end of the room. If the Sorcerer is unable to guess correctly after three guesses, the learner will need to sit back down with the rest of the group. The sorcerer then sits back down and waits for the next learner to use the wand/magic object.

# Oh yes it is OH NO IT'S NOT!

## ACTIVITY

This quiz is a team activity and each team will need to work together to answer as many questions correctly as possible.

### STEP 1

Split your group of learners into teams as equally as possible and ask them to come up with a team name that should be related to pantomime.

### STEP 2

The teacher/adult in the room will be the quiz host and read out the questions provided.

### STEP 3

After each question, the quiz host will give the teams some thinking time to decide if the answer is true or false. The thinking time can be decided by the teacher depending on how they feel the learners will best cope.

### STEP 4

The quiz host will then ask each group if they think the answer is true or false. If they think the answer is true, they should answer, Oh yes it is! And if they think the answer is false, they should answer Oh no it's not!



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ TEAMWORK
- ★ SPEAKING & LISTENING
- ★ PROBLEM SOLVING
- ★ MEMORISATION
- ★ CRITICAL THINKING

## TEACHING TIP

If you have an odd number of learners it may be an idea to have one learner support you in being the quiz host.

## QUESTIONS

1. In pantomime, Villains traditionally enter stage left and fairies and fairy godmothers always enter stage right? **True**
2. When a theatre is closed or empty, it is tradition to always leave a light on. **True (A Ghost Light)**
3. A pantomime dame can be played by any gender? **True**
4. Pantomime originates from Spanish street theatre? **False (Italian)**
5. Pantomime gets its name from the style of theater originally being performed without spoken word? **True**
6. A pantomime horse is usually two actors in a costume? **True**
7. Often, pantomimes will feature well known songs that will have some of the words changed to fit with the storyline? **True**
8. Pantomimes are based on traditional tales? **True**
9. Pantomime is only performed around Christmas time? **False**
10. A pantomime audience are expected to sit quietly and listen? **False**



# 12 DAYS OF Panto

In many pantomimes the main characters will perform a comedy version of the Twelve Days of Christmas - often with novelty props.

With your group of learners, create your own version of the Twelve Days of Christmas with each of the 12 days being something different made up by your class.

## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ CREATIVE THINKING
- ★ TEAMWORK
- ★ SINGING
- ★ RHYTHM
- ★ MUSICAL TIMING

## TEACHING TIP

If you are unable to arrange a performance, it may be a fun idea to make a music video where each of the twelve groups are filmed singing their line in different locations around your school. This will then be a nice thing to watch as a class or send home to your learners' families at the end of term.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF PANTO THE THEATRE BROUGHT TO ME;  
 ★ 12 BAGS OF POPCORN ★  
 ★ 11 PANTO PROGRAMMES ★  
 ★ 10 DANCERS DANCING ★  
 ★ 9 SINGERS SINGING ★  
 ★ 8 VILLAINS LAUGHING ★  
 ★ 7 FAIRIES FLYING ★  
 ★ 6 PANTO HORSES ★  
 ★ 5 MAGIC WANDS ★  
 ★ 4 SILLY JOKES ★  
 ★ 3 HENCHMEN ★  
 ★ 2 PANTO DAMES ★  
 ★ & A BEANSTALK WITH A THOUSAND LEAVES ★

## ACTIVITY

Follow the steps below to create your own version of the well known festive song.

### STEP 1

Split your learners into twelve groups as evenly as possible.

### STEP 2

Ask each group to think of something to do with pantomime, winter, the festive season or popular things from children's pop culture.

### STEP 3

Give each group a number between one and twelve and that will be the day number from the 12 days of Christmas that the group will represent.

### STEP 4

Whatever each group has chosen in step 2 will need to be paired with their day number. For example if the group chose Beanstalk in step 2 and their day number was 3; their line of the song would be "three Beanstalks growing". Each group will need to make sure that what they have chosen in step two fits with the syllables for their line of the song.

### STEP 5

Depending on how much time you have, your group can either come up with a dance move, to accompany their part or create a poster to hold up when performing the song. If possible a prop to accompany each line of the song would also enhance the performance.

### STEP 6

Get your learners to rehearse the song in order, ready for a performance.

### STEP 7

Arrange a performance. This can maybe be done in a festive assembly at the end of term or in a class setting where the learners perform to each other.

# Comedy CORNER

Slapstick comedy is an important component of a pantomime. This could be exaggerated falling over, characters bumping into each other on stage and many other scenarios.



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ TEAMWORK
- ★ RESEARCH
- ★ DEVISING
- ★ PERFORMING
- ★ MIME

## TEACHING TIP

To save time and to support all learners, it may be easier to pre-prepare your scenarios and have them ready on paper that you are able to give to your groups for them to devise their piece around.

## ACTIVITY

### STEP 1

Ask your learners to research slapstick comedy. This can also be done as a class.

### STEP 2

Split your class into small groups and get them to come up with a funny scenario that they can devise a small slapstick comedy scene to.

### STEP 3

They should rehearse their scenario and perform to the class.

### STEP 4

This time the groups should come up with a different scenario and the challenge is they are not allowed to use words this time around, it must all be done through mime and see if the rest of the class/audience can guess the scenario.



# MASK Charade

Pantomime originated in Italy; Commedia dell'Arte, a 16th-century Italian entertainment. In addition to comedy, mime, dance, music and tricks, the performers would also wear vibrant masks to represent the various characters in their performance.



## SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- ★ CREATIVE THINKING
- ★ IMAGINATION
- ★ PROJECT PLANNING
- ★ CHARACTERISATION

## TEACHING TIP

Once all of your learners have finished making their masks, it may be a nice idea to have a parade. In addition you could stimulate your learners minds more but getting them to think about their own soundtrack or piece of music their character would walk onto the parade to?



Dame

Princess

Villain

Hero

Comic

## ACTIVITY

### STEP 1

Pick one of the characters from the images above to base your mask on

### STEP 2

Draft some ideas on a piece of scrap paper, ready to design your mask based on the character you have chosen. Think about the emotion that your mark will have – Angry, Sad, Happy, Shocked.

### STEP 3

When designing your pantomime mask, remember that bigger is better, so go big and bold. Use lots of bright colours and other items in addition to paint and coloured pencils, such as materials, glitter and accessories.

### STEP 4

Once your mask is finished start bringing it to life by thinking about how they would move and gesture.

# WHO'S BEHIND You?

A great game to take in turns as a whole class or in smaller groups!



### STEP 1

You will need two volunteers.

### STEP 2

One of the volunteers will need to be the guesser and will need to sit on a chair facing the rest of the class. The other will be the mystery panto character.

### STEP 3

The learner who is the mystery panto character will need to choose a panto character and write the character's name down in block capitals on a piece of paper. They will then stand behind the guesser and hold up the piece of paper for the rest of the class to see.

### STEP 4

When the panto character is in place the rest of the class will signal to the guesser that it is time to start guessing by calling out in unison: **They're behind you!** The guesser should start asking questions to the class to try and identify the panto character standing behind them. The questions can only require a Yes or No answer and the rest of the class should respond to the questions by either chanting: **Oh Yes it is** for a Yes, and **Oh no it isn't** for a No. When your guesser has guessed correctly who the panto character is, the whole group should again call out: **They're behind you!**





# Activities

Choose a star then follow the path to see if you can finish in the castle!

Using the template below, you can cut out the shape of a dress or draw/add materials on top to create your amazing costume!



Printable activities available at [www.pantomime.com/education](http://www.pantomime.com/education)







**CROSSROADS**  
PANTOMIMES