

Create a bear

The Winter's Tale contains the memorable stage direction '*Exit, pursued by a bear*'. The character being pursued (chased) is Antigonus, who has been ordered to abandon the baby princess, Perdita. For over 400 years directors have needed to think about how they can create a bear to chase Antigonus away!

It's possible that a real bear was used when the play was first performed at the Globe Theatre in 1611, as the theatre was close to the city's bear-baiting pits. It is more likely that a real bear skin was used by the company to trick the audience into thinking it was real!

David Farr's production started in a grand room with vast shelves filled with books. Halfway through the play the bookshelves fall, and the bear was created out of the pages from the tumbling books.



Antigonus (David Rueben) is chased by the bear in David Farr's 2009 production of *The Winter's Tale*. Photo by Alessandro Evangelista © RSC

ACTIVITY

Your challenge is to create a bear using materials that you can find at home.

Things to consider:

- Is your bear going to be realistic or abstract?
- What different textures of material can you find to make your bear?
- What colour will your bear be?
- Is your bear going to be scary?
- How might your bear move across the stage?

Younger children may want to draw an outline of a bear and then stick on small swatches of different materials to fill the outline, like a collage. You could also add notes about how the bear might move or sound.

Those who wish to challenge themselves more, may wish to make a 3D bear from the materials they can find. Be as imaginative as you can!

You can also consider other ways you might create a bear, such as video, shadow, or a soundscape.