



The Gruffalo's Child © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 2004 - Macmillan Children's Books

THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD

Education Pack



West Wilma

Lond

What's Good

Time

The Scot

Follow-up activities (3-5 year olds)

This production of The Gruffalo's Child uses a variety of physical theatre techniques to create lots of different characters with three actors and a minimal set. The following ideas aim to encourage children to think imaginatively about the story that they have seen.

Monster Pics

'The Big Bad Mouse is terribly strong.
His scaly tail is terribly long...'

In the show, the Gruffalo's child describes the Big Bad Mouse to all three predators. Ask the children to draw pictures of their own invented monsters (with labels if applicable).

Sounds Good

Using the pictures that the children have created, ask the class to create a monster noise for each picture. Can they create very different sounds or do all monsters sound the same?

Do the same for other characters in the story – what noises do foxes, owls, snakes and mice make?

Where did you get that hat?

In the play, the animals are suggested by different costumes. To simplify this, ask the children what kind of hats specific animals would wear. Can they make them out of card and felt tip pens?

Follow-up activities (5-7 year olds)

Thinking in pictures

To get things moving, split the students into two groups and, as a team game, give them a variety of 'situations' that they have to portray in a 'photograph'. The teams have 5 seconds to create each picture and the best picture wins a point. Sample situations are: climbing, swimming, tea party, space, the zoo.

Move on to places and situations from *The Gruffalo's Child*, perhaps using the deep dark wood, the owl's nest, the fox meets the mouse, etc. This will allow students to think about how to create a 'story' visually, on the stage.



A person in a Gruffalo costume, featuring a large, shaggy brown body and a long, striped tail, is holding a long, thin stick. The background is dark with some vertical elements resembling tree trunks.

Telling tales

For The Gruffalo's Child, we used a picture-book as our starting point – but sometimes we start with nothing. Try coming up with your own story to act out. Going round the class ask each student to tell one word of a story. For example:

Student 1: There

Student 2: was

Student 3: a

Student 4: big

Student 5: green

Student 6: giant

Student 7: who

Student 8: went

Student 9: to

Student 10: buy

Student 11: a hundred

Student 12: sausages...

... and so on.

Once everyone has added a word, split the class into groups of five or six and tell them that they have five minutes to show the other group their version of the story. See what they come up with! It will be interesting to see how different their renditions of the same story get created.



Looking good

How can we make a character come alive on stage? How do you determine the way that a character stands, moves and speaks? Ask two students (A and B) to stand in front of the class. Ask a third and fourth student to manipulate their arms and legs and faces, moving them from a neutral position into a character. Perhaps these characters stoop, or lean back, or have their head held high. Ask Student A and B to try to create a voice to match their new positions. Would the character have a squeaky or a low voice? How fast or slow would they speak? Do they have an accent? Try different things. Does a big character need a big voice? What happens if you give a small character a booming voice? Ask the rest of the class to vote on which voice best matches the character.

Using this idea, ask the students to work in pairs to create two characters from pre-prepared character names. Students can create characters based on animals (Mr Hippo, Ms Snail, Mr Rat...) or create from emotions (Ms Cool, Miss Miserable, Terrified Tom etc). Encourage the students to try to use more than their faces to create the character, thinking about how they walk, how fast they can move, how straight/bent their legs are etc. Allow the students to create their own characters in this way and then introduce them to the group.



Whose story is it anyway?

Taking the story of The Gruffalo's Child (or perhaps another tale) discuss what happens if you tell a story from different points of view. For example, what would the story be like if told from the point of view of the fox? Or the Gruffalo? How much would he know about his child's journey into the Deep Dark Wood? Ask different students to tell the story using the first person from different perspectives. Do all the characters have the same version? Are there things that a particular character doesn't know?

Make your own GRUFFALO'S CHILD Jumping Jack

Directions:

1. Colour in or paint the bits of the Gruffalo's Child.
2. Stick it on some card.
3. Carefully cut around the dotted lines.
4. Using a kitchen skewer (ask an adult to help) carefully pierce holes through the circles at the top of the legs and the arms, and through the four circles on the body. (Don't forget the extra holes at the top of the arms and legs, and at the top of the head!).

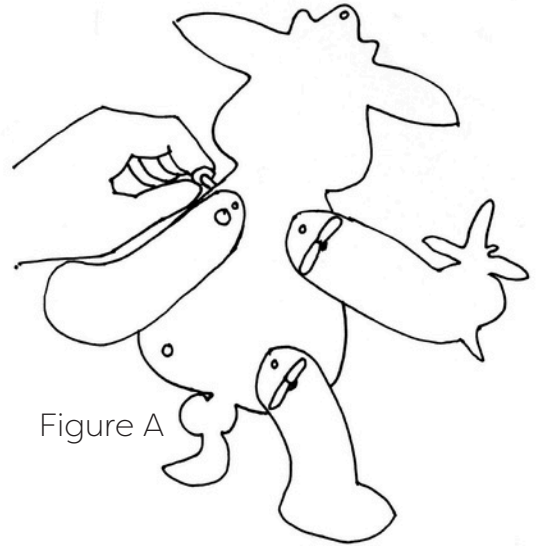


Figure A

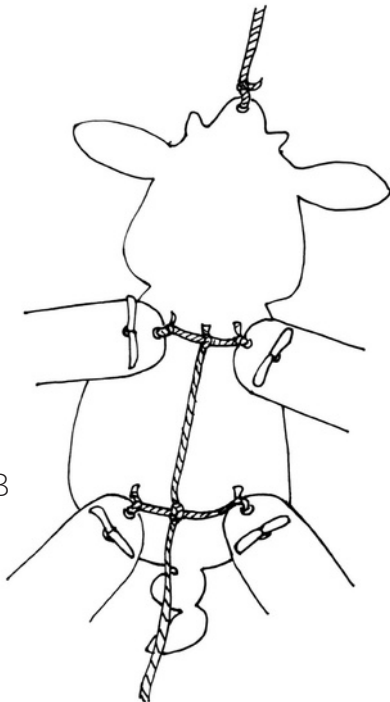


Figure B

5. Attach the legs and arms to the body using brass paper fasteners (see figure A), spreading the fasteners in the back to hold the parts together.
6. Attach a short piece of string to the shoulder holes and hip holes (figure B) with the arms and legs slightly out to the side. Connect the shoulder and hip strings at the centre and leave about 8 inches of string hanging from the bottom.
7. Attach a piece of string to the hole in the Gruffalo's Child's head.

To operate:

Hold the head string in one hand and pull the bottom string to make the arms and legs wave and jump!



