

## INTRODUCTION: LET'S ALL ENJOY THE SHOW!

Thank you for attending TheaterWorksUSA's production of *Peter Pan*. We hope this guide will help your students learn more about the play and its content, as well as give you creative ways to make the show part of your curriculum. A trip to the theater is always very special and unique, and it can create a lifelong passion for performance and storytelling. We hope our production will inspire your students. You may want to review some basic theater etiquette with your class, as this might be one of their first experiences at a live show. Talking or being disruptive during the performance is distracting to the actors and fellow audience members. However, we highly encourage clapping, laughing, and cheering at the parts they enjoy.

Feel free to use this guide as a starting point for you and your students to explore the show and its rich content. This study guide is designed to enhance your students' experience in seeing *Peter Pan*. It will provide discussion points after your class has seen the production, along with lessons and in-class activities. These activities will extend the topic-specific ideas within the show, and engage the students in a hands-on classroom project. Feel free to adapt or change any discussion prompts or material to suit your classroom and style!

## THE PLAY'S THE THING: OUR STORY

Peter Pan was a character written by Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937) who appeared in many of his stories throughout Barrie's career. This production is based on John Caird and Trevor Nunn's 1982 adaptation of *Peter Pan*, which was originally developed for London's Royal Shakespeare Company. In our production the story is told by children living in the early 1900s; they act out the classic tale with objects they find in their attic. 🌿



L-R: Hannah Timmons, Christian Castro. Photo by Jake Wragge

A mysterious boy named Peter Pan flies into the Darling family's nursery window and entices Wendy, John, and Michael to go with him to a magical place called Neverland. After many adventures there, Wendy convinces her brothers that they must return to their anxious parents. The Lost Boys have enjoyed having a mother (Wendy) so much that they decide to go with them to the real world. As they exit the hideout, the children are captured by the evil Captain Hook and his pirates and Peter rushes to rescue them. After Peter battles with the Captain, the pirates are vanquished and Hook is eaten by a crocodile. Peter returns the children to their nursery window, where their parents and Nana the Dog await. Peter refuses to stay; he prefers to remain a boy forever no matter the cost, thinking that growing up is terribly overrated, and he flies back to Neverland.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME? OUR CHARACTERS

### WENDY

A young English girl who is excited to meet Peter Pan and see Neverland. Others try to make her their mother, which can be overwhelming for Wendy, as she needs a mother herself.

### JOHN

The middle child of the Darlings. He is excited for the adventure that he finds in Neverland, and as time passes on, forgets his previous life in England until Wendy reminds him.

### MICHAEL

The youngest Darling child. A happy boy, he loves his newfound skill of flying, and loves being with the lost boys, but needs a mother to take care of him.

### MR. DARLING

The father of Wendy, John, and Michael. He is a stern man, prone to acting in anger and jealousy, and takes out his feelings onto Nana.

### MRS. DARLING

Mother of the Darling children. She is firm, but a kind and loving mother. She is nervous about the appearance of a boy at the window, and heartbroken when her children disappear.

### NANA

The family dog, and the children's nurse/caretaker. A beloved family pet who loves the children very much.

### PETER PAN

Leader of the Lost Boys in Neverland. He longs for a mother of his own, but loves fun and adventure, and has a fear of growing up.

### TINKER BELL

Peter's sidekick and mischievous fairy, a trickster. She is portrayed by the sound of a bell.

### SLIGHTLY

A lost boy in Neverland. He is excited for a mother

### TOOTLES

A lost boy in Neverland. He wants a mother, too, but accidentally shoots Wendy out of the sky.

### CAPTAIN HOOK

Captain of a Pirate ship. After losing a hand in a fight with Peter Pan, he is set on defeating Peter and escaping the crocodile who keeps following him. He wears a hook where his hand once was.

### SMEE

Hook's sidekick, a pirate.

### CROCODILE

After tasting Hook's hand, he follows Hook relentlessly, hoping for more to eat.



## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: PREVIEW DISCUSSION

1. Open a classwide discussion about the play you are all going to see. Using the information above, present the play's storyline and characters to the class. Encourage your students to ask any questions they might have about the story or the characters. Some of your students may be familiar with different versions of Peter Pan (see Online Resources later in this guide for film options). Encourage those who have read the stories or seen different productions to share their opinions about the different versions and the story as a whole in this discussion.
2. Have a class discussion about other stories that have make-believe elements. What kinds of things can happen in a story that are not possible in the real world? Introduce the story of Peter Pan in light of this discussion, talking about the fantastic elements of the story such as mermaids, fairies, and the fact that people can learn how to fly! Follow up with a post-performance discussion. (see Section VIII Extension Activities for more on this discussion)
3. This production of Peter Pan is set in a children's attic in England in the early 1900s, and the story is "acted out" by the children. Introduce students to this concept by reading a book aloud (preferably one with magical events) and having them act out the story with limited props if available. Follow up with a discussion after the performance (see Section VI for more discussion prompts).
4. Tell the students that you will be discussing the play in greater detail after they see it, and the above discussions will be revisited.



L-R: Madeline Kolker, Sara Glancy, Jojo Karlin, Hannah Timmons, Ryan Frostig. Photo by Jake Wragge

## WHAT'S THAT YOU SAID? SOME KEY VOCABULARY WORDS

In order to fully experience and understand the play, your students should be familiar with and understand some key vocabulary words. For more vocabulary practice, refer to the worksheets at the end of this study guide.

### Beginner Vocabulary

**NURSE** A nanny or caretaker of children

**CLEVER** Smart, handy, skilled

**FAIRY** A small, magical creature

**SPOOL** A small cylinder that holds thread

**PIRATE** Someone who robs other ships at sea

**MERMAID** A fictional creature who is half woman, half fish

**LAGOON** A stretch of water separated from the sea by coral or a sandbank

### Advanced Vocabulary

**IGNORANT** Not knowing something  
Synonyms: uneducated, uninformed

**CONCEIT** Excessive pride in oneself, pompous  
Synonyms: narcissism, smugness, big-headedness  
(Conceit has a second definition, meaning a fanciful expression or elaborate metaphor. Advanced students may be able to analyze the double meaning of this word, as Peter Pan himself is a conceit for perpetual childhood and all its benefits and troubles.)



**IMPERTINENT** Disrespectful or rude  
Synonyms: impolite, disrespectful  
(Impertinent has a second definition, meaning not pertinent to the matter at hand, irrelevant, or off-topic)

**DASTARD** Treacherous, despicable, evil  
Synonyms: cowardly, traitorous

**MAROONED** To leave someone alone and trapped with no means of escape  
Synonyms: stranded, deserted, abandoned

**SCHEME** A large, systematic plan  
Synonyms: project, strategy, idea, procedure

**SEIZE** To take by force  
Synonyms: grab, snatch, pluck

**QUEER** Strange or odd  
Synonyms: unusual, bizarre, puzzling, uncommon

**KING EDWARD** Edward VII, who ruled the United Kingdom from 1901-1910.



## EVERYONE'S A CRITIC: POST VIEWING DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Now that your class has seen the play, tell your students that you are going to be exploring the play and doing some activities related to the play. Open a class-wide discussion about what the students just saw.

1. What is the story about? See if you can describe the play in just a few sentences.

What were your favorite parts? What were your least favorite parts? Is there any part of the story or play you still have questions about?

2. Why do you think Peter doesn't want to grow up?

If Peter decided to stay with the Darlings and be adopted, what kind of things do you think he would experience that he would like or dislike? Do you think your idea of fun changes as you get older? Peter says he 'never cries' when he is caught crying over his shadow. Why do you think he said this?

3. Many characters in the play desire a mother. Why is a mother/parent so important to Peter/the Lost Boys/Hook and Smee?

What do the various characters think a mother/parent is? Wendy tries her best to be a mother to Peter and the other boys; do you think she succeeded? Sometimes Wendy was comforting, and sometimes she gave orders. What do you think is most important about being a mother/parent? What do you think the Darlings felt when their children were gone? Do grownups still need mothers/parents, and why? In the show, the one female character is asked to take care of all the male characters; what do you think about that?

4. Tinker Bell was not played by an actor, but was represented by a bell and the actors' reactions to her. Was this easy to follow? Why or why not? Could you tell what Tinkerbell was supposed to be doing? How?

Why does Tinker Bell seem to dislike Wendy? Why did she drink the poisoned medicine meant for Peter? Peter asks the audience to clap to keep Tinkerbell alive; did you like this *audience participation*?

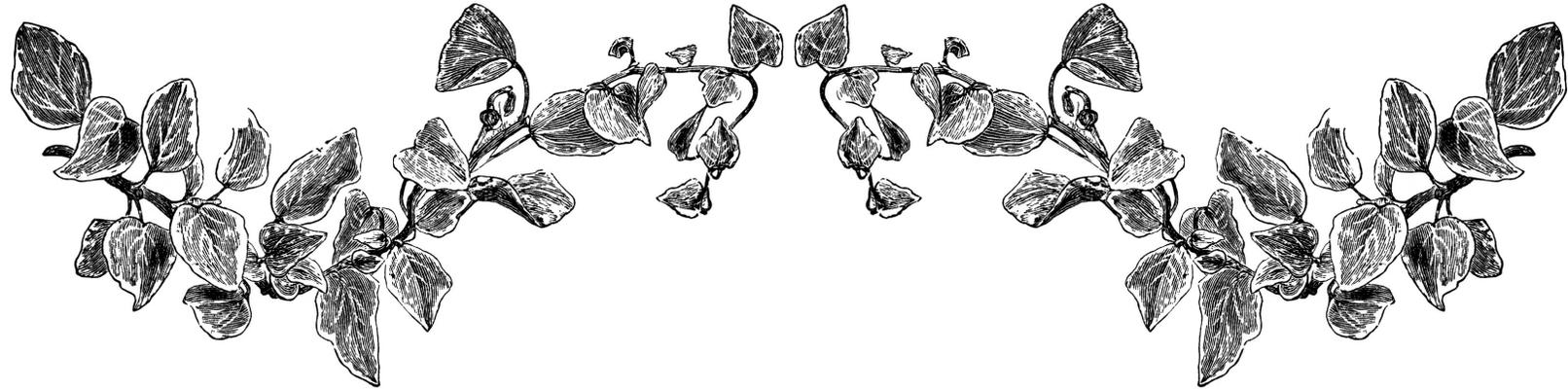


L-R: Jojo Karlin, Christian Castro. Photo by Jake Wragge

## UNDERSTANDING PETER PAN

The production is a *play within a play*, which is a production in which the characters on stage act out another story. How could you tell when the children changed characters/locations? Was it fun to experience the story in this manner?

**Peter Pan the character:** What are some of Peter Pan's character traits? (brave, headstrong, stubborn, etc). How do his traits affect choices he makes? If Peter had different traits, would he take different actions? Would that change the story? Based on what you now know about Peter Pan, would you have made the same decision as Wendy did to go to Neverland? Why/ why not?



## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

To continue the discussion about being a grownup, use the following activities:

- Make two pros and cons lists. One list will be the pros and cons of growing up, and the other will be the pros and cons of remaining a child. Have students fill these out individually or as a class. List all the things that can fit into each category. Weigh this decision out as you would for a regular pros and cons list (Given all the information we have put on these lists, would it be better to grow up or stay a child?) Keep in mind that while they may be similar, sometimes the pros of being a grown up are not exactly the same as the cons of staying a child, and vice versa.
- Have students draw what they might look like as an adult. How are they dressed? What kind of life do they expect they will have? Will they have children of their own? Be as descriptive and specific as you can.



To continue the discussion about imagination and interpretation, use the following activities:

- Sit or stand in a circle. Give the students one object (ex: a piece of paper, a rubber chicken, kitchen tongs, etc). Pass the object around the circle, and ask each student to come up with a possible use for this object and demonstrate it cleanly and safely. No repeats! (ex: kitchen tongs can be a tool to pick up garbage, a backscratcher, a nose picker, a statement necklace, the newest style in bowties, a shoe horn, etc.) Try with different objects for each round.
- Draw a map of what you think Neverland looks like. Where is Mermaid Lagoon? Where do the Lost Boys stay? Where does the Pirate ship dock? What else do you think would be in your version of Neverland? This activity can be done individually or as a group.

- Summary and Opinion Writing: Write a summary of *Peter Pan* as well as an opinion paragraph that answers the question: ‘Who is your favorite character from Peter Pan and why?’ Choose one or two characters to focus on.
- Imagine a scene where Captain Hook and Peter are on the pirate ship. They are battling for some treasure that the Lost Boys found on Neverland. Peter wants his treasure back, and Captain Hook doesn’t want to give it to him. What would happen? Describe what Peter would do to get back his treasure from Captain Hook. Students can write or safely act out the scene.
- Tinker Bell serves as a guide through Neverland for Peter Pan. After reading the story and seeing the play, invite students to create their own fairy to guide them. Students can draw, paint, or sculpt images of their fairies, then give them names and provide information about their personalities. Students should answer questions like what kind of power the fairy has, whether the fairy is mischievous or sincere, how the fairy will help them, how they will need to help their fairy, and so on. Additionally, if instruments such as kazoos, maracas, bells etc. are available, students can give voice to their fairy and experiment with what they would sound like.
- Break into small groups, and assign each group a classic story and a small selection of objects you have available to you. Give the groups a certain amount of time to rehearse, and afterwards have each group present the story like a short play. They will need to be inventive with their objects to use as props to tell their story effectively. The bigger the choices, the better! (You can assign small scenes from Peter Pan for students to act out, act out a different story, or have students make their own story! Remember, one actor can play many roles, and a prop can have many possibilities!)
- Fly High: In order to fly, Peter Pan and the Darling children have to think nice thoughts. While students may not be able to fly, they can feel like they are soaring by hearing the nice thoughts their classmates have to say about them. One by one, ask each student to sit in a chair at the front of the class while classmates share what they like about that person (either out loud or written on paper), such as that he is a good friend or she is good at soccer. When you are done with the activity, ask students to think about how the good thoughts from their classmates made them feel, and relate it back to the story.



L-R: Hannah Timmons, Sara Glancy. Photo by Jake Wragge



## STRAIGHT ON TILL MORNING- LEARNING MORE

The play is about the story of Peter Pan, but there are plenty of other aspects of Peter to continue exploring. There are a number of short stories written by Sir James Matthew Barrie (see Resources to Further Explore below) that contain Peter Pan, and further history to learn.

### Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937)

Barrie was born in Kirriemuir, a village in Scotland, the ninth of ten children, but later moved to London to be a journalist. Barrie gained fame as a writer and published a popular novel *The Little Minister* in 1891. After his successful dramatization of the work in 1897, he continued to write plays for much of his career. He was highly regarded during his lifetime and was honored with the title of baronet in 1913. The character of Peter Pan first appeared in Barrie's novel *The Little White Bird* (1902), in which a man tells the story of a young boy who could be found in London's Kensington Gardens only at night. Barrie said that the character was inspired by the five sons of Barrie's close friends, Arthur and Sylvia Llewellyn Davies. With no children of his own, Barrie became very close to the Llewellyn Davies family; when the boys' parents died of illness, Barrie became their guardian. The adventures in Neverland came out of tales that he made up for his young charges, who enjoyed acting them out. Peter Pan appears throughout Barrie's literary career, in many versions. The play was first performed in 1904 (although not formally published in that form until 1928).



J.M. Barrie. courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica

- Find out more about J.M. Barrie, and read some of the original Peter Pan stories
- Find out more about Scotland, including his hometown of Kirriemuir in Angus/Forfashire. Compare his work to other Scottish writers such as Sir Arthur Conan Dyle (who developed the character of Sherlock Holmes) and Robert Louis Stevenson (*Treasure Island*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).

### London, England

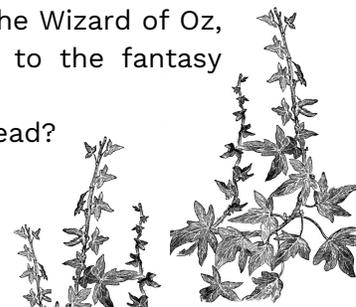
Peter Pan takes place in London at the turn of the century, known as the Edwardian Era (when Edward VII was the King of England, 1901-1910). While the main adventure in the play takes place in Neverland, Wendy and her brothers as well as the children acting out the story live in London in this time period.

- Research England during the Edwardian Era. How does this time period compare to where and how you currently live? (note clothing, global politics, family structure, modes of communication, etc.)
- Where are Kensington Gardens, where Peter Pan supposedly first frolicked? (There is a statue in honor of Peter Pan in the parks to this day)

### The Role of Fantasy

The fantasy world of *Peter Pan* is colorful and vast. Fantasy plays a role in many famous stories, and can sometimes tell us much about our own world.

- What are the elements of fantasy in Peter Pan? What parts of the story could happen in real life, and what couldn't? (for beginner students: establish the definition of fantasy before opening this question)
- What other stories have fantasy in them? (Ex: Alice in Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh, The Wizard of Oz, Harry Potter, Frankenstein, etc) Are the elements of fantasy in Peter Pan similar to the fantasy elements in the stories you mentioned? What makes them similar/different?
- Why would an author/playwright want to include fantasy in a story? Is fantasy fun to read?



## ONLINE TEACHER RESOURCES TO EXPLORE FURTHER

### Peter Pan Books

Peter and Wendy, J.M. Barrie (1911)- free on [Google Books](#)

Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens, J.M. Barrie (1906)- free on [Google Books](#)

The Little White Bird, J.M. Barrie (1902)- free on [Google Books](#)

### Peter Pan Film Productions

Peter Pan (1953)- free to view in full on [Vimeo](#)

Mary Martin as Peter Pan (1954)- available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#)

Hook (1991)- available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#)

Peter Pan (2003)- available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#)

Finding Neverland (2004)- available for hard copy purchase on [Amazon](#)

NBC Peter Pan Live! (2014)- available for purchase on [Amazon](#)

Pan (2015)- available to rent or buy on [Amazon](#)



### J.M. Barrie

J.M. Barrie, [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

Why J.M. Barrie Created Peter Pan, [The New Yorker](#)

Hide and Seek With Angels: A Life of J.M. Barrie, Lisa Chaney- for purchase on [Amazon](#)

### London, England

The Edwardian Period, [Intriguing History](#)

Beautiful Photos Capture Life in England During the Edwardian Era, [Vintage News](#)

The Peter Pan Statue, [The Royal Parks](#)

### If your students liked Peter Pan, they may also enjoy:

Winnie the Pooh, A.A. Milne- free on [Google Books](#)

When We Were Very Young, A.A. Milne- free on [Google Books](#)

Now We Are Six, A.A. Milne- free on [Google Books](#)

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll- free on [Google Books](#)

A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens- free on [Google Books](#)

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, L. Frank Baum- free on [Google Books](#)

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley- free on [Google Books](#)

We'd love to hear from you! Please let us know what you thought of *Peter Pan*. Were your students familiar with the story before seeing the play? Did seeing the play inspire them to read more about Peter Pan? Send comments and suggestions to Elyse Orecchio, Marketing & Communications Manager, TheaterWorksUSA, [eorecchio@twusa.org](mailto:eorecchio@twusa.org)



# Peter Pan

## Vocabulary Review

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using words from the word bank.

**Nurse    Clever    Spool    Fairy    Mermaid    Lagoon    Pirates**

- 1) Both Peter Pan and Wendy were able to solve problems because they were very\_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) Peter's enemy, Captain Hook, was the leader of a ship full of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3) Wendy offered Peter a kiss, but she was embarrassed when he put his hand out, so instead she gave him something from the sewing basket, a \_\_\_\_\_of thread.
- 4) Peter told Wendy all about\_\_\_\_\_(s), the beautiful creatures who looked like they were part woman and part fish and lived in the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) The Darlings had so little money that their dog, Nana, acted as their children's \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6) Peter Pan taught the children how to fly, but they couldn't get off the ground until he sprinkled \_\_\_\_\_ dust on them.



# Peter Pan

## Answer Key

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using words from the word bank.

**Nurse    Clever    Spool    Fairy    Mermaid    Lagoon    Pirates**

- 1) Both Peter Pan and Wendy were able to solve problems because they were very \_\_CLEVER\_\_.
  
- 2) Peter's enemy, Captain Hook, was the leader of a ship full of \_\_PIRATES\_\_.
  
- 3) Wendy offered Peter a kiss, but she was embarrassed when he put his hand out, so instead she gave him something from the sewing basket, a \_\_SPOOL\_\_ of thread.
  
- 4) Peter told Wendy all about \_\_MERMAID(s), the beautiful creatures who looked like they were part woman and part fish and lived in the \_\_LAGOON\_\_.
  
- 5) The Darlings had so little money that their dog, Nana, acted as their children's \_\_NURSE\_\_.
  
- 6) Peter Pan taught the children how to fly, but they couldn't get off the ground until he sprinkled \_\_FAIRY\_\_ dust on them.



# Peter Pan

## Vocabulary Review

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using words from the word bank.

**Ignorant      Conceit      Impertinent      Dastard      Marooned**  
**Scheme      Seize      Queer      King Edward**

- 1) The pirates wanted to \_\_\_\_\_ Wendy to make her their mother.
- 2) Peter was a \_\_\_\_\_ because he congratulated himself for getting his shadow back without thanking Wendy for her help.
- 3) Captain Hook heard a \_\_\_\_\_ sound he hadn't heard before, and mistook it for a bird.
- 4) Tinkerbell's behavior of pulling on Wendy's hair, stopping Peter's kiss, was quite \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) John and Michael stayed loyal subjects to England by refusing to swear off \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6) Captain Hook and Smee came up with a \_\_\_\_\_ to capture Peter Pan.
- 7) What a \_\_\_\_\_ act to shoot down a girl, even if one thought it was a bird!
- 8) Wendy thought it was \_\_\_\_\_ of Peter not to know what sewing is.
- 9) Pirates will often leave those who disobey the rules of the ship \_\_\_\_\_ with no means of escape.



# Peter Pan

## Answer Key

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, using words from the word bank.

**Ignorant      Conceit      Impertinent      Dastard      Marooned**  
**Scheme      Seize      Queer      King Edward**

- 1) The pirates wanted to \_\_\_SEIZE\_\_\_ Wendy to make her their mother.
- 2) Peter was a \_\_\_CONCEIT\_\_\_ because he congratulated himself for getting his shadow back without thanking Wendy for her help.
- 3) Captain Hook heard a \_\_\_QUEER\_\_\_ sound he hadn't heard before, and mistook it for a bird.
- 4) Tinkerbell's behavior of pulling on Wendy's hair, stopping Peter's kiss, was quite \_\_\_IMPERTINENT\_\_\_.
- 5) John and Michael stayed loyal subjects to England by refusing to swear off \_\_\_KING EDWARD\_\_\_.
- 6) Captain Hook and Smee came up with a \_\_\_SCHEME\_\_\_ to capture and poison Peter Pan.
- 7) What a \_\_\_DASTARD\_\_\_ act to shoot down a girl, even if one thought it was a bird!
- 8) Wendy thought it was \_\_\_IGNORANT\_\_\_ of Peter not to know what sewing is.
- 9) Pirates will often leave those who disobey the rules of the ship \_\_\_MAROONED\_\_\_ with no means of escape.