

WENDY & PETER PAN

AN EDUCATION PACK

By Ella Hickson

ABOUT THIS PACK

This Pack has been written and created by Ella Hickson, writer of *Wendy and Peter Pan*. This exciting new production, directed by Jonathan Munby, will open in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford upon Avon on 10 December and run until 2 March.

Throughout this pack Ella explains how she has taken this classic children's story and transformed it into a new stage play, offering you activities and strategies to inspire your students' own writing. The pack is ideal for supporting KS2-3 pupils, but many of the activities can be adapted for other age groups.

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These symbols are used throughout the pack:



READ

Notes from the production, background info or extracts



ACTIVITY

A classroom or open space activity



WRITE

A writing activity



RESEARCH

Online Research opportunities

A NOTE FROM THE WRITER

Dear teachers and students - I hope you enjoy working through this pack as much as we have enjoyed working on 'Wendy and Peter Pan'. J.M Barrie's tale is such a wonderful classic and I have loved every minute of adapting it for today's audience. This pack will show you some of the exercises and approaches I used to adapt a classic tale into a modern play.

THE ORIGINAL STORY

Peter Pan is the well-known children's story written by J.M Barrie. Barrie originally wrote the story as a play that opened in London in 1904. He then went on to develop the story into a book, 'Peter Pan and Wendy', that was published in 1911 following the success of the play. Peter, 'the boy who wouldn't grow up', was based on Peter Llewelyn Davies, one of five Llewelyn Davies brothers, all of whom Barrie met daily to play with in Kensington Gardens. The story of Peter Pan grew from the games they played and it became a coping mechanism for the boys when their mother and father passed away in 1907 and 1910.

The original story tells the tale of The Darling Family – Wendy, John and Michael – who fly to Neverland with Peter Pan. There they meet the Lost Boys who live with Peter and they fight Captain Hook and his crew of horrible pirates. Whilst in Neverland, Wendy pretends to be mother to the Lost Boys and she falls for Peter Pan but, as the story comes to an end, Wendy returns home asking Peter to join her. Peter refuses, claiming that he always wants to be a little boy and to have fun.

ADAPTING THE STORY



MY APPROACH

When it came to doing an adaptation of the story I re-read the original texts and made some decisions:

- Which moments in the story did I definitely want to keep? I created a list of these moments and I called this 'a story bible'.
- Whose story was it? I wanted to look at the story from Wendy's perspective, how would the story be different?
- What did I think the story was *about*? Were there particular themes that I wanted to focus on? What did I want to say to the audience?

A full synopsis of the story is available at <http://www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/wendy-and-peter-pan/> where you can see what happens in this version.



ACTIVITY 1: TEN MOMENTS

Ask students to complete the following activity, based on the version of Peter Pan that they know best.

- Invite pupils to select the ten most important moments in the story, each one can be no more than one line long.
- Discuss with them as a group whether they tell the whole story in just these bits? Which moment, or moments, did they have to leave out?



ACTIVITY 2: ELEVATOR PITCH

In Pairs, ask students to imagine they are in a lift with a very exciting big movie producer who they want to produce their new film of Peter Pan. However, they only have the time between floors to sell him their 'big idea'. This gives them less than one minute to pitch the whole story of Peter Pan to the producer. Listen to some examples of their pitches and then look at the following questions:

- What does this exercise tell you about the most important parts of the story?
- Which character did you mention first?
- What did you decide that the story was about?

CREATING CHARACTERS



HOW TO MAKE A HERO

I decided that I wanted to re-tell the story of Peter Pan from Wendy Darling's perspective. In the original story Wendy gets a rather rough time – every girl in the story tries to kill her and she spends most of her time in 'The Home under the Ground' scene trying to be mother whilst the boys get to play. I wanted to make Wendy into the hero of the story.

In the original text Wendy is a little bit precious and her only want is to put up curtains, play mother and get Peter to marry her. I wanted to make Wendy a little bit tougher and more likeable. I used a 'Rule of Writing' by Kurt Vonnegut to help me –

"Be a sadist. No matter how sweet or innocent your leading characters, make awful things happen to them-in order that the reader may see what they are made of."



ACTIVITY 3: WENDY'S SPEECH

- Invite students to look at Wendy's speech at the beginning of Act One: Scene Four in the Resource Materials.
- Discuss with students what they think Wendy wants. What challenges do you think Wendy will have to overcome to get what she wants? Why do you think the text is so broken up with dashes? Who do you think Wendy is talking to?
- Provide students with the Home under the Ground Scene – Act Two: Scene Four – in the Resource Materials.
- In Pairs, ask students to decide what challenges Wendy faces in this scene. How many times does she try to ask for help?
- Ask pairs to write a list of the reasons that the Lost Boys don't help her.

- Discuss the reasons they have found and ask them: what are the different ways that Wendy shows courage in this scene? What are the different tactics that Wendy uses to try and get what she wants?
- Why do you think Wendy leaves The Home under the Ground?



ACTIVITY 4: FACING YOUR FEARS

Look at the 'Cloud Scene' in the Resource Materials as a group.

- Organise students into pairs.
- Ask each pair to create a short scene where one person is facing a big fear and the other person is encouraging them to over-come this fear. The scene should last no more than 30 seconds.
- Encourage each pair to reflect on the following:
 - Where are they in their scene?
 - What has happened just previous to the moment in their scene?
 - What exactly is the person afraid of in their scene?
- Ask students to create an action to add into their short scene that is connected to triumphing over the fear. It could be jumping off something, leaping over an object, picking something up, running, or anything they feel shows their success.
- Encourage students to practice staging their own moment of jumping off the cloud – facing their biggest fear and triumphing over it, using the action they have devised.
- Reflect with students on the following:
 - How did it feel to overcome their fear?
 - Did they need a happy thought to make them braver?
 - If they had to pick just one happy thought what would it be?
 - Why does that happy thought make them braver?



HOW TO MAKE A VILLAIN

Every good villain has a fatal flaw that they can't over-come. For example, Macbeth becomes villainous because he can't control his ambition. Hook, the villain in this story, is very jealous of Peter's youth; it is this jealousy that creates a bitter hatred in him that he can't control.

"Look, he's sleeping. His precious medicine from mummy right by his side. [HOOK holds up the medicine and a bottle with skull and cross-bones from which he takes three vile yellow drops] Night night – Peter Pa- [PETER moans in his sleeps, HOOK freezes – stares at the boy] What lurks in that empty seeming head? [HOOK bends close] I don't want your life, your charm – I don't even want your youth. I want your time, Peter. Give me your time. Time again – time to make mistakes, time to be unsure – a time when errors were lessons not failures. When things could still turn out all right; oh Peter – you lucky thing – take me back to endlessness...take me back to a time before I was aware of time."



ACTIVITY 5: CREATING THE INTERIOR OF A VILLAIN

- Organise students into small teams and introduce the idea that they will build a character together.
- Ask each team to pick a character trait from the following list: envy, greed, dishonesty, avarice, cruelty, ambition, pride.
- Invite students to imagine that their 'villain' has an excess of that character trait and create a map of that character, writing down:
 - One thing their character wants more than anything else.
 - What their character is most afraid of.
 - A specific event in their character's life that made them so envious, greedy, dishonest.
- Challenge students to write a diary entry from their character's perspective about this event in their life, thinking about the impact it has on them and why.
- Ask students to imagine that their character is trying to achieve the thing that they want. Then decide on three 'points of action' where someone is stopping their character from getting what they want. What are these obstacles? What does your character *do* to this other person as a punishment for getting in their way?



ACTIVITY 6: CREATING THE EXTERIOR OF A VILLAIN

"HOOK, is an ageing cowboy, beaten chaps, a velvet waistcoat, frock-coat - curls beneath a leather Stetson, spurred boots. You can tell he was incredible in his prime, but now - heavily tanned with yellow teeth - his thin lips pucker around his double cigar holder. There is something of an ageing Country star, a past-it boozier, a jaded cowboy."

- Ask the students to form a circle - collect some pieces of costume and props for them to choose from - hats, swords, eye-patches, coats etc. - the more ridiculous and extraordinary the better.
- Explain that, having created the interior world of their villain, they are now going to try to build the exterior appearance of their villain.
- Ask each pupil to decide which object best represents their character's fatal flaw.
- Reflect with pupils on whether the experience that their character had when they were younger, that created their fatal flaw, left them with a physical problem - a limp? A stutter? A scar?
- Ask students how their interior would show itself in their character's movement. Are they slow or quick? Are they hunched or do they stand tall? Are they tactile with others or closed off? Invite them to work on a simple action - making a cup of tea, for example - and encourage them to work closely on every movement involved. How do their actions show their character's interior?
- Invite students to select an outfit for their villain. How would they dress themselves? Do they need to look authoritative? Do they need to be able to fight in their outfit? How often do they wash? Is this a particular outfit for a particular purpose?

- Using the props, and movements they have created – work up to staging the three points of action where your villain faces an opponent that you decided on in the previous exercise.

THE THEME OF DEATH



WHY IS DEATH IMPORTANT?

"PETER: To die will be an awfully big adventure."

Barrie wrote the original play of Peter Pan as a coping mechanism for the five Llewelyn Davies boys who had just lost their mother and their father. Never Land was constructed as an escape route, a world of eternal youth where death is not painful or sad but instead 'an awfully big adventure'. Peter's new mythology of what happens to lost boys when they die – is something that Wendy has created for herself to help understand the loss of her brother.

"PETER: When a boy gets lost, I take him up into the night sky and he becomes the newest smallest star...the reason the stars shine is because each star is a lost boy reflecting his mother's tears as she looks up into the night wishing him back. That's why they look like they are made of water...the lost boys get to watch over their old families for a while and see that they are ok...At the very first moment that every member of the family has been truly happy again, for just one moment – that's all it takes, one second of pure happy, and the lost boy is released – he lands on Never Land and he is free to play – forever."



VICTORIAN MOURNING RITUALS

- Encourage students to complete some research into Victorian mourning rituals. How long did families usually mourn for a lost child? What did the funerals look like? How long would the family dress in mourning clothes and what did they look like?
- Look at the above description that Peter offers Wendy for what has happened to her young brother, a 'lost' boy. Within our society, different religions and cultures have different ways of explaining death and helping people to deal with it. Ask students to explore some of these explanations. How do these theories help people deal with their loss?



ACTIVITY 7: CREATING YOUR OWN MYTH

- In pairs or small groups, ask pupils to create their own birth or death myth including the following:
 - A character that carries the person/soul from the living world to the next world.
 - A place where the soul gets stuck between one world and the next.
 - A challenge that the family or a friend of the soul must complete before the soul is released.
 - The arrival of the soul in the new land. How does this make the soul feel? How has the soul changed? How has the family of the soul changed?
- See if you can find an animal that works as a symbol or a metaphor for your birth or death myth. Draw this animal and explain how it relates to your myth.

THE THEME OF GIRLS

Barrie's approach to the female characters in his story is not the most generous or understanding, in fact he goes so far as to apologise to one of the Llewelyn Davies boys that he had to include girls at all but reassures him that they all come to a sticky end. Every girl in the story tries to kill Wendy out of jealousy and Peter leaves her waiting by the window year after year as he blithely forgets that he promised to return for her... poor old Wendy!

'She did not yet know that Tink hated her with the fierce hatred of a very woman' – Peter Pan, J.M. Barrie.

In my adaptation of the story I really wanted to change the idea that girls have to be jealous of each other and compete for the attentions of a boy. I also noticed that this theme cropped up a lot in other fairy stories.



INVESTIGATING FAIRY STORIES

Ask students to investigate the following fairy stories –

- Snow White
- Cinderella
- The Little Mermaid

As they research, encourage pupils to consider the following questions about these stories:

- How do the women in these stories treat each other?
- Why do they treat each other this way?

- How would the stories be different if the women in these stories behaved differently toward one another?



ACTIVITY 8: WENDY'S SPEECH TO TINK AND TIGER LILY

- Look at 'Wendy's Speech To Tink and Tiger Lily' in the Resource Materials and try to answer the following questions:
 - Why is Wendy angry with the other two girls?
 - What is she suggesting as a new plan of action?
 - Why does she think that the other girls don't like her?
 - Why have the other girls on the island tried to kill Wendy?
 - If you were Tink or Tiger Lily would you join Wendy on her mission?
- Ask pupils to create a short performance of Wendy's speech in pairs.
- Invite two or three pairs to deliver their version of the speech to the group – can you convince them to join you on your mission?



THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT

In this version of Peter Pan Mr. Darling thinks Mrs. Darling has run off to join The Suffragette movement. Encourage pupils to carry out some research into this movement and try to answer the following questions:

- What was The Suffragette Movement?
- When was it at its most active in London?
- Who was Emmeline Pankhurst?
- How do you think someone like Mrs. Darling would have felt about suffragettes?
- Can you find any anti-Suffragette posters or slogans? Why do you think people were against The Suffragettes?

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RESOURCES

ACT 1 SCENE 4 EXTRACT – WENDY'S SPEECH

[In the nursery, WENDY who has been listening to her parents at the door – takes the nightlight, sets it on the ground]

WENDY:

[half whisper, half prayer] I know I shouldn't complain, and I know it will get better in time but I am trying so hard – and I just can't – keep.... pfff *[trying not to cry]* – look, Tom if you're there? If you're out there – please, help me – please help it get better – because I – I – John is so angry he's broken three trains and Michael gets so nervous that he can't get his words out at school and mother and father...don't laugh, ever anymore *[beat]* and I don't know how to...how to...

ACT 2 SCENE 3 EXTRACT – THE HOME UNDER THE GROUND

MICHAEL: Hey – Wendy! You're here, isn't it amazing!

WENDY: Well – yes – it is – just, Peter do you think we might make a plan - to find Tom?

PETER: You don't really plan adventures, you just/

WENDY: /Maybe we could plan this one, though? Maybe?

PETER: Three hundred and twenty eight pirates – never had a plan.

WENDY: Ok - well, as mother I say we have to make a plan.

PETER: But it's playtime.

WENDY: It's plantime.

PETER: But I'm father – and I say we can't make a plan unless I say so.

WENDY: As mother – I tell you, father – to say that we *are* going to make a plan.

PETER: I haven't had any pie.

WENDY: What?

PETER: Slightly says that when a mother wants a father to do something that he doesn't want to do she cooks a pie.

WENDY: No Peter that's not quite right that's/

PETER: /That's what Slightly said and if Slightly said it then/
[PETER *leaps off to something new*. WENDY *turns, furious and strides over to SLIGHTLY*. SLIGHTLY *is bent over with his head down a fishing hole*]

WENDY: Slightly? Slightly!

SLIGHTLY: Sorry Wendy – I'm a bit – busy – I –

WENDY: Slightly will you please tell Peter that/

CURLY: Mother! There is a hole in my sock!

WENDY: Yes – one minute.
[SLIGHTLY *pulls his head out of the hole – he's wielding two sticks*]

SLIGHTLY: How can I be of help to you mother?
[WENDY *winces, her hand to her nose and backs off*]

WENDY: What is that?

SLIGHTLY: Do you want to play? I'm playing poo sticks.

WENDY: Slightly that's not what pooh sticks is - oh, oh –
[SLIGHTLY *disappears back down the hole*]

WENDY: Peter! Peter!
[WENDY *turns back and sees PETER playing and laughing with TINK, she feels too threatened to get involved. She spots MICHAEL in his botanical laboratory who is explaining something very smart to TOOTLES*]

WENDY: Michael – Michael? Do you know what they're laughing about/

MICHAEL: /If we take this flower of division magnoliophyta and we add it's nectar to the glow worm compound/

WENDY: /Michael/

MICHAEL: /One moment Wendy - this is very precise work/

WENDY: /No - look, there's no time for games - I need, we have to find/

MICHAEL: /Um - Games? Actually - I think you'll find that this is incredibly important botanical research/

TOOTLES: Michael - should I keep adding?

WENDY: It's mud - mostly Michael - it's not really/
[WENDY *picks up a jar with a sleeping fairy in it*]

MICHAEL: /No -a - please don't touch - they're very delicate and chubby girl fingers are not [WENDY *picks up a lantern with a fairy in the bottom of it*]-

TOOTLES: Michael how much is enough?

WENDY: It's a fairy. There are hundreds of fairies.

MICHAEL: She's under controlled conditions.

WENDY: She's drunk and she's smoking a pipe.

TOOTLES: Michael it's getting a bit bubbly.

MICHAEL: Give it back.

WENDY: Finding Tom is more important.

TOOTLES: Michael?

MICHAEL: Tootles calls me Professor - It wouldn't hurt to have a little of the same respect from my own flesh and/

TOOTLES: Michael?

WENDY: He just called you Michael.

MICHAEL: Give me back my botany!

WENDY: Not until you agree to help me!
[*The experiment that TOOTLES is looking after explodes everywhere*]

MICHAEL: It's ruined!

WENDY: Michael - listen to me.

MICHAEL: I'll never get the Nobel Prize now.

WENDY: Michael!

MICHAEL: All my work!

WENDY: Oh for Pete's sake -

PETER: Me?

WENDY: No - no - but actually yes, Peter - look please come down here.
[PETER *moves as if to go down - TINK makes a big under the thumb action. PETER scowls at her and stys where he is.*]

CURLY: Mother, what does it mean when my tummy is rumbling and it hurts a bit?

WENDY: Oh Curly, I'm sorry - it means - it means I should make breakfast.

[The mere sound of the word breakfast and the whole room – without looking up – erupts into 'toast, one eggs – over easy – coffee – no sugar etc]

WENDY: I'll do it in just a second – just Peter, can you stop playing a moment – and/

TINK: /I thought making sure her kids was fed was top of the list for a good mother?

WENDY: *[red faced and furious]* Why don't you try and be mother hm?

TINK: I'm sorry – I didn't hear that – do come a bit closer. *[WENDY marches towards TINK, one foot disappears down a fishing hole, TINK finds it hilarious]* Oop careful – fishing hole! *[WENDY is furious – she pulls her wet foot out the hole and leans on a rock – she burns her hand]* Oo – easy there– firefly! *[TINK bursts into laughter once more]* 'Cor wreck and ruin – I reckon mum's been on the gin again.

WENDY: I thought you were only big when you were full of feeling? You seem to be rather large all the time.

TINK: You got a bit a pondweed on your face babe.

WENDY: Ugh!

TINK: Delighted– by the way – I'm brim-full of bleedin' delighted!

[TINK grins at WENDY]

[Another tug at WENDY's dress]

CURLY: You look a bit angry mother, does cooking breakfast with me and being in the home with your children make you angry?

WENDY: It's quite hard to find Tom, be mother and have fun all at the same time!

JOHN: Any news on that breakfast Wendy?

WENDY: Right – breakfast – make breakfast, be fun and find..Curly – let's make breakfast!

CURLY: I been trying see – *[CURLY lifts up a dubious looking saucepan]* Worms and custard – but I think it curdled, which is odd because custard is usually my specialty.

[WENDY looks and nearly gags]

WENDY: How about we make some bacon – just - as well – just – in case.

CURLY: Oh yes! Oh yes! Lovely! Oh mother – you are the best! I am so – so glad of you!

[CURLY picks WENDY up and spins her round, WENDY finally seems a little happy – and gets in the spirit – just enough to suggest]

WENDY: Maybe we could even make a game of bacon?

[CURLY drops WENDY immediately and looks very grave]

CURLY: No Wendy, bacon is serious, very seriously yummy and I don't think anyone should make a game of it..not even mothers.

ACT 4 SCENE 1 EXTRACT – THE CLOUD SCENE

- PETER:** When a boy gets lost, I take him up into the night sky and he becomes the newest smallest star. Look – like that one, just there.
- WENDY:** It's tiny.
- PETER:** The reason the stars shine is because each star is a lost boy reflecting his mother's tears as she looks up into the night wishing him back. That's why they look like they are made of water.
- WENDY:** But that's so sad and the stars are so beautiful.
- PETER:** It's not really sad – the lost boys get to watch over their old families for a while and see that they are ok.
- WENDY:** But they're stuck, they can't get down. How Peter? Please tell me how they are released. I so want to see Tom again, and mother and father will be so/
- PETER:** At the very first moment that every member of the family has been truly happy again, for just one moment – that's all it takes, one second of pure happy, and the lost boy is released – he lands on Never Land and he is free to play – forever.
- WENDY:** But I don't want to forget him. I love him.
- PETER:** You don't forget the boy; you just forget to be sad; just for a moment.
- [Pause]
- WENDY:** But I've been trying – I've been trying so hard to forget but I'm – I'm tired Peter. I feel like I've been sad for such a long time...and I can't seem to
- PETER:** That's just it – you're trying and if you try to forget well...That's why I couldn't tell you that forgetting was what you had to do – because if you knew, well then you'd try – you'd try to forget – and you see if a person tries to forget it only makes them remember twice as hard and they get stuck
- WENDY:** No – Peter! You shouldn't have told me! Now I'll just try and try and never forget and Tom will stay stuck and
- PETER:** Just one happy thought – pure happy.
- [WENDY stops panicking, she looks at PETER, she then looks out at the night and from somewhere deep inside her she pulls the strongest bit of fight that she's ever found. WENDY stands – puts both feet on the edge of the cloud...]
- WENDY:** I am Wendy Darling. I am brave and I am strong and I am going on an adventure.

ACT 3 SCENE 4 EXTRACT – WENDY'S SPEECH TO TINK AND TIGER LILY

WENDY:

No one's going anywhere. I've had it with this island. Every single girl I've met has tried to kill me; do you know how that makes me feel? Tink, you've never liked me and I've not done anything to you ever. And Tiger Lily just get over the lone-ranger thing – you might be able to do it on your own but isn't it just...better, to have some help? I don't get it – I don't get why the boys get to be friends and have fun and – but we – we have to be against each other. And if it's all because of – him – well – well that – that's a waste...because I promise you – he isn't not being friends or not having fun because of us, is he? And the truth is – I would love to fight like you, or be all - [she makes a gesture an a noise that indicates grr and great and bolshy and brilliant] – like you, I – actually – think you're both – quite...I'd like to be like you. So here's what's going to happen – we're going to be a team. We're going to go to that pirate ship, we're going to kick some pirate – bum – and we're going to find my little brother and I – I – will be Captain. Who's with me?