

**POLKA
THEATRE**

World-class theatre
for children

James and the Giant Peach



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Dear Teacher/Parent

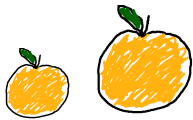
We do hope you enjoyed the show! Here are a few activities for you to do with your children after you have seen the performance. Most of these exercises are drama based and are good for developing speaking and listening skills.

This Teachers Resource Pack has been created in conjunction with Teachers in Training from St Mary's University College, Twickenham.

Key
Stage
1



Key
Stage
2

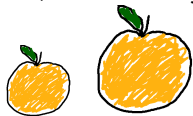


Warm Up Game

Live the life of James for a day. In an empty room, label the opposite sides of the room as Aunt's house and Peach Tree, and the middle as James bedroom. The children must quickly move to the side that has been called. Next, introduce actions that will signal the children to remain on the spot and mime the action. '*Chop the wood*' signals everybody to stop and chop wood on the floor, '*make the tea*' signals everybody to stir the pots, '*clean the garden*' signals everybody to pick up rubbish from the floor, '*Aunt Sponge and Spike is coming*' signals everybody to hold their nose.

Which other actions can your class mime? Think about the other chores James carried out every day for his aunts.

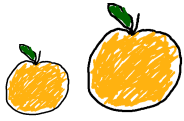
To make the game more difficult, swap over the commands and actions, so for example, *make the tea* signals picking up the rubbish, and *chop the wood* signals holding their nose. Continue playing until those children who have not been caught out, are the only ones left in the game.



Recall the Story

With the whole class, go around in a circle with each child taking it in turns to recap a part of the story. By the time everybody has spoken, the entire story must have been told. Each child may say as much as they remember, try and piece the story in consecutive order.

In smaller groups, ask the class to recall their favourite moments in the story, and create a frozen image of their moments. Continue the exercise by exploring a moment in the story where somebody did a good deed and when somebody did a bad deed, and a moment when James was the most happiest. Include as much detail as possible, the image should capture these moments through the actions of the characters. Each group can take it in turns presenting their images; the rest of the class may decide what the frozen image represents.

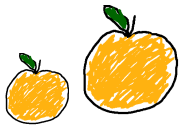


Bring the Insects to Life

In an empty hall, ask the children to walk around the room at a steady pace, changing direction to ensure they have walked to every part of the room. Call out 'freeze' to ensure everybody can remain complete still when the command is called. Repeat the command a few times to establish the routine. Call out a body part, such as fingers, everybody must continue walking but led entirely by their fingers. Continue by using different body parts.

Next call out the name of one insect from the story, the children must freeze and create a pose of this character. Encourage the pupils to use their body and facial expressions to create this insect's unique features. Continue the exercise until all the different insects have been created. Begin to move around the room as one of the insects to greet one another, how will the different insects respond to each other? Split the class into 5 groups, each group will be labelled a different insect. Create a frozen image of the insect using everybody in the group. Think about the different body parts and features that make up this insect. Can this insect move and walk? Encourage the children to think about what their character would say on meeting James for the first time as he enters the peach. A pupil or a teacher may take the role as James and greet the insect for the first time.

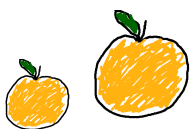
Extend this exercise by allowing the class to question James, asking how he felt about each insect upon meeting them.



Drama Exercise

James friends are unusually large insects, who have all been affected by the magic tiny green things in the bag that James dropped. Consider what these insects might have been like before they found the magic tiny things, upon finding the magic, just after eating them and finally transforming into giant magical insects.

Spread across a room to allow space for the class. Imagine you are an insect before you even knew about the magic tiny things. Think about your size and remember you live in the garden of the aunts' house. Move slowly around the space exploring this world full of new challenges. Next, you discover these magic tiny things, you have no idea what they are or what you are suppose to do with them – how might you feel? After you have finished eating the magic tiny things – are you going to instantly turn into a magical insect or might you feel a little strange? Finally, explore the new and transformed you, a magical large insect, how do you feel? What do you want to do now?



Role Play and Creative Writing

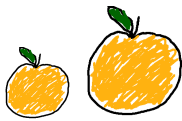
- ***Letter is available at the end of the pack***

Begin by informing the children that you have just received a letter from a boy who needs their help. After reading the letter, ask the children what they think of James

and of his aunts, what words can they use to describe them? How do they feel about the letter and what do they think the boy should do?

Working in 3s, recreate the different moments in James letter. Bring his daily chores to life with frozen images. How do Aunt Spiker and Aunt Sponge react to James when he is doing all the chores? In front of the class, each group will show back their frozen image, ask the children what their character would be feeling in this situation. Ask the rest of the class why the characters feel like this?

Once every group has presented their picture, extend the exercise by discussing why the aunts might be treating James the way they do. Prompt the pupils to each write a letter back to James, suggesting their thoughts on his aunt's behaviour.



Imagination Exercise

Explore the inside of the giant peach. What can you see and hear? What does the peach feel like? Create your own giant peach in groups or as a whole class. How does it feel to be inside? In the story, James and his friends roll into the ocean, what other different and interesting places could the peach have landed? Who or what else may already be living there?

In order to create the scene, think about the different sights and sounds you might see and hear in this situation, what challenges may occur here and how might you overcome them?



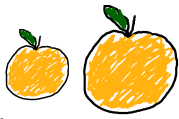
Musical Insects

Split the class into five groups, labelled Earthworm, Spider, Ladybird, Centipede and Grasshopper. In their groups the children can discuss what type of sounds their insect makes. Some research into this may help, explore outside and find some insects, or research information on the internet. Recreate these sounds by using just yourself. You may try clapping, whistling, using your voice or tapping your feet. What other ways can you create a noise?

Next, move onto using musical instruments or use everyday objects such as the top of a bucket or a carrier bag. In fact everything around you can make an interesting sound.

Try mimicking the sound your insect makes when moving around. What noises do they create when communicating to other insects? Experiment with the pace and tempo.

Each group will perform their sounds; the rest of the class may try and determine which insect the sounds signify.



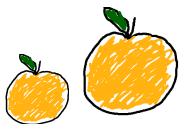
Poem Exercise

The Marvellous Things poem explains what James should do in order to make the magic work. Write your own marvellous poem. What strange and interesting rituals can you invent that will explain how to grow the magic tiny things?

Put them in water
Just before bed
Add ten hairs
From the top of your head
That gets them going
They'll bubble and froth
Then drink down the lot
Trying hard not to cough

Marvellous things
Marvellous things

While you are sleeping
They'll do their thing
When you wake
You'll feel grand as a King
Marvellous things will
Dissolve all the pain
And never will you
Be unhappy again



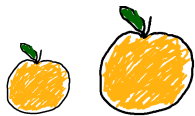
Creative Writing

Ask the children to imagine the giant peach flying in the sky over their school. You may use a parachute to represent the peach, shaking it so that it floats above the children. The peach lands on top of the school building, as a class you go over to look at what has landed and question the situation.

Questioning ideas –

- What has happened?
- What is it?
- Where did it come from?
- How did it get here?
- How did you feel?
- What can you hear?
- Do you think there is anything inside?
- What are we going to do?
- Should it stay?

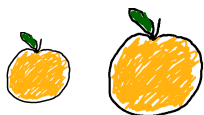
Create your own story headline for your local school newspaper. For example 'Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it's a giant peach!...' Write an article or an account of what happened today at school. How did everybody react? What happened after the giant peach landed?



Improvisation Exercise

Explore what could have happened if James had not dropped the bag of tiny green glowing things. What might he have created? How might he escape from his aunt's house? Be imaginative as possible, the pupils can brainstorm the ideas and explore this using themselves.

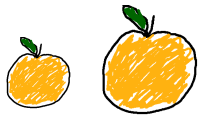
What other possible side effects could the green things have had on anything they came into contact with?



Match the Facts to the Insects



Insect Fact
I have strong hind legs to allow me to jump 20 times the length of my body
Their name means hundred feet
I have four pairs of legs, and I can grow a new leg if they lose one
Most of us have red, orange, or yellow wing covers
This insect has no arms, legs or eyes
I have eight eyes
I can beat my wings 85 times a second when I fly
I am known for my songs, I make them by rubbing my hind legs together, or rubbing my wings together
Did you know I have five hearts
I can be found under stones, logs, bark, in litter and soil.



Test Yourself

N	B	Z	H	W	J	Q	W	E	R	T	Y	U	I	C
A	E	D	S	F	H	W	V	H	S	K	B	D	U	E
D	F	W	M	D	W	K	O	L	R	V	S	O	T	N
F	V	Q	Y	J	G	K	U	R	X	V	E	L	Y	T
B	S	K	V	O	E	K	G	H	M	R	A	I	H	I
F	G	P	W	H	R	A	J	G	H	S	G	A	H	P
C	B	S	H	A	R	K	J	A	K	F	U	S	N	E
B	D	J	F	S	N	C	L	Z	J	K	L	F	K	D
E	V	K	S	G	T	K	A	A	U	Y	L	F	S	E
A	O	J	R	I	V	Y	Q	F	D	N	S	E	N	A
C	N	R	R	H	I	N	O	Q	U	Y	E	J	R	D
H	J	R	C	B	O	Z	J	U	I	P	B	E	Q	A
G	J	E	K	L	L	D	Y	W	Y	R	N	I	E	U
E	Y	B	V	N	I	A	H	J	J	K	S	E	R	N
Y	H	K	I	P	N	S	T	R	O	T	T	E	R	D

1. Where did the peach finish its journey?
2. What animal escaped from the zoo?
3. What animal was used to help the peach to fly?
4. Which instrument did the grasshopper play?
5. What is James' surname?
6. Which insect has more than eight legs?
7. Which animal endangers the peach in the sea?
8. Which insect was used as bait for the seagulls?
9. Where does James remember playing when he was younger?
10. Which insect has a spotty shell

Ramshackle House
Top of the High Hill
Miles away from Home
England

Dear Class,

My Name is James Henry Trotter and I'm in desperate need of some advice. You see my parents died when I was just a boy and I am completely alone apart from my awful aunts. They treat me like a slave! My days are spent cleaning up after them while they sit around watching me work. I work hard but it never seems to please them. In fact they spend their days thinking up awful things to say to me like 'disgusting little worm', 'ungrateful wretch', 'lazy good-for-nothing brute!' which is not fair because I work so hard for them.

On hot days while they rest in the cool shade I have to fetch them drinks and chop wood for the stove. I have to cook and clean for them and I am never allowed to have any fun. I dream of going to the sea or on a picnic and playing with other children, I am so lonely!

I just don't know what to do anymore. I can't understand why my aunts are horrible to me and why they don't let me leave the house or have any happiness. If you could help me by giving me some advice I would be most grateful.

Yours Sincerely,

James Henry Trotter.