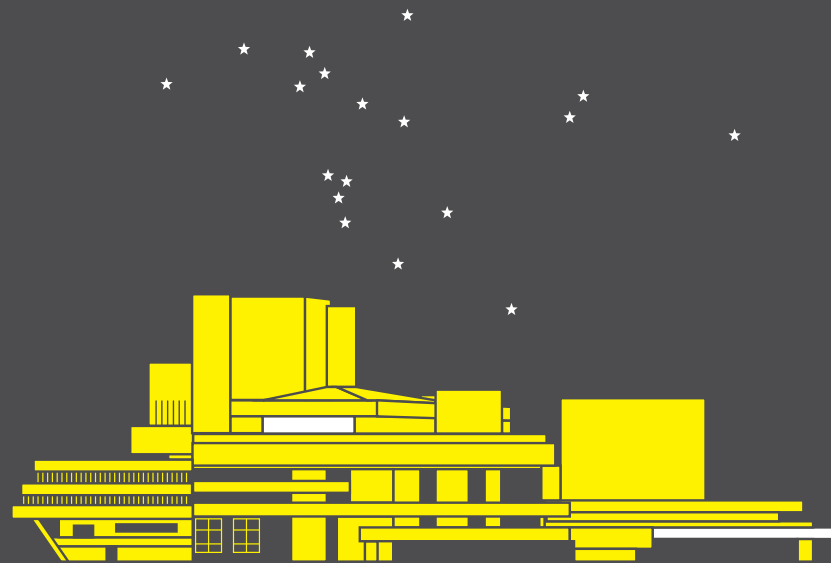


MAYOR OF LONDON

**THE LONDON CURRICULUM
ENGLISH KEY STAGE 3**

THE LONDON LIMELIGHT



THE LONDON CURRICULUM

PLACING LONDON AT THE HEART OF LEARNING

The capital is the home of innovations, events, institutions and great works that have extended the scope of every subject on the school curriculum. London lends itself to learning unlike anywhere else in the world. The London Curriculum aims to bring the national curriculum to life inspired by the city, its people, places and heritage.

To find out about the full range of free resources and events available to London secondary schools at key stage 3 please go to www.london.gov.uk/london-curriculum

English in the London Curriculum

London is one of the most written about cities in the world, has inspired countless authors and poets and has been a centre of innovation in theatre since Elizabethan times. London Curriculum teaching resources aim to support English teachers in helping their students:

- ♦ **DISCOVER** literature inspired by the city or central to the city's literary life
- ♦ **EXPLORE** the city known to the London writer and the London theatres where texts come to life
- ♦ **CONNECT** their learning inside and outside the classroom to develop their own descriptive and creative writing.



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THE LONDON LIMELIGHT OVERVIEW



The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to London's bustling theatre scene, its history, scale and significance today. In discovering the world of London's theatre, students will be study a variety of non-fiction texts, including biography, interviews, speeches and literary reviews. This unit has a particular focus on writing and students will apply their learning to inform their own writing for different purposes, including to inform and to entertain. The units includes a range of suggested opportunities to explore London's theatres, to see a production, tour backstage and meet the people behind the plays.

KEY STAGE 3 NATIONAL CURRICULUM

This unit addresses core requirements of the new key stage 3 national curriculum. It provides specific opportunities for students to:

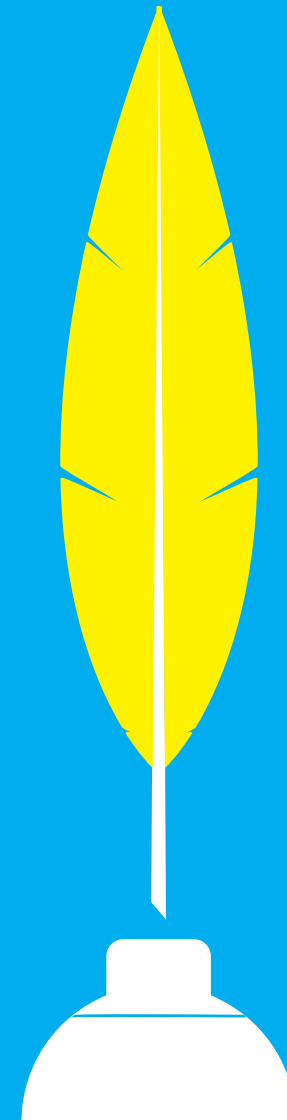
- ◆ Write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information through
 - writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences
 - summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail
- ◆ Speak confidently and effectively, including through:
 - using Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts, including classroom discussion
 - giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point

In meeting some of the requirement of the national curriculum, this teaching unit contributes to its aims for key stage 3 students, which include:

- ◆ read easily, fluently and with good understanding
- ◆ acquire a wide vocabulary
- ◆ appreciate our rich and varied literary heritage
- ◆ write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
- ◆ use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas
- ◆ are competent in the arts of speaking and listening, making formal presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

DISCOVER

This section introduces London's bustling theatre industry, from its earliest stages to the people and roles that shape theatre today. Students will form an understanding of the wide ranging roles that people play to bring productions to life and learn about different types of theatres.



LESSON 1

LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR



THE BIG IDEA

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to one of London's earliest theatre entrepreneurs, James Burbage. Alive during the Elizabethan era, Burbage built London's first purpose-built theatre.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

All students will be able to summarise and organize factual detail about the life and achievements of James Burbage. All students will write an obituary marking his death.

Most students will draw on appropriate literary devices identified in the reading of other powerful obituaries to enhance the impact of their writing, for example the use of quotations to recount pertinent stories.

Some students will recall, using a range of descriptive language, a number of significant events in James Burbage's life, including combining his carpentry skills with his acting career.



RESOURCES

- ♦ **Resource 1.1:** Purpose of theatre speech bubbles
- ♦ **Resource 1.2:** Biography of James Burbage (one per pair)
- ♦ **Resource 1.3:** Unearthing the first theatre (one per pair)
- ♦ **Resource 1.4:** Obituary writing rubric (one per student)

LESSON 1

LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR



YOU WILL ALSO NEED:

Examples of powerful obituaries,
for example the obituary below which
celebrates the life of Siobhan Dowd:

[http://www.theguardian.com/
news/2007/aug/24/guardianobituaries.
humanrights](http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/aug/24/guardianobituaries.humanrights)

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

KEY LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE	EXPLANATION	SYNONYM
Elizabethan	Relating to the reign of Elizabeth I	
Obituary	A notice of someone's death, usually published in a newspaper and accompanied with a brief biography	Death notice, eulogy
Deceased	A person who has died	Dead, departed, passed away
Entrepreneur	Someone who is at the cutting-edge of their profession; someone who likes to try out new ideas	Whizz kid, 'mover and shaker', ideas person
Scoundrel	A dishonest person	Liar, rogue
Troupe	A group of actors, dancers or other entertainers	
Inn	An old word for somewhere that provides accommodation, food and drink, especially for travellers	Tavern, lodge

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

SETTING THE SCENE

James Burbage (1531-1597)

James Burbage was an Elizabethan entrepreneur; he built London's first stationary theatre and learnt how to make a living from putting on plays.

James was born in in 1531 in Stratford-upon-Avon, which is the same birthplace as William Shakespeare. Little is known about his early life, but we know that he started his career as a carpenter. Later on, he decided to become an actor. This was a risky decision because, in the Elizabethan era, actors were viewed as scoundrels. Despite this, James was quite successful and led a group of actors (sometimes called a 'troupe'). He became very serious about his career in the theatre industry and, in 1574, he got a theatrical license. With this, he built the very first purpose-built theatre. Located in East London, James called it 'The Theatre'. Before this existed, theatres were temporary structures that 'popped-up' in the grounds of grand houses and Elizabethan inns.

James produced many plays at The Theatre, including ones written by William Shakespeare. These brought him financial success.

James died in 1597, at which point his two sons took over the running of the family business. James is buried in at St Leonards Church, which is nearby to the site of The Theatre. Many actors are buried at this church and it has become known as 'the actor's church'.

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

ACTIVITIES

STARTER

What's theatre for?

Ask the class, what's theatre for? Start a discussion drawing on their suggestions and the conversation prompts in resource 1.1. Does anyone disagree with any of these purposes, can they think of others? Has anyone seen a production that fulfills all of the different purposes? Why is 'What is theatre for?' such a difficult question to answer? Spend a couple of minutes discussing each purpose.

MAIN

London's earliest theatre entrepreneur

Drawing on the facts about James Burbage's life detailed in 'Setting the Scene', explain that this lesson's learning focuses on the life of one of London's earliest theatre entrepreneurs. In brief, tell students who he was, what he was famous for and a couple of engaging facts about his life (for example, he built London's first purpose-built theatre and learnt how to make money out of putting on plays at a time when actors were viewed with suspicion).

Explain that James Burbage lived during the Elizabethan era and died in the bitterly cold winter of 1597. Students are going to write an obituary to mark Burbage's death, focusing on his achievements that are cause for celebration.

What is an obituary?

At its simplest, an obituary notifies people of someone's death. Obituaries are usually published in newspapers and, very often, they are for prominent citizens and celebrities. At their best, obituaries celebrate the life of someone who was well known and loved. They tell a compelling story about their life, recalling some interesting facts and capturing the impression they left on peoples' lives.

You may wish to draw on this obituary of Siobhan Dowd. Dowd wrote *The London Eye Mystery*, which students may have studied in the *Mysterious Metropolis* unit for English.

Encourage and help students to identify ways in which the writer has used appropriate literary devices to create a moving and impactful obituary.

Activity

Give each student a copy of resources 1.2–1.4. Working alone or in pairs, students should read through the biography of James Burbage, the newspaper article about his theatre, and the ground plan of his theatre. With the information in these texts, students should fill in the writing rubric (resource 1.4), including as much relevant information as possible.

Once students have completed this task in an allotted time, give students an opportunity to write a four-paragraph obituary. Students should be discouraged from converting their findings captured in the rubric directly into paragraphs. Encourage students to arrange their content to draw in their readers.

You may want to give students the first sentence to get them underway. For example:

‘It is with great sadness that the family of James Burbage announce his death.’

Differentiation

A copy of the key language table will support students with the vocabulary in the handouts. You may also want to provide students with sentence starters for each of their four paragraphs, prompting students to focus on the birth, death, life and achievements of James Burbage.

Students may want to read their obituaries aloud to the class. As they do, you could ask the class to ‘fact-check’ their own work. For example, did the dates of James’s birth and death match yours? Has the reader included any information that you have not included in your obituary?

PLENARY

Students can present their obituary of James Burbage as it may appear in a newspaper.

Homework ideas

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Why do people go to the theatre?
2. Who was James Burbage and why was he significant for London’s theatre business?
3. Where is James Burbage buried? What is special about this graveyard?
4. Where would you usually find an obituary?

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

RESOURCE 1.1: PURPOSE OF THEATRE SPEECH BUBBLES



...to entertain

...to inform

...to challenge

...to explore

**...to offer
escape**

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

RESOURCE 1.2: BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES BURBAGE



James Burbage (1531-1597)

James Burbage was an Elizabethan entrepreneur; he built London's first stationary theatre and learnt how to make a living from putting on plays.

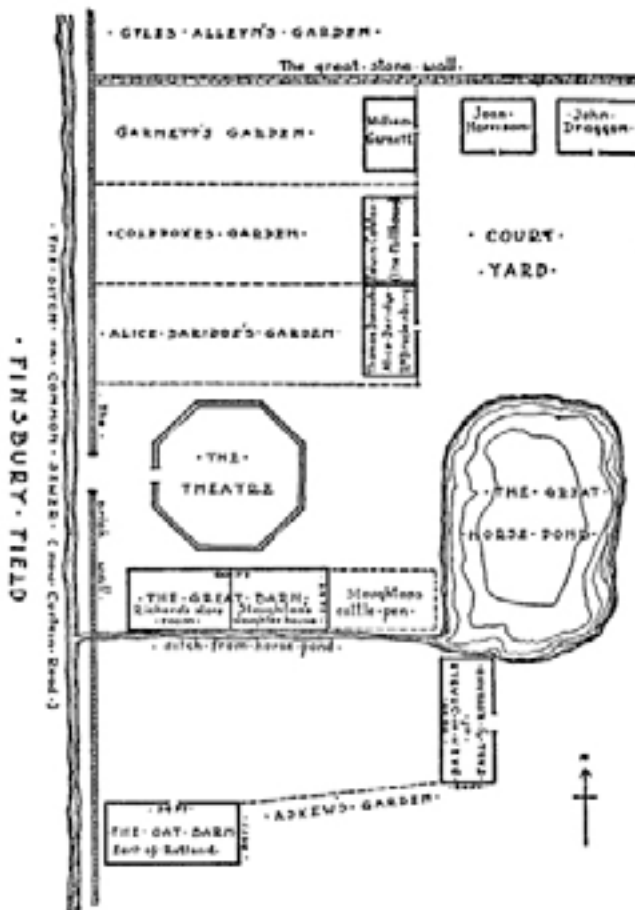
James was born in 1531, in Stratford-upon-Avon, which is the same birthplace as William Shakespeare. Little is known about his early life, but we know that he started his career as a carpenter. Later on, he decided to become an actor. This was a risky decision because, in the Elizabethan era, actors were viewed as scoundrels. Despite this, James was quite successful and led a group of actors (sometimes called a 'troupe'). He became very serious about his career in the theatre industry and, in 1574, he got a theatrical license. With this, he built the very first purpose-built theatre. Located in East London, James called it 'The Theatre'. Before this existed, theatres were temporary structures that 'popped-up' in the grounds of grand houses and Elizabethan inns.

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LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

RESOURCE 1.3: UNEARTHING THE REMAINS OF LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE



In 2008, the Tower Theatre Company stood examining a plot of land in Shoreditch, wondering whether it would provide suitable accommodation for their company of actors. Little did they realise another theatre company had stood there four hundred and sixteen years earlier thinking exactly the same thing, amongst them was James Burbage and William Shakespeare.

Both companies decided the site was ideal. The Tower Theatre Company called in a group of archeologists to find out what lay beneath the site. Almost immediately, the team discovered what appeared to be the corner of a structure, the kind of structure that would indicate a Tudor theatre.

The idea of finding a Tudor theatre in Shoreditch was hugely exciting; for years archaeologists and historians had been trying to pin down the site of 'The Theatre', James Burbage's purpose-built playhouse, erected on a corner of the site of the old Holywell Priory. Tudor London was incredibly densely populated. The space for entertainments was limited, both physically and legally, with strict controls on where and when plays could be performed.

SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYHOUSES:

A history of English theatres from the beginnings to the restoration, but Joseph Quincy Adams, 1917

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

RESOURCE 1.3: UNEARTHING THE REMAINS OF LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE CONTINUED



In 1575, the City banned plays for the public within the City walls. Actors could still perform for the wealthy in their private houses, but cheap theatre for the general public had to find a new home. James Burbage was a carpenter-turned-actor, leading a group of actors with the support of the Earl of Leicester.

Text extract from the Museum of London blog, posted by Lucy Inglis, 17 Sep 2010

<http://blog.museumoflondon.org.uk/shakespeares-first-theatre/>

In 1576, disgruntled with the lack of a popular playhouse and a lack of money, Burbage began to eye up potential sites for a theatre; Shoreditch was perfect. Just outside the City walls, Shoreditch was ideal for a walk to the theatre. Beyond the City regulations things such as drinking alcohol (which was very popular in those days) could operate without being disturbed by the authorities.

The Theatre was an instant success. People crowded to see the productions. Theatregoers walked up a narrow stone path and dropped their entrance fee in to earthenware boxes, which were broken open after the performance (and kept in a small, safe room which soon became known as 'the box office'). Once inside the theatre the poorest people stood an open pit, whilst those who had paid for seats sat in tiers around the stage. The actors, protected by a roofed stage, performed in the open.

LESSON 1: LONDON'S FIRST THEATRE ENTREPRENEUR

RESOURCE 1.4: OBITUARY WRITING RUBRIC



1. THE DECEASED'S FULL NAME, BIRTH AND DEATH DATES, INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR DEATH, FOR EXAMPLE LOCATION:

2. INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR LIFE:

3. THEIR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS – WHAT THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR:

4. CHOOSE YOUR FAVOURITE AND FASCINATING STORY ABOUT JAMES BURBAGE'S LIFE. RETELL IT HERE AND REMEMBER TO INCLUDE DETAILED, DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE.

LESSON 2

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GLOBE



THE BIG IDEA

The purpose of this lesson is to extend students' knowledge of James Burbage's legacy and, in particular, focus on the movement of 'The Theatre' across the frozen Thames to a new home, which formed the first Globe Theatre.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

All students will summarise and organize material they find about the first theatre in order to identify the most relevant factual detail for their storyboard.

Most students will edit their writing to ensure that finer details about the history of the Globe theatre is presented in their storyboards in such a way that engages the audience, for example describing how timber was transported across the frozen river Thames.

Some students will recognise the significant role that William Shakespeare played in the development of the Globe theatre, the theatre with which he is most commonly associated today.



RESOURCES

- ♦ **Resource 2.1:** A Storyboard about the globe

LESSON 2: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GLOBE

LANGUAGE AND LANDMARKS

KEY WORD	EXPLANATION	SYNONYMS
Timber	Wood prepared for building, e.g. houses	Wood, lumber, logs
Landlord	A person who rents land or a building to other people	Property owner, proprietor
Disapprove	To not be pleased with something or someone	To dislike, to object to
Demolish	To pull or knock down (a building)	To knock down, tear down, destroy
Carpenter	Someone who creates things – e.g. houses, furniture – out of wood	Woodworker

LESSON 2: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GLOBE

SETTING THE SCENE



A FROST FAIR ON THE THAMES AT TEMPLE STAIRS, 1684
Abraham Hondius © Museum of London

In the years after James Burbage's death, his widow and two sons took over the running of The Theatre. Shortly after his death, however, the lease on which the theatre was built needed to be renewed. Like many people at the time, the landlord, Giles Allen, was very disapproving of the theatre. Burbage's family failed to renew the lease. They tried and tried to persuade Giles Allen otherwise, but he did not budge. They had to leave the site and, with it, their livelihood.

Giles Allen wanted to demolish the theatre. Instead, Burbage's family and the troupe of actors who performed there decided to move the theatre to a new site. They had clearly caught some of James Burbage's entrepreneurial spirit!

What followed was an amazing feat. One night, the troupe of actors dismantled The Theatre and hauled the timbers across the frozen Thames river. That winter was particularly cold and people could walk straight across the frozen Thames. With the help of an experienced carpenter and a team of workers, the troupe began to assemble the theatre on the banks of the south side of the river. They needed to do this as quickly as possible – if they weren't acting, they weren't getting paid.

James Burbage had not left his family much money and they could not afford to rent the new site by themselves. So, for the first time, the family allowed five other people to join them in their latest adventure. Each person contributed a sum of money and together they jointly owned the new theatre. It was built in six months, which was an extraordinarily short time. A magnificent new theatre – called the Globe – opened in 1599.

William Shakespeare – a friend of the Burbage family – was one of the joint owners of the Globe.

LESSON 2: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GLOBE

ACTIVITIES

STARTER

Frozen Thames

Display *A Frost Fair on the Thames at Temple Stairs, 1684*, by Abraham Hondius on the whiteboard. If students have studied *Riverscape*, an art unit from the London Curriculum, then they will be familiar with this painting. Discuss the content of the painting: what is happening? What are people doing? Can we do this now?

MAIN

Remind students of the last lesson and what they learnt about. Describe the events that followed the death of James Burbage, drawing on the information provided in 'Setting the Scene'.

Activity

Students will need access to computers or laptops for this activity. Resource 2.1 – a storyboard – focuses student's minds on the transformation of the Globe Theatre, which has been built three times. Using this resource as a scaffold, in pairs, students should use the

internet to research the life, death and rebirth of the Globe Theatre. They may fill in their first part of their storyboard using their knowledge from Lesson 1. A space has been left for students to draw or cut and paste pictures of the Globe in its different forms. In the section entitled 'A brief history', students should tell the story of the Globe from the perspective of a significant or common person from the time, for example William Shakespeare or a theatre-goer. Encourage students to bring their story to life, using a wide range of vocabulary. They may also want to include dialogue, for example, recounting the wrangle between the landlord of the first theatre and James Burbage's sons.

Useful websites include:

Fact Sheets from the Globe Theatre:

www.shakespearesglobe.com/education/discovery-space/fact-sheets

www.william-shakespeare.info/william-shakespeare-globe-theatre.htm

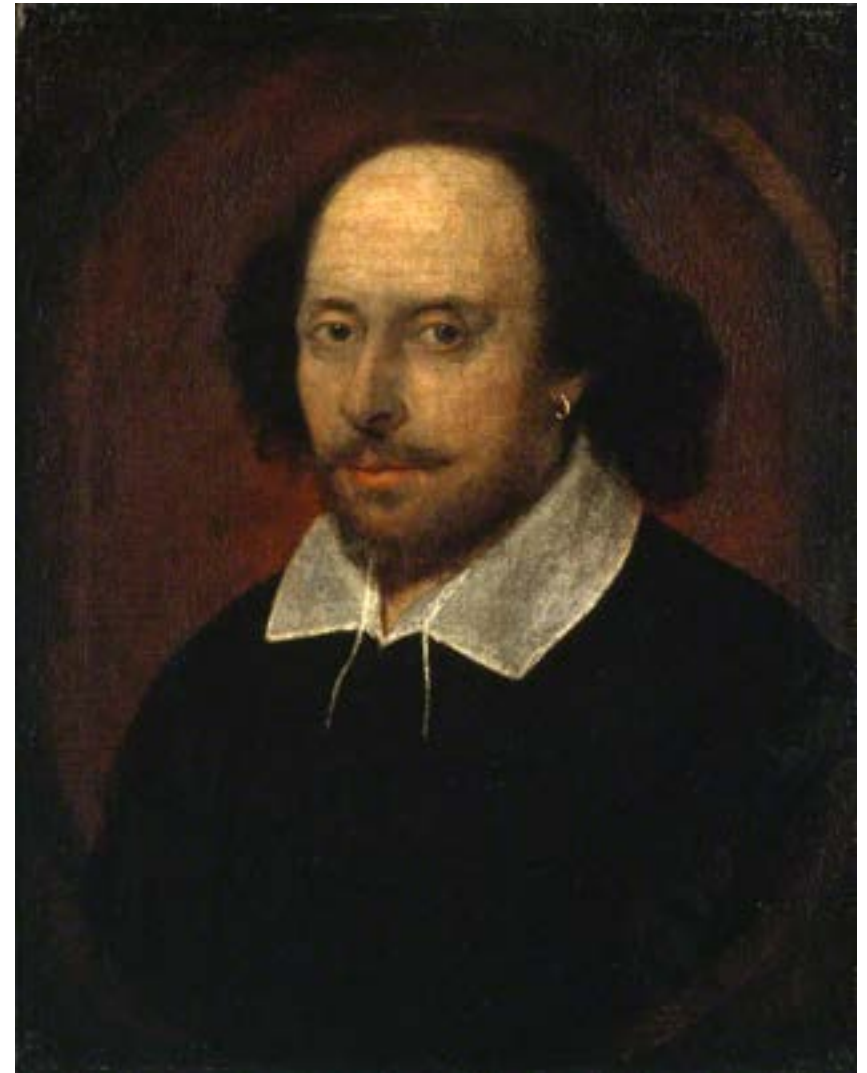
PLENARY

William Who?

Did students recognise the names of any famous playwrights in their research? Steer students towards a discussion about William Shakespeare's role in the development of the theatre. How has his legacy continued?

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Describe the transformation of the Globe theatre over the many centuries that it has existed.
2. What was William Shakespeare's earliest involvement in the Globe theatre?



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, 1600-1610

Associated with John Taylor, © National Portrait Gallery, London

LESSON 2: A GOTHIC CITYSCAPE

RESOURCE 2.1: A STORYBOARD ABOUT THE GLOBE



The 1st Globe

The 2nd Globe

The 3rd Globe

The inside story, as told by

The Inside Story, as told by

The Inside Story, as told by

Who was involved?

Who was involved?

Who was involved?

Past performances

Past Performances

Past Performances

LESSON 3

LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY



THE BIG IDEA

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to a range of different types of theatre – commercial, subsidised, open air and fringe. Students will learn about the motivations and experience of people who work behind the scenes in these theatres.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

All students will listen and read carefully to learn about different types of theatre. They will draw on this new knowledge to define commercial, subsidised and fringe theatre. All students will apply their growing theatre vocabulary to discuss the lives of significant movers and shakers from the theatre industry.

Most students will plan, draft, edit and proof read their answers to a series of questions that require students to understand the differences between different types of theatre and be able to describe people's motivations in each. Similarly, they will research a famous theatre maker with the similar questions in mind.



RESOURCES

- ♦ **Resource 3.1:** Voices from behind the scenes (one per pair)
- ♦ **Resource 3.2:** Examples of theatre makers (one per class)
- ♦ **Resource 3.3:** Research rubric (one per student)

LESSON 3

LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY



YOU WILL ALSO NEED:

Students will need access to computers or laptops for the main part of this lesson.

OPTIONAL

Example interviews with key people in London theatre eg

<http://londoncalling.com/show/interview-with-indhu-rubasingham-artistic-director-of-the-tricycle-theatre>

Access to links to video interviews with a range of theater makers

www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=11&Section%252F@id=20.html

www.stagework.org.uk/webdav/harmonise@Page%252F@id=6023&Document%252F@id=5508.html

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

LANGUAGE AND LANDMARKS

KEY WORD	EXPLANATION	SYNONYMS
Commercial	Making or intending to make a profit	Trade, business
Subsidize	To support financially	Sponsor, support
Fringe	The outer edge of an area	Margin, edge, outskirts
Open air	A free or unenclosed space outdoors	Outdoor, outside

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

SETTING THE SCENE

West End theatre

The significant majority of West End theatres are found in London's 'West End', the area around Leicester Square, the Strand and Shaftesbury Avenue. These theatres are commercial, which means they mainly put on large and expensive productions. Ticket prices are sometimes quite high, but it is worth hunting around for a cheap deal because they can be found, especially if punters (people watching the performances) purchase their tickets at the last minute. There are a couple of West End theatres that are not in the West End – for example, in Victoria – but these are considered to be West End theatres because of their size and the huge investment people have to make in order to put on a show.

Subsidised theatre

Subsidised theatres receive funding from the public, via the Arts Council. They do not have to raise the same kind of funding from private investors (who often expect to get their money back at the end of the show!) This means that they can take a risk with new plays and unknown writers. If the plays are popular they can be transferred to the West End where they can be shown for a longer time.

The National Theatre is London's most famous subsidised theatre. Recently, its productions have included *War Horse* and *The Light Princess*.

Fringe theatre

Fringe theatres tend not to be in the West End. These theatres are smaller, for example some are above pubs and restaurants. They don't seat as many people and tickets tend to be much cheaper than for large commercial shows. Fringe theatre brings its audiences very close to the action because the venues are far more intimate.

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

ACTIVITIES

STARTER

Where are all of London's theatres?

Using an interactive whiteboard or similar, visit *My London Map: An Interactive Theatre Map* at www.mylondonmap.com/london-theatres.php. This website displays London's major theatres. Explore the interactive function with students. Focus students' attention on the location of London's major theatres: where are they? Are they all in the same area? Why might this be the case? Does anyone know the name of this area of London? Explain to students that most of London's theatres are found within a very short distance of one another. This area of London is called Theatreland or the West End. Smaller theatres that are outside of this area are called 'Off West End'.

MAIN

As a class or in pairs, students can read about the work and motivations of passionate people who work behind the scenes London's theatres in Resource 3.1. Use these mini-biographies to stimulate a short class discussion about what inspires people to put on shows.

Writing exercise 1

Present the following questions on the whiteboard and ask students to draw on their reading and the class discussion to answer the questions individually.

1. What inspires people to work in the theatre industry?
2. What are some of the challenges that people encounter in London theatres? Did any of the challenges talked about surprise you? Why?
3. If you joined the theatre industry tomorrow, what job would you like to have and why? What would your motivations be?

Writing exercise 2

For the remainder of the lesson, students will research the lives and motivations of some of London's theatre makers – past and present. Resource 3.2 is a suggested list of these people, though teachers may add to it as they see fit. Resource 3.3 scaffolds the research task for students, including different questions that students should try to find the answers to. Ensure that students choose a range of different people, so that the class as a whole produces a comprehensive collection of research briefs.

Once this research task is complete, you could ask students to write up their research in the form of an interview for a newspaper article. Draw on the interview with Indhu Rubasingham, the Artistic Director of the Tricycle Theatre, or alternative interviewee as an example of the form and detail that students should strive for in their own work.

Differentiation:

You may want to draw on excerpts only. Similarly, you may want to encourage some students to incorporate the information that students learn through their research task into an article, as Charlie Kenber has done. Alternatively, you may ask some students to write questions and answer, such as the format of the profiles included in this lesson.

PLENARY

Students should either write up their research notes in such a way that they can be copied and distributed amongst other students for their reference. Alternatively, groups of students who researched the same person may want to present their mover and shaker to the class.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

- 1) **What is commercial theatre and how does this differ from subsidised theatre?** Students should refer to the teachers' explanation at the beginning of the lesson, where material from 'Setting the Scene' was used.
- 2) **What is Fringe theatre and how does this differ from commercial theatre?** Students should refer to the teachers' explanation at the beginning of the lesson, where material from 'Setting the Scene' was used.
- 3) **Name London's most famous subsidised theatre.** The National Theatre.
- 4) **What will audiences experience at fringe theatres that they may find difficult to find in subsidised and commercial theatre?** Fringe theatres are small venues, so the audience is much closer to the action.



LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.1: VOICES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES



Sarah Hopkins, Company Stage Manager at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre

Describe your role at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre.

I'm the Company Stage Manager. I manage the acting company, stage management team and any show staff – wardrobe, lighting, sound, wigs, stage crew, etc. I ensure the show runs smoothly each night in the way it was set by the creative team and I maintain the quality of the show. This involves keeping an eye on the condition of the set, props, costume, running times of the show, the audience's reaction, etc. I also look after the welfare of all involved in the show – be that an actor who is taken ill or needs physiotherapy or a sound operator who is feeling unwell (as we had yesterday!), all whilst ensuring the audience is none the wiser and the performance is unaffected!

What are the specific challenges related to working outdoors in the heart of London?

The first is the weather and its unpredictability! We can never be 100% sure of what the weather will do – we perform until it is unsafe to do so, so if it's a light shower we will do our best to continue the show. Shows here are designed to be outdoors – props, set, costumes are all made and bought with the weather in mind. Everything has to be durable. A slightly less obvious challenge is the sunshine – it can be harder to perform in the glaring sun than in the rain because it affects you mentally, as well as physically. Trying to deliver your best lines while squinting into the middle distance with sun cream running into your eyes is actually much harder to do than getting a bit wet and cold.

The more urban answer to this question is the noise. In Regent's Park you hear an assortment of

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.1: VOICES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES CONTINUED



sounds – they vary from police helicopter's searching for a man on the run in the park to the sounds of grass being mown and families having fun, there's also the sound of holiday makers flying high above in aeroplanes. We put radio mics on all of our actors. This isn't to amplify their voices, but to ensure clarity and to ensure an audience doesn't miss crucial moments, like the verdict given to Tom Robinson at the end of the court scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird*!

What is the atmosphere like during performances?

Electric – there's those moments in shows where you can feel all 1,256 people listening intently and those where you've got a house full of school children and families up on their feet egging on a hero on the stage. It's such a special place – there's a café under the seating and it's lit almost entirely by fairy lights. It's in amongst really mature trees so there's no way you'd know you were in the middle of London once you were inside (apart from the occasional helicopter and plane!). We also have the magic of daylight fading into darkness and I love the way the darkness wraps itself around the show and its audience.

How does working outdoors in the heart of London differ to working indoors in the West End?

It's refreshing, but exhausting. It takes much more to maintain a show of West End standards while also constantly watching the weather! I experience much more of an impact at the end of an open air show. The actors and audience have to work much harder to stay engaged with the show because it can get a little bit cold later in the evening. A standing ovation at the end of an open air show is a very proud moment.

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.1: VOICES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES CONTINUED



Gareth Owen, Sound Engineer

Gareth is a Sound Engineer. He takes overall responsibility for everything the audience hears in a number of West End musicals. This includes making sure that the orchestra, cast, sound effects, surround sound and backing tracks sound right and create the effect that the Theatre Director is trying to achieve. We asked him a couple of questions about his job.

What's the most exciting part about working in London's theatres?

The most exciting thing about working in London's theatre industry is that the people in it today are part of an establishment that goes back to the days of Shakespeare and beyond.

What are the challenges of working in London's theatres?

The vast majority of West End theatres were built in an age before radio mics and speaker systems had even been invented. They were designed to work well acoustically, so that an actor's voice projected naturally. They weren't designed for modern technology. As a result, it's often very difficult to work with amplified sound systems in the theatres. The theatres – which are very old – were also never designed to have the high sound pressure levels that modern technology creates, so I live in constant fear of damaging them!

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.1: VOICES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES CONTINUED



Jamie Hendry, Theatre Producer

Jamie is a Theatre Producer. He takes plays and musicals from seedlings and turns them into big West End productions. His work involves reading scripts and seeing shows in small theatres outside of London with a view to transferring them to a bigger theatre in Theatreland. He recruits a director, creative team, actors and actresses and musicians to bring a show to life. He also oversees the marketing and publicity for a show, to make sure that people buy tickets and come to see it. He also raises the money needed to put on a show, which is no small feat – sometimes a big musical can cost £8 million! We asked him some questions about his work.

How did you get started in the theatre industry?

Having taken part in school drama from a young age, I was excited about the idea of producing a show myself. So, when I was 16 years old, I persuaded my teachers to let me produce a rock n' roll concert for charity. This is when it all kicked off and I've produced shows ever since, right through university to today!

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.1: VOICES FROM BEHIND THE SCENES CONTINUED



What's the best thing about making theatre in London?

London is the centre of the theatre world. It has more theatres per square mile than anywhere else. London's audiences are hugely diverse, which means that producers can put on lots of different types of shows, from big blockbuster musicals to small, intimate plays and jazzy variety acts to comedy. Over 60,000 people go to the theatre every night in London. It's an amazing feeling to be part of that.

What's the most challenging part of what you do?

It's very expensive to produce theatre in London and the stakes are very high. A good play with good reviews can run for many, many years (for example, *the Mousetrap* is now in its 62nd year!), but a good play with bad reviews can close within weeks. The difficulty is in not knowing how the public will respond to a play. What might be a great idea in my head doesn't always result in a great stage play! Because of this, most plays that end up in the West End start out life in smaller theatres outside of London. They're tried and tested there. This means that Londoners have the very best theatre on their doorstep.

Tell us about the next show you're working on.

I am currently producing a new musical of *The Wind in the Willows*. It's based on the famous children's novel by Kenneth Grahame. It's being adapted for the stage by the team behind the popular musical *Mary Poppins*. *The Wind in the Willows* is such an iconic piece of British literary heritage and I think it deserves a large musical adaptation. As a producer, the most exciting shows are pieces that have been commissioned. I am incredibly lucky to be working with such a fantastic team to put the show together.

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.2: EXAMPLES OF LONDON THEATRE MAKERS



	NAME	ROLE
1	Laurence Olivier	Actor, Director, Producer
2	John Gielgud	Actor, Director
3	Harold Pinter	Playwright, Screenwriter, Director, Actor
4	Noel Coward	Playwright, Composer, Actor, Singer, Director
5	Ivor Novello	Composer, Actor
6	Judi Dench	Actress
7	Adrian Lester	Actor
8	Andrew Lloyd-Webber	Composer, Impresario
9	Nica Burns	Theatre Producer, Theatre Owner
10	Julian Fellowes	Actor, Novelist, Screenwriter

LESSON 3: LONDON'S THEATRE MAKERS TODAY

RESOURCE 3.3: RESEARCH RUBRIC



BASIC BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

CURRICULUM VITAE

MOST SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

IF I COULD ASK ONE QUESTION?

LESSON 4

FROM PAGE TO STAGE



THE BIG IDEA

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to adapting novels for the stage. Students will read an extract of *The Wind in the Willows*, which has recently been adapted for a new musical, and think about how they would like to portray the setting and conversations on stage. (Alternatively, this lesson can be adapted to focus on a suitable extract from another novel the class has collectively read recently.)



LESSON OBJECTIVES

All students will read and listen carefully to the opening of *The Wind in the Willows* in order to enhance the impact of their creative writing piece.

Most students will apply the vocabulary and knowledge they acquired in this reading to embellish their adaptation with a description of the set and a couple of stage directions.

Some students will draw on the literary devices used in the extract in their own writing to sustain the audience's attention with a dialogue that conveys the characters' emotions accurately.



RESOURCES

- ♦ **Resource 4.1:** Opening of *The Wind in the Willows* (one per pair) (or alternative extract)

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

LANGUAGE AND LANDMARKS

KEY WORD	EXPLANATION	SYNONYMS
Whitewash	A chalky white paint used to paint walls white	Cover up
Lowly	Low in importance	Humble, plain, ordinary
Discontent	Unhappy with the way things are	Unhappy, dissatisfied
Imperious	Quickly assuming authority, even though it hasn't been given	Bossy, assertive
Seclusion	Being private or isolated from others	Privacy, isolation
Conscience	A feeling or voice inside yourself that guides you to think about whether something is right or wrong	Inner voice, values
Bijou	Small and elegant	
Forbearance	Being patient and self-controlled	Tolerance, patience
Muzzle	The nose and mouth of an animal, such as a dog or horse	Snout, nose
Triumphant	The feeling after being successful	Successful, winning

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

SETTING THE SCENE

The children's classic *The Wind in the Willows*, telling the story of four animals 'simply messing about in boats' on the River Thames is a much loved choice for adaptation – for the stage, screen and ballet. *Toad of Toad Hall* was the first dramatization, written by A A Milne and performed for the first time at the Lyric Theatre in London in 1929. The novel is a celebration of nature and rural life in the face of what the author portrays as the ugliness and destructiveness of an increasingly industrial world. For the author the book was most likely an escape back to happy childhood memories, in the face of personal difficulties in his own life.



KENNETH GRAHAME, 1920-1921
Lady Ottoline Morrell
© National Portrait Gallery, London

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

ACTIVITIES

STARTER

Ask students whether they've ever dreamed – or still dream – of performing in a big show. Does anyone take part in any drama activities after school? Or, perhaps students are learning a musical instrument and want to perform in a big band, orchestra or accompany performers on stage? Explore their dreams, or tell a story about your own!

MAIN

Remind students of the theatre makers they learnt about in the previous lesson. Who was their favourite? Why? Ask students what they can remember about the work of the West End theatre producer Jamie Hendry? Can students remember what his latest project involves? Remind students that Jamie Hendry is producing a brand new musical based on the story of *The Wind in the Willows*. You may wish to draw on this extract from the previous lesson's resources:

Jamie Hendry, tell us about the next show you're working on.

"I am currently producing a new musical of *The Wind in the Willows*. It's based on the famous children's novel by Kenneth Grahame. It's being adapted for the stage by the team behind the popular musical *Mary Poppins*. *The Wind in the Willows* is such an iconic piece of British literary heritage and I think it deserves a large musical adaptation. As a producer, the most exciting shows are pieces that have been commissioned. I am incredibly lucky to be working with such a fantastic team to put the show together."

In this lesson, students will have the opportunity to step into the shoes of a theatre writer and transform a section of Grahame's much beloved story into a scene on the stage.

Introduce students to *The Wind in the Willows* and the opening of the first chapter 'The River Bank', drawing on the information detailed in Setting the Scene.

Give pairs of students a copy of resource 4.1. As a class, ask students to read

the passages. Refer to the table of key language to explain unfamiliar vocabulary.

In pairs, ask students to reread the section in highlighted in red. One student can assume the role of Rat, the other Mole. The students will need to share the part of the narrator.

Still in pairs, students should discuss and write a short description of what they envisage their set – the background of their stage – to look like. It should include a note of colours used in the background, how they might create the effect of the river, whether there will be any trees or other animals in the background. Should the lights be bright or dimmed?

Then, underneath this paragraph, students should write their own 'script' – for this, students should reread and draw on the text highlighted in blue. In other words, students will need to create a monologue for Mole to say on stage, drawing on his actions and Grahame's descriptions in this passage. Perhaps Mole could describe what he sees, how he feels? You may want to model this

before students are put to task. Encourage students to use descriptive vocabulary that accurately describes the emotions of the characters and captures the spirit of their fun day messing about in a boat on the river.

Then, surrounding the dialogue, in different coloured pen, students should write stage directions. What is Mole doing at each point in his monologue? Is he scuffling around? Is his head down? What is he doing with his hands? Model this on the whiteboard for students.

PLENARY

Give pairs of students five minutes to practice reading through their script, remembering to pay attention to their stage directions and speak with expression, to convey the feelings of their characters. Following this, ask pairs of students to present their scene to the class.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

1. Who wrote *The Wind in the Willows*? Kenneth Grahame wrote *The Wind in the Willows* in 1908.
2. What is Mole doing when Chapter One opens? Mole is spring-cleaning his humble little home.
3. Who does the Mole meet on the river? Mole meets Rat on the river. Rat is rowing a boat.
4. How does Mole intend to spend the rest of his summer? Mole decides to spend the rest of his summer messing about in a boat on the river with his new best friend.
5. What is a stage direction? A stage direction is an instruction that tells an actor what to do on stage, whether there should be any sound effects, or whether the set needs to change.

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

RESOURCE 4.1: CHAPTER ONE, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS



The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. Something up above was calling him imperiously, and he made for the steep little tunnel which answered in his case to the gavelled carriage-drive owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air. So he scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with

his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.

'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than whitewashing!' The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.

'Hold up!' said an elderly rabbit at the gap. 'Sixpence for the privilege of passing by the private road!' He was bowled over in an instant by the impatient and contemptuous Mole, who trotted along the side of the hedge chaffing the other rabbits as they peeped hurriedly from their holes to see what the row was about. 'Onion-sauce! Onion-sauce!' he remarked jeeringly, and

was gone before they could think of a thoroughly satisfactory reply. Then they all started grumbling at each other. 'How STUPID you are! Why didn't you tell him—' 'Well, why didn't YOU say—' 'You might have reminded him—' and so on, in the usual way; but, of course, it was then much too late, as is always the case.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering 'whitewash!' he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

RESOURCE 4.1: CHAPTER ONE, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS



river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level

and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!

Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

'Hullo, Mole!' said the Water Rat.

'Hullo, Rat!' said the Mole.

'Would you like to come over?' enquired the

Rat presently.

'Oh, its all very well to TALK,' said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped gingerly down. 'Lean on that!' he said. 'Now then, step lively!' and the Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself actually seated in the stern of a real boat.

'This has been a wonderful day!' said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. 'Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life.'

LESSON 4: FROM PAGE TO STAGE

RESOURCE 4.1: CHAPTER ONE, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS



‘What?’ cried the Rat, open-mouthed: ‘Never been in a—you never—well I—what have you been doing, then?’

‘Is it so nice as all that?’ asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

‘Nice? It’s the **ONLY** thing,’ said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. ‘Believe me, my young friend, there is **NOTHING**—absolute nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,’ he went on dreamily: ‘messing—about—in—boats; messing—’

‘Look ahead, Rat!’ cried the Mole suddenly.

It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

‘—about in boats—or **WITH** boats,’ the Rat went on composedly, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. ‘In or out of ‘em, it doesn’t matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that’s the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don’t; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you’re always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you’ve done it there’s always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you’d much better not. Look here! If you’ve really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?’

The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. ‘**WHAT** a day I’m having!’ he said. ‘Let us start at once!’

EXPLORE

The purpose of this section of the unit of work is to give students an opportunity to experience London's theatre firsthand. Ideally, students will be able to see a performance and visit a theatre's back stage to learn about life behind the scenes.



EXPLORE

THE LONDON THEATRE SCENE

There are at least 200 shows to choose from every day across the city so there is plenty of opportunity to find a show that links to texts that form part of your curriculum. The education departments of many theatres can help you to prepare for a particular performance, with classroom teaching resources or workshops.

Students will be drawing on their theatre visit when back in the classroom in the next part of this unit, Connect. With this in mind, ensure that students have the resources and direction necessary to make an accurate account of their visit to the theatre. This might mean providing a rubric to take notes of a backstage interview with someone from the theatre, or collecting literature about the performance from the box office.



PIMLICO ACADEMY TRIP TO THE OLD VIC THEATRE

© James O Jenkins

EXPLORE: THE LONDON THEATRE SCENE CONTINUED

PLANNING THE TRIP

Mousetrap Theatre Projects is a theatre education charity that aims to open the doors to all that London's vibrant theatre scene has to offer. Moustrap Theatre Projects Youth Forum have developed a video aimed at offering theatre going tips to young people with a particular focus on the golden rules of audience behavior which can be found on their website below. The charity's schools programme works in particular with schools with high numbers of disadvantaged children and provides a number of opportunities, including discounted tickets. See their website for more information.

www.mousetrap.org.uk/

Making the most of your theatre trip

Many theatres in London offer schools an exciting range of opportunities, including backstage tours, the opportunity to meet the creative teams and workshops in the classroom and on site.

A small number of examples are highlighted in the following pages.

Unicorn Theatre

147 Tooley Street, SE1 2HZ

The Unicorn Theatre is dedicated to producing inspiring and invigorating work for audiences under 21. The Unicorn creates around seven new plays suitable for KS3 per academic year. Much of the work is new writing specifically written for a young audience and is of relevance for young Londoners. The Unicorn Theatre's school programme offers back stage tours, post show question and answer sessions with the creative teams and a chance to meet theatre professionals.

<https://www.unicorntheatre.com/>



EXPLORE: THE LONDON THEATRE SCENE CONTINUED

PLANNING THE TRIP

The National Theatre

South Bank SE1 9PX



The National Theatre offers a range of opportunities for schools, from onstage lecture demonstrations to hands-on sessions giving students a taste of what it means to work backstage or offstage

<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>

Shakespeare's Globe

21 New Globe Walk, Bankside, SE1 9DT



You can visit the world famous Globe theatre to see a professional 'learning' production or book your class a workshop on any Shakespeare play of your choosing. Visit the Sackler Studios and enjoy an exciting workshop for students, young people and teachers all year-round.

www.shakespearesglobe.com/education

The Young Vic

66 The Cut, Waterloo, SE1 8LZ

The Young Vic schools and colleges programme works with south London state schools all year round to introduce young people to theatre both as an audience member and as a practitioner. Schools groups outside of South London are entitled to discounted tickets to all productions.

www.youngvic.org/taking-part/schools-colleges

Almeida Theatre

Almeida Street, N1 1TA

The Almeida Theatre works with schools in a number of ways, including offering subsidised tickets, workshops and partnerships.

www.almeida.co.uk/education/schools-and-education/

EXPLORE: THE LONDON THEATRE SCENE CONTINUED

PLANNING THE TRIP

The Tricycle Theatre

269 Kilburn High Road, NW6 7JR

The Tricycle's Creative Learning programme works to develop the imaginations, aspirations and potential of children and young people in the diverse community of Brent and beyond. Collaborating with schools and young people, the theatre uses theatre, drama and film, to bring unheard young voices into the mainstream; creating work that engages the emotions and provokes debate. Offers include free tickets for teachers' previews, school rate tickets, workshops and Q&As.

www.tricycle.co.uk/home/about-the-tricycle-pages/youth-tab-menu/schools/

Half Moon Young People's Theatre

43 White Horse Rd, E1 0ND

Half Moon Young People's Theatre produces and presents professional theatre for children and young people at their Limehouse venue. The theatre also runs

an extensive creative learning programme, giving children and young people from birth to 18 (or 25 for disabled young people) an opportunity to participate in a variety of drama and theatre activities and explore careers in theatre. This includes curriculum-focused activity, after-school and out-of-school workshops.

www.halfmoon.org.uk/participate/educators/

Hackney Empire

Hackney Empire, 291 Mare Street, E8 1EJ

Hackney Empire offer schools performances for much of their programme with special discounted rates and free entry for one teacher for every 10 students booked. The theatre also offers: bespoke pre- and post-show talks, educational packages, and schools tours of the beautiful Grade II listed building.

www.hackneyempire.co.uk/1832/creative-learning/creative-learning.html

Battersea Arts Centre

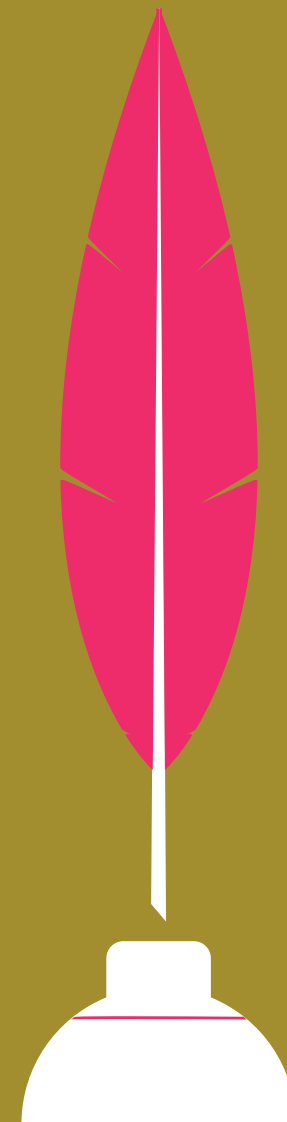
Lavender Hill, Battersea, SW11 5TN

The Battersea Arts Centre is a performance space that specialises in music and theatre productions. Battersea Arts Centre offers workshops for schools and an Artist Teacher Exchange programme, which provides the opportunity for teachers and artists to come together for a unique programme of collaborative training.

<https://www.bac.org.uk/>

CONNECT

The purpose of this section is give students an opportunity to reflect and extend their experience of the school visit they took part in the Explore section of this unit.



LESSON 5

THE THEATRE'S CRITIC



BIG IDEA

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the performance they saw in a London theatre. They will produce a structured review, which takes into consideration all aspects of the experience of the trip, including a visit backstage if this was organised.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

All students will organise and utilise the information they gathered during their Explore activity write a review of the performance based on their own views and covering a broad range of features including: the stage's set, actors' performances, and story.

Most students will consider how their writing reflects the audience for which it was intended and recall appropriate details of the performance to engage their audience and to support the views they express in their review.

Some students will embellish their review with suggestions of what might have worked better.



RESOURCES

- ♦ **Resource 5.1:** Review Rubric (one per student)

LESSON 5: THE THEATRE'S CRITIC

LANGUAGE AND LANDMARKS

Depending on the pitch of the performance's promotional literature, you may need to produce your own definition of tricky vocabulary.

SETTING THE SCENE

Collect as much promotional material about the production seen as part of the Explore activity. If possible, collect several copies for students to draw on in the lesson.



PIMLICO ACADEMY TRIP TO THE OLD VIC THEATRE

© James O Jenkins

LESSON 5: THE THEATRE'S CRITIC

ACTIVITIES

STARTER: STAR RATING

As a class, devise a rating system for theatre productions. For example, using one to four stars, create descriptions for each of the ratings. Remember to include all aspects of the experience, including the layout of the theatre seating (for example, could you see all of the stage?), whether it was a full house and whether the show's programme was informative.

MAIN 1

Ensure that students have access to the notes they made during the production.

Remind students that they should write a review that accurately reflects their feelings about seeing the show, whether these are good, bad or mixed. They must, however, justify their views, drawing on features of the production and experience of seeing it.

Students should use Resource 5.1 to support their review writing.

MAIN 2

PLENARY

How does it compare?

Print and copy a range of professional reviews of the production the class went to see. Read excerpts aloud to the class, including the writer's rating. How does their review compare to reviews produced by students?

Useful sites for collecting reviews include:

- ♦ National and local online and print papers
- ♦ What's On Stage

London Theatre

www.londontheatre.co.uk/londontheatre/reviews/

Critic's Choice at Time Out London

www.timeout.com/london/theatre/london-theatre-critics-choice

- ♦ Individual theatre websites

LESSON 5: THE THEATRE'S CRITIC

RESOURCE 5.1: WRITING A REVIEW



The production

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Remember to include:

Title

Names of playwrights, composers,
other significant people who
helped put on the show

Date

The plot

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Remember to include:

What happened?

What worked in the story?

What didn't work?

Where you interested throughout
the performance? If so, why? If
not, why not?

Did the performance send a
message to the audience? Was
this successful?

LESSON 5: THE THEATRE'S CRITIC

RESOURCE 5.1: WRITING A REVIEW CONTINUED

The technical stuff

The performers

Rating

Remember to include:

How did the sound and lighting support the performance?

Did the costumes work?

Describe the stage's set?

Was it effective?

If you managed to visit backstage and interview some of the company, how did this change your view of the performance? Did it have an impact?

Remember to include:

Were there any star performances? Why?

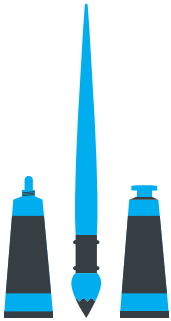
Who was your favourite actor/actress?

Would you have changed any of the characters?

Remember to include:

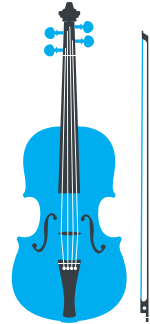
A rating for the performance!

LINKS TO OTHER LONDON CURRICULUM SUBJECTS



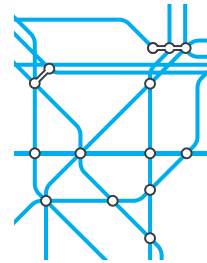
ART AND DESIGN

Riverscape explores the River Thames as a subject of art and a cultural space in its own right and features frost fairs, held in winter when the river Thames froze over, from Tudor times onwards.



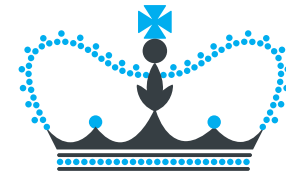
MUSIC

City on the move develops a composition inspired by travel across London so could be combined with the visit of any unit.



GEOGRAPHY

Mapping London explores the city through the medium of maps, so links to the maps used to consider factors behind the location of theatres in London.



HISTORY

London at war references the roots of the Southbank in the Festival of Britain.

CREDITS

The GLA would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution:

Our collaborators on
The London Curriculum



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'We're learning about London in English and History
and it makes me feel proud to be a Londoner'

key stage 3 student

'The level is appropriate for KS3 students and will
match the levels expected from the new national curriculum too'

key stage 3 teacher

'The idea of using London as a teaching resource has never been explored
much before, so both students and teachers are excited about it'

key stage 3 teacher