

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK FOR OWL AT HOME:
Autumn 2023



ABOUT THE SHOW

Theatr Iolo present

Owl at Home

Based on the illustrated children's book by Arnold Lobel.

Adapted for the stage by Rina Vergano and Theatr Iolo.

Owl lives alone in a cosy little home in a hollow tree in the woods. With no one to talk to, Owl sings to himself and looks for ways to pass the time. He wonders about things a lot. What will happen if he invites winter into his home? And can he be in two places at once?

As his imagination runs away with him, ordinary objects begin to take on a life of their own and Owl finds an unexpected friend who's willing to follow him to the ends of the earth... whether he likes it or not!

An enchanting tale with music, **Owl at Home** shows us how friendship can be found in the most unlikely of places.

INTRODUCTION

This resource is designed for teachers bringing children to see **Owl at Home** in autumn 2023 at venues across Wales.

Owl at Home is aimed at children age 5+. The pack has been created to help teachers explore the themes of the production before or after their visit.

Owl at Home is based on the illustrated children's book of the same name, by the author Arnold Lobel.

INFO ABOUT THEATR IOLO

Theatr Iolo's vision is for all children in Wales to have equal access to cultural experiences. To achieve this, we want to create as many meaningful cultural activities as we can, in order to enrich the lives of Welsh children and to help them make sense of the world around them.

Theatr Iolo has been at the forefront of theatre for children for over thirty years, delivering performances and workshops to babies, children, teenagers, parents, pupils and teachers across Wales, the UK and internationally.

Theatr Iolo is the leading Welsh children's theatre company, creating high quality experiences that are stimulating, surprising and meaningful for children and their adults.

MORE ABOUT OWL AT HOME

Owl at Home is a new show based on the 1975 children's book by Arnold Lobel. The autumnal tale for children aged 5-11 is about an owl who lives by himself, but finds fun and friendship amongst the solitude.

Owl at Home has been written for the stage by Rina Vergano and is directed by Theatr Iolo's Artistic Director, Lee Lyford, starring actor and musician George Williams as Owl. Although the original story is over 45 years old, this new version of the classic tale is set to be more relevant than ever, as the story explores and reflects upon what it's like to spend lots of time by yourself; something children are more than familiar with due to the pandemic.

"We know that some children found the isolation of the pandemic really difficult, but for others they absolutely loved being at home. And course for many, their experience was a mixture of the two! This show gives children and families an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and hopefully to remember the positives of spending time at home."

Lee Lyford, Theatr Iolo's Artistic Director

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YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME...

Owl at Home explores the highs and lows of living alone. Owl enjoys his own company, but sometimes he feels he would like a friend or two to spend time with.

Owl's experiences are similar to those that young people may have had during the pandemic. The activity below is a reflective exercise designed to help children explore their own feelings about spending time alone and to think about how this has an impact on other people.



ACTIVITY

Years 1 & 2

Using a big sheet of paper, draw a picture of Owl. Ask the children in your class to think about a time when they've had to stay at home and haven't been able to leave this house. This could be things from lockdown or, if they can't remember this, just when they've had to stay at home because they have been unwell.

Ask the children about all the things they enjoy (i.e. the positive things) about being at home. Write all their suggestions on one side of the Owl picture.

Then ask your class to tell you all the things they didn't like about being stuck in the house. Write all their suggestions in a different colour on the other side of the Owl.

Use the drawing to further explore your classes feelings around spending time alone.

If your children are enjoying the discussion, you may want to talk about people who have to spend a lot of time alone and what this might feel like. For example, the elderly or disabled. You could also break out into groups to discuss what things might help them to feel happy or less lonely.

ACTIVITY

Years 3-6

Give everyone in the class two sticky notes. Ask everyone to write one thing they enjoyed about the lockdowns in 2020/21 on one note and one thing they didn't like or missed on the other note. Let your class know beforehand that you will be asking them to share what they have written with the rest of the class.

Then ask everyone to display the notes on separate walls / areas of the classroom. One area for the positives and one for the negatives. Talk about the different experiences. Here are some questions you can ask:

- How many are the same?
- Are there any that some people enjoyed and some that people missed?

Now give everyone another sticky note. On this one, ask them to write the thing that they won't take for granted in the future. Something they missed that they now appreciate. (This may be the same as the negative experience above)

Trigger Warning: If a child had a particularly difficult experience during this period, they may find this task difficult or upsetting. Have a think about whether all members of your class would be happy to participate in this activity. You may wish to give them the option as to whether to share their experiences or to speak to you about it afterwards if they would like to.

PEN-PALS

Owl lives alone and doesn't get to see or talk to other owls. He doesn't have a phone or email, so if he wants to communicate with other owls, he has to write a letter.

This activity is designed to explore different methods of communication, including different languages.



ACTIVITY

Years 1 & 2

Part One

Start this activity with a quick discussion about how the children communicate with their friends and family. Maybe they use FaceTime or send photos on phones owned by their adults? Or maybe they live close by, so simply speak to them face-to-face. Together write down all the different ways you can think of!

Part Two

Using pictures and words or sentences, write a postcard to a friend or family member who lives far away (make one up if you need to!) and tell them about your weekend. Try to include one good thing that happened and one thing that was boring or didn't enjoy. Here are some things to think about:

- Without video or photos, how could you tell them what you've been doing? Could you draw a picture instead?
- Think about how it made you feel? Perhaps you could write a sentence or draw a smiley face or sad face to let others know.

EXTRA ACTIVITY: After the children have written their postcards, your class could walk to the local post box and send them to their family members, friends or perhaps even another school. This activity will help children to learn more about communicating by post.

ACTIVITY

Years 3-6

Part One

Start this activity with a quick discussion about how the children communicate with their friends and family. Maybe they use FaceTime or send photos or text messages if they have a phone of their own? Or maybe they live close by, so simply speak to them face-to-face. For older children, this activity could be done in small groups, before discussing as a class.

Part Two

Write a letter to a friend or family member who lives far away (make one up if you need to!) and tell them about your weekend. Try to include one good thing that happened and one thing that was boring or that you didn't enjoy. Here are some things to think about:

- Without video or photos, think about how you would best describe what you've done so that the person reading it can really understand what that experience was like for you.
- Think about what questions they might ask you if you were having a conversation in person or on the phone.
- What else could you include in your letter to better explain your weekend? A drawing perhaps? A ticket from the football match you went to? Or maybe a photo you took?

EXTRA ACTIVITY: After the children have written their letters, your class could walk to the local post box and send them to their family members, friends or perhaps even another school. Following this activity, you can discuss with your class the most effective methods of communication and the benefits for each.

THE WONDERFUL WEATHER!

Owl experiences lots of different kinds of weather in the woods. Sometimes the wind blows his door open and other times it's calm and peaceful. In **Owl at Home**, the weather outside often reflects how Owl is feeling.

In stories or plays, writers often use a description of the weather to set the mood of a scene or to describe how a character is feeling.



ACTIVITY

Years 1 & 2

Part One

On a piece of paper, ask your class to draw four different types of weather and to colour these in. Underneath each picture, then ask them to draw a picture of a face showing an emotion which is similar to the weather. For example, a picture of a sun might match with a happy face or a picture of a stormy cloud, could be an angry face.

Discuss the pictures as a class and see who has similar and who has different faces. Discussing the different types of weather is a great way for children to start talking about and identifying different emotions. Here are some questions you might want to ask to explore this further:

- Sometimes the weather can be two things at once! For example, both sunny and rainy. Can anyone think of a time when someone might feel two different emotions together? E.g. Happy for it to be the school holidays, but sad you won't see your friends as much.
- The weather can also change very quickly and our feelings can be the same! Can anyone think of any reasons why you might change quickly from one feeling to another?
- We can't change the weather, but we can sometimes change how we feel, especially if the feeling is an unhappy one. What things might you do to feel better if you were...
 - o Sad because you had fallen over
 - o Angry because someone had said something unkind
 - o Worried about starting at a new school

Part Two

Read a story together as a class that uses the weather to explain how characters are feeling or a book that focuses on emotions and how characters are feeling.

Here are some suggestions:

***My Inside Weather* by Jen Thorpe**

***Ruby's Worry* by Tom Percival**

***Stormy Weather* by Debi Gliori**

***Little Miss Bronte: Wuthering Heights: A Weather Primer* by Jennifer Adams**

***The weather has feelings: How about you?* by C.L. Ross**

Afterwards, discuss the story and see what weather the children noticed and how it was similar or different to how the characters were feeling?

ACTIVITY

Years 3-6

Part One

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Part Two

Introduce your learners to how the weather can be used in literature and film to describe how characters are feeling or to help depict a certain mood. The Disney film ***Frozen*** is a great example that most children will be familiar with!

Following the discussion, ask your learners to write a short story using the weather as a way of setting the scene or describing how a character is feeling.

Here are some examples:

“Rain poured down on Ava’s house. It felt like it would never stop.”

“Ravi had a face like thunder”

“At that moment, the sun appeared from behind a cloud.”

“Mali did not like the old woman and behaved frostily towards her”

Afterwards, share and discuss the stories that the children have written, exploring how each of them has used the weather to help describe the mood or feelings of the character.

REUSE AND RECYCLE!

Owl is a resourceful little chap and his home is full of bits and pieces that other people have discarded. He even generates his own electricity using an old bicycle!

Here are some ideas of practical activities you can get children involved with...



ACTIVITY IDEAS

Years 1 & 2

- Use items that would usually be thrown away or recycled to make a bird feeder for the garden (Be careful of using items that could be dangerous to wildlife)
- Have a junk fashion show! Turn your old (clean) rubbish and recycling into amazing new outfits. Why not see if you can create an Owl costume?
- Make a puppet out of old socks and put on a show!

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Years 3-6

- Use items that would usually be thrown away or recycled to make something for the wildlife in your school or garden. A washing up bowl could become a pond or an old box a home for a hedgehog. (Be careful of using items that could be dangerous to wildlife, especially anything that could get stuck or tangled up in)
- Design something that could be powered by peddling. This company will give you lots of inspiration: <http://www.pedalemporium.co.uk>
- Turn an old item of clothing into something new. Old, ripped jeans can be turned into brilliant patchwork bags!
- Design a costume, prop or a whole set for a theatre show, using only recycled items. If you want a challenge, bring these designs to life by making them!