



Hansel and Gretel

Practical Activity Pack for GCSE

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Teacher's Introduction

Hansel and Gretel is another cracker from Kneehigh with all the things you'd expect from the innovative Cornish theatre group with the added familiarity of a well-known fairy tale. It tackles the classic fairy tale themes as well as raising new ones for the twenty-first century. It's familiar but it's different and it offers a huge amount of exciting and innovative content which makes it an ideal choice for GCSE Drama.

This resource offers a huge range of both exploratory, practical and exam-based activities for *Gretel* for the AQA GCSE Drama specification. There are introductory activities to explore the play as well as detailed text notes to guide you through your reading of the play. In addition, there are activities that will allow students to explore the play as a text for performance, essential for their understanding of the text for the exam. There are many opportunities for discussion and writing throughout this comprehensive guide to writing for the examination.

Most of the activities in this pack consist of a student worksheet. Where relevant, there is also a separate teacher sheet. This may be a completed version of the student worksheet, or additional notes for the teacher to act as an aid in delivering the activity. These are found before the relevant student worksheet.

Some activities have a teacher sheet only, with no accompanying student worksheet. These are for teacher-led practical or discussion activities.

In some cases, there are also student handouts to support the activity worksheet.

All page references refer to Kneehigh Theatre's *Hansel and Gretel* by Carl Grose, published by Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781849430579

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Activity Grid

Activity	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Written	Practical	Discussion	Research	Independent	Group	Class
Pre-reading Research Task – The Brothers Grimm			x		x			x	x		
Classic Fairy Tale Recipe			x				x	x		x	
Pre-reading Task – What Do You Know about 'Hansel and Gretel'?			x		x		x				
Comparison – What are the Main Differences between Kneehigh's Version of 'Hansel and Gretel' and the Original?			x		x		x		x	x	
Kneehigh Research Project			x		x		x		x	x	x
Themes			x		x		x	x	x	x	x
Storyboard			x		x		x		x		
Using Brechtian Devices with Tableaux	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x
Creating Placards	x	x	x		x	x	x			x	
Tableaux Warm-up Activity	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x
Family Tableaux and Thought Tracking	x	x	x	x		x				x	x
Character Exploration					x		x		x		x
Character Relations			x		x		x		x		x
Exploring Characters through Rotary Improvisation	x	x	x			x					x
Exploring the Chorus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
Exploring the Family Using a Split Stage	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	x

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Activity	A01	A02	A03	A04	Written	Practical	Discussion	Research	Independent	Group	Class
Deciding to Leave the Children in the Forest – Practical Exploration and Hot Seating	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Monologues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Recreating the Animals	X	X	X	X		X				X	
The Strange Character	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X
Creating the World through Sound	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Ensemble Recreation of the Witch's Death	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	X
Exam-style Question			X		X				X		
Costume Design			X		X		X		X	X	
Puppet Design			X		X		X		X	X	
Set Design Set Building			X		X		X		X	X	X
Props			X		X		X		X		X
Staging for a Specific Scene from <i>Hansel and Gretel</i>			X		X		X		X	X	X
Lighting Design			X		X		X		X	X	X
Sound Design			X		X		X		X	X	X

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Activity Outcomes

Pre-reading Research Task – The Brothers Grimm

The outcome of this task is for students to research the Brothers Grimm and gain social and historical context of the story as well as relating the Grimm's work to their understanding of how the fairy tales we know today came about.

Classic Fairy Tale Recipe

The outcome of this task is to explore some of the conventions that are found in a classic fairy tale in 'Hansel and Gretel'.

Pre-reading Task – What Do You Know about 'Hansel and Gretel'?

The outcome of this task is to explore students' prior knowledge of the story. It's hoped that people will be able to recite some of the details of it.

Comparison Task – What are the Main Differences between Kneehigh's Version of 'Hansel and Gretel' and the Original?

The outcome of this task is to highlight how Carl Grose's version of 'Hansel and Gretel' differs from the original tale.

Kneehigh Research Project

The outcome of this task is for students to research Kneehigh Theatre Company and identify what conventions are common in their work. There is a great deal of information available on Kneehigh's own pages.

Themes

The outcome of this task is for students to explore the themes of the play using evidence from the text and their own opinions.

Storyboard

The outcome of this task is for students to demonstrate their knowledge of the text. The task also introduces the idea of tableaux and allows students to practically explore the text.

Using Brechtian Devices with Tableaux

The outcome of this task is for students to explore some of Brecht's methodological devices in his tableaux work.

Creating Placards

The outcome of this task is to use the Brechtian convention of placards to support the text.

Tableaux Warm-up Activity

The outcome of this task is to ensure that students are familiar with the idea of tableaux and how they are used.

Family Tableau and Thought Tracking

The outcome of this task is to push the creation of tableaux further and to explore the family's relationships.

Character Exploration

The outcome of this task is for students to develop their knowledge of the characters from the text to support their views.

Character relationships

The outcome of this task is for students to examine the family's relationships documented in the text but also from what is inferred.

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Exploring Characters through Rotary Improvisation

The outcome of this task is to use improvisation to explore how characters might be different people extending students' understanding of the character.

Exploring the Chorus

The outcome of this task is to explore the idea of a conventional chorus and how it can be used in a play.

Exploring the Family Using a Split Stage

The outcome of this task is to use the text to focus on creating characters using a split stage.

Deciding to Leave the Children in the Forest – Practical Exploration and Hot Seat

The outcome of this task is to gain an understanding of the characters by practical exploration. This task examines how a twenty-first century family might react in the same situation and how it has changed and allows students to ask character questions to account for their actions.

Monologues

The outcome of this task is to allow students to use the answers from the hot seat to create monologues that allows a character to explain their thoughts, feelings and decisions. This will help students to understand a character for both the performers and the audience.

Recreating the Animals

The outcome of this task is to explore how to physically and vocally portray the animals in the play as well as using off text work to explore the creation of different characters.

The Strange Character

The outcome of this task is to use tableaux and physical and vocal skills to recreate a character and explore how these choices might affect an audience.

Creating the Play through Sound

The outcome of this task is to explore the use of soundscape to retell the story.

Ensemble Recreation of the Witch's Death

The outcome of this task is to explore and develop the use of ensemble work to recreate a scene.

Costume Design, Puppet Design, Set Design, Set Building, Staging, Lighting design

The outcomes of the tasks above are to explore the technical conventions of the play and how to choose to use design skills to create their own performance. These explorations will be assessed in the exam about these conventions in the exam.

Exam-style Question

The outcome of this task is to look in depth at the type of questions that will be asked in the exam and how questions might be answered.



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Specification Information

Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE Drama boards.

AO1: Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance.

AO2: Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.

AO3: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

AO4: Analyse and evaluate their own work and the work of others.

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx. %)		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
AO1		20	
AO2		10	
AO3	30		
AO4	10	10	
Overall weighting of components	40	40	

'Hansel and Gretel' is a set text for AQA GCSE Drama for Component 1: Understanding of Drama. Section B: Study of set text and assesses Assessment Objective 3. AO3 requires you to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre is developed and performed.

What will you be assessed on?

Your knowledge and understanding of Drama and theatre

Your study of one set text from a choice of six

Your analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

How are you assessed?

A written exam that lasts 1 hour and 45 minutes. The exam is open book which means you can bring your text with you, however, you are not allowed to have any notes in the text at all.

The exam is out of 80 marks and is worth 40% of your GCSE.

The questions in the exam are:

Section A: Multiple choice questions – 4 marks

Section B: Four questions on a given extract from your set text – 44 marks

Section C: One question (from a choice) on the work of live theatre makers in a live performance – 32 marks

Your answers on your set text are worth 55% of the exam so you need to know your set text well.

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Checklist from the Specification
Students must develop knowledge and understanding of the

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Characteristics of performance texts and dramatic works
Genre
Structure
Character
Form
Style
Language
Sub-text
Character motivation and interaction
The creation of mood and atmosphere
The development of pace and rhythm
Dramatic climax
Stage directions
The practical demands of the text

Social, cultural and historical contexts
The social, cultural and historical contexts in which the performance texts studied
The theatrical conventions of the period in which the performance texts studied

How meaning is interpreted and communicated
Performance conventions
Use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage
Actor and audience configuration
Relationships between performers and audience
Design fundamentals such as scale, shape, colour, texture
The design of props and the design of sets such as revolves, trucks, projection, m
pyrotechnics, smoke machines, flying
the design of costume including hair and make-up
The design of lighting such as direction, colour, intensity, special effects
The design of sound such as direction, amplification, music, sound effects both l
Performers' vocal interpretation of character such as accent, volume, pitch, tim
phrasing, emotional range, delivery of lines
Performers' physical interpretation of character such as build, age, height, facial
posture, gesture, facial expression

Drama and theatre terminology and how to use it appropriately
Stage positioning: upstage (left, right, centre), downstage (left, right, centre), centre
Staging configuration: theatre in the round, proscenium arch, thrust stage, traverse
promenade
Students should have a general understanding of the implications of the above s
the use of performance space

The roles and responsibilities of theatre makers in contemporary professional theatre
Roles: playwright, performer, understudy, lighting designer, sound designer, set
designer, puppet designer, technician, director, stage manager, theatre manager
Knowledge and understanding should cover: the activities each may undertake c
the aspect(s) of the rehearsal/performance process each is accountable for (thei
whole production being a success)

Requirements taken from the 2016 GCSE AQA Drama specification, pp. 11–13
(<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/drama/specifications/AQA-8261-SP-2016.PDF>)

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Pre-reading Research Task – The Brothers Grimm

The Brothers Grimm are perhaps the most well-known tellers of fairy tales. If you know, quite a few of them would have been written by the Brothers Grimm. They were not only storytellers but also language and stories as well as writing. The brothers put together collections of folk tales, beliefs, customs and stories of a community shared through the generations by writing them down. Their book 'Children's and Household Tales' was published in two volumes in 1812 and 1815. If the Brothers Grimm had not put these stories together, somebody else would have.

Research the Brothers Grimm and fill in the table below with some information.

The Brothers Grimm	
Wilhelm Grimm 	Jacob Grimm 
Born: Died: Key facts:	Born: Died: Key facts:
Other Works	

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Classic Fairy Tale Recipe

Fill in the sheet below with all the ingredients that make up a classic fairy tale. What is different in this version of the story?

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Pre-reading Task – What Do You Know About 'Hansel and Gretel'?

'Hansel and Gretel' is a really well-known fairy tale. Fill in the boxes with everything you know about the story.

Plot	
Hansel	The Witch
Woodcutter/Father	
Setting	

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Compare what you wrote with other people. What did everyone agree on? Were there any differences?



Hansel and Gretel Synopsis

'Hansel and Gretel' is, of course, a really well-known story but Kneehigh's version is a bit different. Here's a summary so you don't forget.

ACT ONE

The play opens with the Supernature Chorus singing the opening song; it begins with 'time.' As they sing two rabbits appear; they join in with the singing, eat the grass and Gretel enter, they watch a red bird circle overhead and Gretel catches a white feather. The sound of a rabbit snare and the rabbits vanish.

Hansel is reading an encyclopedia and reads bits out loud. Gretel who is preoccupied with a rabbit she has seen in a tree. Gretel tells Hansel that she intends to practise her engineering and collect items for the contraption that they will construct. They employ the contraption to catch the rabbit and knocks the apple into Gretel's hands. Hansel snatches the apple and teases Gretel with it. Gretel takes the apple and eats it.

The twins' mother and father enter; Father is wielding an axe and Mother is brandishing a knife. They are much cheerfully as Gretel and Mother skin the rabbit and Hansel and Father dance. Father allows himself to be beaten. The scene is very upbeat and energetic and we see the family enjoying themselves together. Hansel continues to follow his father's instructions to cut up the encyclopedia. Father and Hansel exit leaving Mother and Gretel to look for the chickens.

The chickens, Diane and Maureen, enter and Gretel pops three eggs from them. Father and Hansel are introduced to the call for Graham the ferret. Graham arrives and scampers up the hill. Hansel wonders when he will have his own ferret. Mother is impressed by Father's feisty dance. Gretel then enters with a contraption for feeding the chickens strapped to her back. The contraption is everywhere and the chickens reappear to gobble it up. The chickens are left alone and Mother makes a remark on the life of plenty that they lead.

The distant sound of yodelling can be heard soon followed by Johann and Wilhelm, the twins, running across the valley. Hansel and Gretel realise that their father is wrapping presents, the arrival of Johann and Wilhelm with their birthday instruments signifies that it is their birthday. The twins bring fireworks and Father gives the twins beautiful wood carved figures of themselves. The twins blow out the candle.

The blowing out of the candle brings an abrupt change as famine strikes, the wind has blown the family forward a year. Diane and Maureen, now scrawny, lament their dreadful predicament. They demand eggs from the chickens but Maureen can't lay and Diane only manages to lay one. In singing their lament, Mother enters with a knife and takes Maureen away. Mother and Hansel wonder what they can do. Mother is about to hit Father over the head with a chopper. Gretel enters to remind them that it is their birthday. Mother and Father offer the twins a gift. Gretel brings a candle with a picture of the family on it. Mother gives Gretel some marigolds and Father gives Hansel some food to eat. The children blow out the candle hoping to wish for a better future but the family is still in a state of famine.

The family endeavour to cheer themselves up by singing and dance the family dance. Mother suggests to Father that they should take the children into the forest to look for themselves that it's for the best. Father and Mother tell the children that they are going to the forest for forage. Gretel tells Hansel to leave a trail of pebbles while she leaves a trail of petals. Hansel and Gretel dance in the forest until Father finds a spot and tells the children to count. The children are heartbroken.

Hansel and Gretel open their eyes to find their parents gone; assuming that they have fallen asleep. The rabbits appear again and comment on what a bad idea it is to fall asleep. Gretel wakes up in the dark and wanders through the forest; they are terrified to see a witch appearing with an old bicycle. She shoots fire out of her fingertips and brings knives and passes and the moon rises revealing the pebbles and petals that the children dropped. Relieved, the twins spot the trail and begin to follow but suddenly the strange character appears and destroys the trail. She sings and skips off into the forest.

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Diane the chicken appears alone in a wasteland; she sings a song for her lost friend. Mother checks Diane for eggs but there are none. Diane and Mother both spot a worm and Mother goes away and eats the worm. She sings in distress and admits to Father what she has done to her children. As Mother and Father dance slowly and sadly Hansel and Gretel enter the forest. Mother states that they still have nothing to eat and chases Diane with an axe. Hansel and Gretel, while Mother and Father watch, starving. After Father fails to catch a mouse, Gretel constructs a contraption to catch it. The contraption squashes the mouse and Mother and Father are shocked.

Hansel and Gretel realise that they can't go on like this and as their parents sleep they steal some bread and Johann give them the last of their bread. The twins crumble the bread and throw it away as they enter the forest.

ACT TWO

Hansel and Gretel wake up to the sound of a thousand rabbits flying off. A bird appears and it leads them to a house made of bread. The bird encourages them to eat and they do. The bird flies from the roof and gobble it down. The door to the house opens to reveal an Old Lady who offers the children something to eat and invites them inside. Hansel and Gretel can't believe that the Old Lady is so kind and her bird prepares the food, they dance and feed Hansel and Gretel to bursting. The Old Lady covers them with a blanket over them. The Old Lady tells Birdy that she is going to sleep when she returns. When she returns in her hunting gear we realise that she is the strange character from the woods earlier. When the Old Lady returns to the house it is a place of nightmares with bones and teddy bears fall from the roof and come to life, crawling over the sleeping children.

The next morning the children wake still full from their previous night's feast. The Old Lady shows them a brace of dead rabbits. As they talk to the Old Lady the atmosphere is filled with horror and laughter. The children notice the shoes hanging everywhere and ask about the bones. The Old Lady tells them that they would like to go home and the dead rabbits come to life and sing. Gretel accuses the Old Lady of being a witch and she transforms, her dress peeling away to reveal a mouldy, bald monster. The Witch uses her magic to put Hansel into a cage and tie Gretel to the cage. She leaves and Hansel and Gretel fret about how they will survive.

In the forest the rabbits try to find a song to help them forget the horror of what they have done. In the house Hansel hangs in his cage eating and eating. He sings wishing that he could stop eating. He will soon be fat enough to cook. The Witch returns and orders Gretel to fix the punnet. Gretel is ready to cook Hansel and lights the fire. Hansel tells her that he is a bag of bones and she agrees to pass him a chicken bone which he pretends is his finger. In the meantime, Birdy has decided to help the children and aids Gretel in the construction of another contraption.

The Witch sings a gruesome song and makes everyone dance before telling Hansel to eat the bone sauce. Again he tricks the Witch with the bone as his finger. The Witch becomes more angry and flame shooting from her fingers. As the dance comes to an end fire roars from the fire. The Witch sticks her finger a final time. Hansel offers the bone but she snatches it out of his hand and realises that Hansel is fat just as Gretel is about to activate her contraption. The Witch magically prepares to cook Hansel. Gretel manages to activate her contraption; an axe falls from the sky and swings through the air and hits the Witch knocking her into the flames. She screams in pain. Hansel is released and everyone is relieved. The Witch jumps out of the flames shrieking and disappears. Nowhere kamikaze rabbits leap at the Witch's throat and she falls back into the fire. The fire again, a smouldering skeleton rises from the flames and explodes in a shower of dust. The Witch goes to look in the cellar and flies away into the distance. The children look in the cellar and find the bones they put into a cart and begin their journey home singing as they go and leaving a trail of bread. The rabbits who were once filled with bravery. When they arrive home Mother and Johann cannot believe their eyes. Wilhelm and Johann arrive yodelling and the play ends with Hansel and Gretel has his very own rabbit down his trousers.

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Comparison – What are the Main Differences Between Kneehigh's Version of 'Hansel and Gretel' and the Original Story?

There are many ways in which Kneehigh's version of this classic story differs from the original. Below fill in some ways in which the plot, characters, setting and the use of Gretel's contraptions differ.

Plot

The family are happy and living a life of plenty at the beginning of the play. The original story is set during a famine.

Mother and Father clearly love their children and feel that they have no choice but to leave them in the forest. In the original the Mother wants to leave them in the forest from the beginning.

In the original story Hansel left a trail of pebbles and then breadcrumbs in the forest. In the play he leaves flowers and petals and throw the bread crumbs into the air.

When Hansel and Gretel return from the forest and see that there is nothing, they take that their parents will survive. In the original story their parents abandon them in the forest.

Gretel pushes the Witch into the oven in the original; in the play the Witch is knocked into the oven before finally dying.

In the original story the wicked mother has died when the children return.

Characters

In the original story Father is often depicted as a caring but hen-pecked man who is bullied by his children by his wife. The wife is shown as a cruel mother who wants to abandon her children. In the play the parents dote on their children and they lead a happy and joyful life. It is the children who are taken into the forest.

In the original story we aren't given a great deal of character information. Hansel is largely in charge of the children (a useful place to discuss the historical context of the story) and Gretel is shown to be very frightened. In the play the characters are much more developed. Hansel and Gretel are twins and we see Gretel as brave, strong and full of ingenuity with her contraptions. Hansel is shown as intelligent and kind and willing to support Gretel in her creations.

The play switches the Old Lady into the Witch quite dramatically showing her to be quite different from the Old Lady disguise whereas in the original the Witch pretends to be nice until she has trapped the children, then turning nasty but she remains physically the same.

Wilhelm and Johann don't appear in the original tale.

There are a range of animals in Kneehigh's script that engage us. The rabbits serve as a warning, the chickens almost foreshadow what is going to happen and Birdy switches from the Witch's ally to Gretel's ally. And, of course, there is Graham the ferret.

Setting

The original story is set in a cottage in the forest in Hansel and Gretel's cottage and is often referred to as the gingerbread house to be made entirely of gingerbread but in fact the house is made of brick. In the play the house is made of gingerbread walls and sugar windows. In the play the children only refer to the house as the house of baked bread.

Gretel's contraptions

Gretel constructs elaborate contraptions in order to make life easier or solve the problems she faces. She creates the contraption to knock the apple out of the tree, the automatic chicken (which is very dissimilar to the board game) and the contraption that knocks the witch into the fire.

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Comparison – What are the Main Differences Kneehigh's Version of 'Hansel and Gretel' and

There are many ways in which Kneehigh's version of this classic story differs from the original. Below fill in some ways in which the plot, characters, setting and the use of Gretel's

Plot



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Characters



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Setting

Gretel's contraptions

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**Comparison – What are the Main Differences
Kneehigh’s Version of ‘Hansel and Gretel’ and the Original?**

Plot

Choose three of your answers to how the plot has changed and explain why you think Kneehigh has made these changes to the original text.



Characters

Choose two characters and explain why you think Kneehigh have chosen to do this in their version of the play.

Setting

Why do you think that Kneehigh have chosen to make the house of bread and sweets?



Gretel’s contraptions

What do Gretel’s elaborate contraptions tell us about Gretel and how can you explain this in the context of Kneehigh’s version of the play?

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Kneehigh Research Project

Research Kneehigh Theatre Company. Fill in the boxes below with the information

Kneehigh Asylum

Kneehigh are a touring company but in 2010 they created The Asylum in Cornwall. The Asylum is a flexible, purpose built tent that can be used to create anything and everything.

Influences

- 2003 Tristan and Yseult
- 2004 The Bacchae
- 2005 Nights at the Circus
- 2007 A Matter of Life and Death
- 2010 The Red Shoes
- 2013 Brief Encounter
- 2015 Daphne Du Maurier
- 2016 The Flying Lovers
- 2016 Dead Dog in a Suit
- 2017 The Tin Drum
- 2018 Brief Encounter

Kneehigh Ensemble style

Ensemble is at the very heart of what Kneehigh do. Their work is created and performed with every member of the cast playing their part to create a unified, co-operative development of ideas.

Kneehigh

Kneehigh Ramblers offer more access well as other local tickets and run with financial or social able to access the

Puppets

Puppets are a staple in Kneehigh shows. They are almost always very distinct from the person operating them and the puppeteer is not concealed. Puppets evolve during the creative process and are always given very careful consideration.

Dance

There is always a space to explore dance in Kneehigh's work. It might be a cheeky cha cha cha as a character walks upstage or a full-on choral dance number. As with the music, it evolves and there is space to enjoy it.

Staging/Design

Kneehigh are all about telling so sets are often created to suggest the location rather than to represent it naturalistically. Stage spaces often feature multiple levels created by scaffolds, ladders, platforms, blocks, boxes, slides and so on. Kneehigh want the set to enable the audience to realise that they are in a forest, the Witch's cottage, a ship, etc.

Characters

Characters in Kneehigh are larger than life, daring, eccentric yet always with that the audience can feel empathy, pathos, love for characters that are prepared to give themselves to their story

Music

Music is vital to Kneehigh productions and plays an important part of the development of their work. Music is as big a part of the action as the script and actors frequently play instruments and sing as part of the action.

The lighting of the show develops. The lighting is where the audience should be well as to help create the

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Kneehigh Research Project

Research Kneehigh Theatre Company. Fill in the boxes below with the information

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Kneehigh Asylum

Influenti

Kneehigh's indie style



Kn

Puppets

Dance

Staging/Design



Music

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Teacher's Questions and Discussion Points to Accompany Reading the Text

All page references refer to Kneehigh Theatre's *Hansel and Gretel* by Carl Grose, published by Bloomsbury, ISBN: 9781849430579

Act One	
Page 9	<p>The text opens with the Supernature Chorus standing in silhouette. What do you think that means? What do you think 'Supernature' is?</p> <p>Discuss the concept of the chorus. How is it different to traditional Greek chorus and ensemble work.</p> <p>Two rabbits are introduced. Would you opt to use people in costumes or puppets? How has puppetry changed over time and the conventions of modern puppetry? Discuss the puppeteer and the workings of the puppet.</p>
Page 10	<p>What is the significance of the red bird circling overhead? What happens when it flutters down? What is the relevance of the colours that Carl Grose uses?</p> <p>We are introduced to Hansel and Gretel as identical twins. Immediately we are introduced to two characters; Hansel is reading his encyclopedia and Gretel starts to take an apple out of the tree.</p>
Page 11	<p>The twins spring into action to build Gretel's contraption. What do you think of the twins? How can we compare this to what we know about how children behave in the original story?</p>
Page 11/12	<p>Hansel teasing Gretel is fairly standard sibling behaviour. What do you think of Hansel punching Gretel in the stomach – tell us about the dynamics within the family.</p>
Page 12	<p>Father tests Hansel's strength with a game of thumb war. Father asks Hansel to win. Why? What does this suggest about Father?</p>
Page 12/13	<p>What type of parents are Mother and Father portrayed as? How do you think they would tell about the twins' relationship with their parents from this scene?</p>
Page 13	<p>The chopping of the wood and the skinning of the rabbit are quite detailed. How might you use your vocal skills and facial expressions here?</p>
Page 14	<p>This is where we are first introduced to the chickens, Diane and Maureen. How do you think the chickens to be played? Humans as chickens or puppets? How do you think the chickens how would you interpret their characters?</p>
Page 15	<p>We are introduced to Graham the ferret. How would you use puppetry to bring Graham to life?</p>
Page 16	<p>What does Mother and Father's dance tells us about their relationship? What sort of parents who would abandon their children in the forest?</p>
Page 17	<p>We are introduced to Johann and Willem. Discuss yodelling and how you think they would be played. How does Mother respond to the neighbours' appearance? What does this suggest about the character?</p>
Page 18	<p>Gretel breaks through the brick wall and talks directly to the audience. Discuss the significance of this and its effect.</p>
Page 19	<p>When Hansel and Gretel blow out the candle the atmosphere changes. How would you use puppetry to show ways in which you would do this.</p> <p>Diane and Maureen talk about how hard things are. How would you use puppetry to show characters from when we first encountered them?</p>
Page 20	<p>How might you show the change in Mother from the previous scene? Discuss also about vocal skills, movement and facial expressions. How do you think you would show Maureen away?</p>
Page 21	<p>Mother is about to hit Father with the chopping block. What has happened to Mother and Father's relationship? How can you tell?</p>

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Page 22	Consider the stark contrast between this birthday and Hansel and Gretel's previous birthday. How do you think Mother and Father make the decision to leave the children in the forest? Do you think their mouths are easier to feed' and 'we have taught them well' do you think they are being dreadful parents or are they trying to save their children?
Page 23/24	
Page 24	The family perform a family song and dance but is it convincing? How do you think the subtext of this scene?
Page 26	Gretel picks the petals from her flowers and says 'they love us, they love us, they love us' what's happening?
Page 28/29	The song is sung as the twins wander, lost through the forest. How do you think they to perform this song?
Page 29	What effect would you want the appearance of the strange character to have? How do you achieve this?
Page 30	How would you play Diane in this scene? How has she changed? How do you think the audience will react to the worm how do you think the audience will react to this? Is it comic? Is it tragic? Or both?
Page 32	Mother and Father dance again. How does this dance compare to the previous one? Mother and Father are happy when the children return. Are you convinced they are happy about the death of Diane? Mother and Father don't eat any of Diane's cake.
Page 33	What does Father's desperation to catch the mouse tell us about his character? What about Mother and Father sucking the nutrients out of the cake?
Page 34/35	Gretel's elaborate mousetrap – discuss the board game and link it to the story. How do you react to Gretel's contraption? How do you feel about Mother and Father's reaction?
Page 35/36	Gretel is very astute and states that 'One mouse will never be enough to feed a family' about how the children see the family's predicament? How do you think they will react? Is there a sense of foreboding or of hope?
Page 36/37	What is the effect of Hansel and Gretel replacing themselves with the mice? What do you think the audience will react to the miniature house made of bread? Discuss that the house is made of gingerbread. What would the effect of a thousand birds descending on the house? Create the sound using recorded or live music? What would the effect be?
Act Two	
Page 38	What would the effect of a thousand birds flying off be like? How do you think the audience will react? Create this effect?
Page 39	How would you react if you were in the middle of eating someone's cake and the door opens? The Old Lady is dressed like Fanny Craddock. Discuss who Fanny Craddock is.
Page 40	Do we view Hansel and Gretel as quite bright children? How do you think they will react to a stranger's house?
Page 41	What do you think the 'increasingly bizarre mimes' might include? How do you think the audience will react? Is all mimed and not naturalistic?
Page 42	The Old Lady seems too good to be true. We often instinctively trust people who are too good to be true. What effect would this have on you as a member of an audience bearing witness to the story? How do you think the audience will react? Do you know the story?
Page 43	The children are full and asleep and the Old Lady changes into a cat. Discuss the rise and fall of tension that is built in the atmosphere here and how you think the audience will react. What does the cat signify in this scene?
Page 45/46	The Old Lady has a humorous exchange where Hansel and Gretel think they are being tricked but in actual fact she is quite serious that Hansel is on the ground. How do you think the audience will react? How do you think the audience will react to the shoes and teddy bears around the room. Do alarm bells start to ring?
Page 47	The Witch reveals herself. How do we react to the moment that we realise who she is? How do we react to the start of the play?
Page 49	Why do you think this short exchange between the rabbits is there? How do you think the audience will react? How do you think the audience will react to the brace of rabbits that the Witch has caught are not 'our rabbits' from the forest?
Page 50	How do we react to the information that the top job on the Witch's list is to eat Hansel? How do you think the audience will react?
Page 51	Gretel tries to reassure Hansel that she will find a solution. In the end, Hansel is eaten. How do we feel about Hansel's constant scoffing of the food?

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Page 52	Birdy reveals that s/he wishes to be free of the Witch. What do you think of these alternative ideas for Birdy – how else might she be portrayed?
Page 53/54	Hansel tries rather unsuccessfully to communicate to Gretel to have her escape. This scene is rather farcical. What is the effect of this use of comedy? In this comedy the Witch's rhyme is quite chilling. Discuss the reality of the scene.
Page 55	Gretel is colluding with Birdy and finishes her ultimate contraption. What do you think of this?
Page 56/57	How do we react to the making Hansel season himself? It's humorous. How do we react in another especially when the Witch begins to sing and dance.
Page 59/60	Gretel manages to activate the contraption and knocks the Witch into the flames. How do we react to the Witch resurrecting from the flames and the help of the kamikaze rabbits? How do we react to the help of the kamikaze rabbits? How do we create this scene? Would you use actors or puppets for the rabbits?
Page 61	Birdy directs the children to the cellar where they find a plentiful supply of food. How do we react to this? How would we react if the play ended differently to what you would expect from a traditional story?



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Themes

In groups give students the following themes to discuss. Ask them to present their presentations, students can fill in the boxes with other groups' ideas. An A3 version is available here. Some examples are below:

Theme	Examples to support your idea
Family	Pages 12 & 13: This family scene shows how Mother and Gretel. They are trying to teach them things they think are important for their efforts. 'Well done, boy! Very good, singing.' 'Oh well done, darling!'
Resilience	Hansel and Gretel prove their resilience by returning from the forest back into the forest by choice. Despite being in a terrible state, Mother and Father do survive. The Witch is quite resilient and takes quite some time to be defeated.
Good versus evil	The classic fairy tale theme features in the play as we would expect. The children have an unexpected ally in Birdy who helps Gretel (Page 55). Pages 59/60 see the Witch knocked into the fire and the times she is defeated.
Transformation	Hansel and Gretel start the story reliant on their parents. However, not only do Hansel and Gretel save themselves but save the world. The main transformation is, of course, the Old Lady transforming into a Witch. Also see Birdy transform from the Witch's familiar into a friend.
Trust	Arguably another classic fairy tale theme. Hansel and Gretel trust the Witch and they take them into the woods and this trust is betrayed. However, they are very forgiving of this. Hansel and Gretel trust the 'nice' Old Lady who feeds them. However, again this trust is misplaced.
Triumph over adversity	Hansel and Gretel find their way out of the forest the first time. A key change in this version of the tale is that the children opt to save themselves the second time to save their parents. The children triumph over the Witch and the whole family is reunited.
Friendship	We see evidence of several friendships in the play: Diane and Gretel, Hansel and Gretel, Wilhelm and Johann.

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Themes

Theme	Examples to support your idea
Family	
Resilience	
Good versus evil	
Transformation	
Trust	
Triumph over adversity	
Friendship	

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Storyboard

Choose what you think are the nine most important moments in the play and draw a tableau in each box below. Write underneath what the image represents and why.

When students have completed their storyboards they should stick their sheet on a wall and annotate it with the following:

- How is each character feeling?
- What facial expressions are the characters using to show their feelings?
- How is each character standing? Why?
- Explain your use of proxemics.
- What is the character thinking? This may or may not be a quote from the play.

This is designed to be a working document so students can change their character positions as they work through their ideas.

Ask students to work in groups to share their storyboards. Once they have each presented, they can decide on nine images to create into a sequence of tableaux. Their final choice might be one storyboard or a mixture of different people's ideas.

Ask students to work on creating the nine tableaux focusing on clear facial expressions and giving careful consideration to the characters' proxemics.

Discussion: How will you tell the audience which scene you are showing in your tableaux?

This is an ideal opportunity to discuss some Brechtian ideas and explore the use of the fourth wall and direct address. It would be an ideal opportunity to explore the use of projections from a design perspective for set design.

See the 'Using Brechtian Devices with Tableaux' sheet for ideas on how to add Brechtian devices to your storyboard tableaux.

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Storyboard

Choose what you think are the nine most important moments in the play and draw a tableau in each box below. Write underneath what the image represents and why

1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.

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Using Brechtian Devices with Tableau

When you are creating tableaux the audience should know from your drama skills. However, you might want to use Brechtian ideas to tell the audience the title of your tableau. The following Brechtian techniques:

Narration

Narration is common in Brechtian theatre. It is used to give scenes a title or to tell the audience what is happening. Brecht wanted the audience to always remember that they were watching a play; he didn't want them to believe it was real life. Since narration reminded audiences that they were watching a play, they didn't get too emotionally involved in what they were watching.



Direct address

Direct address is when actors speak directly to the audience. Direct address breaks the fourth wall and again reminds the audience they are watching actors perform, not real life. Direct address give the audience their opinions on what is happening on stage, introduce a scene, narrate what is happening on stage or ask the audience what they are seeing.



How is direct address different from narration?

Placards

It's quite common to see placards, banners or signs in Brechtian theatre. They can be used in a wide range of ways from a piece of card to tell the audience the name of the scene to showing a sequence of news items or the horrors of war. Placards can be used to tell the audience about characters, what's going to happen next, what has happened in the past and so on.



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Creating Placards

Create four placards for the scene below. They can include a title for the scene, characters' thoughts, what will happen next or any other ideas you have.

A dilemma.
What would
you do?

Father: That's true, but it's been. I feel I cannot provide for my children and children need something. There was a moment when I

Mother: Husband?
Father: Wife?
Mother: There's not enough food to go around.
Father: We're in a tight spot, I confess.
Mother: Things are only going to get worse.
Father: I don't know what to do, wife!
Mother: Something has to be done.
Father: Yes. Something. But what?

Mother: I wish I had a choice. I wish there was something else I could do. I wish I didn't know what I am about to do.

What
parents
provide
their children

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Creating Placards

Create four placards for the scene below. They can include a title for the scene, characters' thoughts, what will happen next or any other ideas you have.

Placard one



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Mother: Husband?

Father: Wife?

Mother: There's not enough food to go around.

Father: We're in a tight spot, I confess.

Mother: Things are only going to get worse.

Father: I don't know what to do, wife!

Mother: Something has to be done.

Father: Yes. Something. But what?

Placard three



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Creating Placards 2

Create four placards for the scene below. They can include a title for the scene, characters' thoughts, what will happen next or any other ideas you have.

WTF?!



Gretel: V
mean s
don't wa
want t
This is
rea

Mother: We take Hansel and Gretel into the forest.
Father: Wife?
Mother: We let them go.
Father: What?
Mother: We set them free.
Father: Two mouths are easier to feed than four, and we have taught them well.
Mother: I say we take them into the forest and we
Mother and Father: Let them go!

Hansel: Ooooh.
We're going into the forest. I can take my book of trees and collect some leaves.

Yes, we a
Our resolve
Yes, we are pr
We're a fa

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Creating Placards 2

Create four placards for the scene below. They can include a title for the scene, characters' thoughts, what will happen next or any other ideas you have.

Placard one



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Mother: We take Hansel and Gretel into the forest.

Father: Wife?

Mother: We let them go.

Father: What?

Mother: We set them free.

Father: Two mouths are easier to feed than four, a
have taught them well.

Mother: I say we take them into the forest and we

Mother and Father: Let them go!

Placard three



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Tableaux Warm-up Activity

The next activity is based on the play so this activity is an ideal warm up to it if students have done tableaux work before.

This activity can involve the whole class working together as an ensemble. Ask students to create a performance space. Give the class a title and discuss how that might be interpreted. Students might be involved in that scene, e.g. teenagers, doctors, funeral director, teachers. Students think of an appropriate character, enter the performance space and freeze in a pose. Discuss how their chosen character would behave in the scene. The next person should look at the image and either interact with that character or do their own thing. This continues until everyone has had a turn. Taking a photo of the image to discuss afterwards is a useful idea here.

When everyone is in the image, you can ask them to relax and sit down and move the work by adding a tracking element. To add this, tap different students to say a line of dialogue that describes how their character is feeling in that moment. They should use their character's voice. They feel this way and how they will use their vocal skills to show this.

Below are some ideas for tableaux titles:

- The party
- The Beach
- A and E
- The exam
- The funeral
- The holiday
- The wedding

More abstract titles also work well:

- Disaster
- Saying goodbye
- Loneliness
- Shame
- Happy
- Deception

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Family Tableaux and Thought Tr

In groups of four create a sequence of four tableaux that represent Hansel and Gretel the play. The images don't have to represent things that have happened in the play times, e.g. a day trip, a picnic, a family dinner, Christmas Day, first day of school.

Each person in the group should be responsible for directing one of the images.

Things to consider

Facial expressions – A tableau is a frozen image so you must use your facial expressions to show your character's feeling. Think about your eyes, eyebrows, nose, mouth, brow, position of your hair.

Posture – How you stand tells the audience a lot about how your character is feeling.

Proxemics – How close you are to other characters can reveal a great deal about your character. Also think about if and how you are touching other people.



When each person has directed their image rehearse transitioning from one image to the next. The transitions should be smooth. Aim to avoid using too many props or pieces of furniture as this makes the task more difficult.

Thought tracking

Each person should step out of the tableau that they have directed and, in character, explain to the audience what is happening in the image. For this you will need to consider the following:

- **Movement** – How does your character move? Quick and energetic or slow and thoughtful?
- **Gestures** – Is your character animated and excited when they are talking? How do you use your hands to show this?
- **Vocal skills** – How will you use your vocal skills to show your character? Think about your pitch, accent, tone, volume and emphasis.

Extending the work

Next, add four more images that represent the family after the famine wind on. Each person should direct an image and leave the tableau to explain to the audience what is happening in the image.

Finally

Add an image to represent the end of the play when the children have returned home. Each person should direct an image and leave the tableau to tell the audience their thoughts.



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Character Exploration

Pair students and ask them to explore a character writing down their observations and their ideas.

Put all the Gretel pairs, Hansel pairs, etc. together and ask them to collaborate and list to share.

If you have time ask each group to present their observations to the rest of the class. Use each group's final sheet to give out which other students can annotate from group presentations.

Character details	Evidence	Physical
Hansel and Gretel are twins.	Page 10 – ... it ... they're twins! <i>Hansel and Gretel sneeze simultaneously.</i>	Here I would make sure movements to sneeze and each other using the back
Hansel is quite curious and is always reading.	Page 10 – I'm trying to read my encyclopedia. Did you know that the deepest place in the ocean is 12 miles?	I would speak abruptly and being interrupted. I'd slow know...' and increase my words '12 miles'.
Hansel helps Gretel with her contraptions.	Page 11 – <i>Hansel follows Gretel's orders.</i> <i>Hansel jumps off the stool onto the end of the plank.</i> Page 34 – <i>Gretel swings off a rope which lifts a huge slab of tree. She works fast and light, creating the device with Hansel's help.</i>	As Hansel I would have wide, eyebrows raised, instructions. I would wait Gretel and happy to help As Gretel I would be physically narrow my eyes in concentration on my face to show that
Hansel teases Gretel like a typical brother.	Page 11 – Here you are. <i>(Snatches it away.)</i> Can't have it! <i>(Offers it.)</i> Here you are... <i>(Snatches it away.)</i>	As Hansel I'd be smiling to tease Gretel. I'd be stern over her. My tone would be low pitched when offering high pitched when I snatched amusement.
Hansel looks up to his father. He wants to please him and be like him.	Page 13 – Father? Will this wood-chopping lesson put me on the right path to becoming...a man? Page 15 – Father? Will I have a ferret in my trousers...one day?	As Hansel I would look up and metaphorically. I'd have wide eyes and a smile to proxemics to show my respect to him and following with my eyes.
Although Hansel knows a lot of things he is not as quick as Gretel.	Page 15 – ... (To us.) Give ... <i>Hansel thinks. Mother and Father stand on the table with a big, lit birthday cake. Johann and Wilhelm play.</i> Hansel: Oh! It's our birthday!	As Gretel I'd cross my arms something to show I'm my face to show that I'm unkind way, more to show Hansel has.
Hansel is thoughtful and doesn't complain when he gets pebbles for his birthday after the famine. He is also a bit dim as he tries to eat the pebbles.	Page 22 – Ooooooh. Thanks...They're great... <i>Hansel eats one.</i>	As Hansel I'd show that pebbles by using a high and a smile. My smile melted mouth down as I realised

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Character Exploration

Character name: _____

Fill in the boxes with details about your character using evidence from the text to explaining some of your ideas about how you might use physical and vocal skills to

Character details	Evidence	
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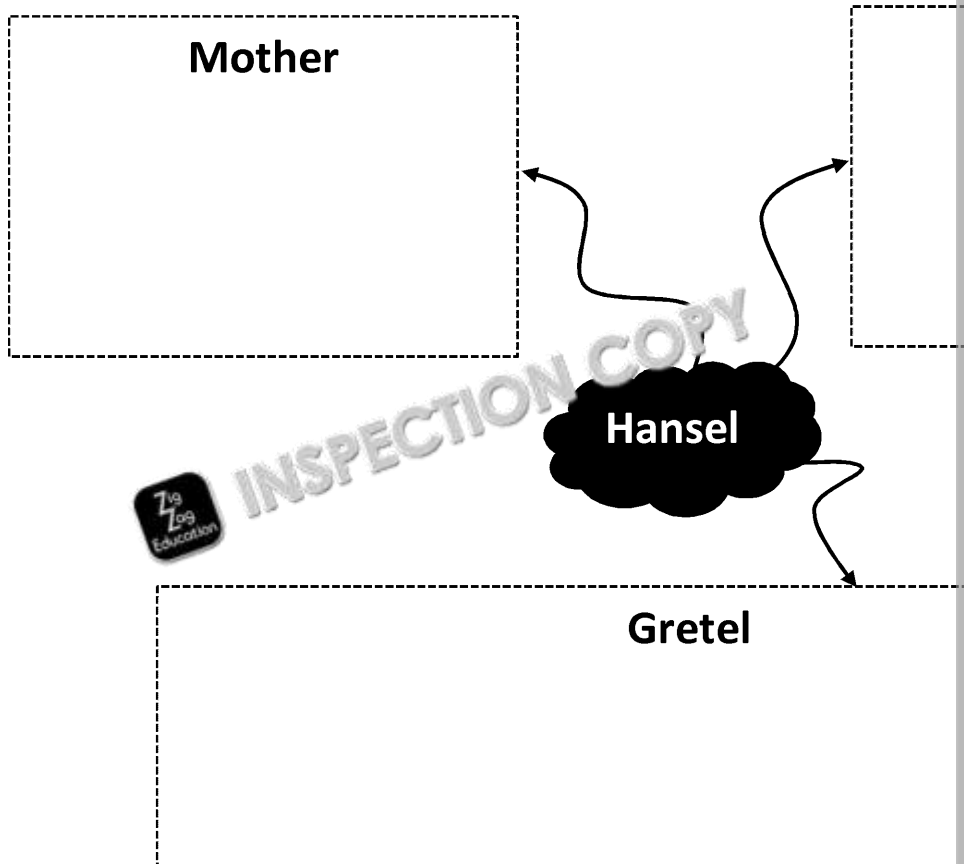
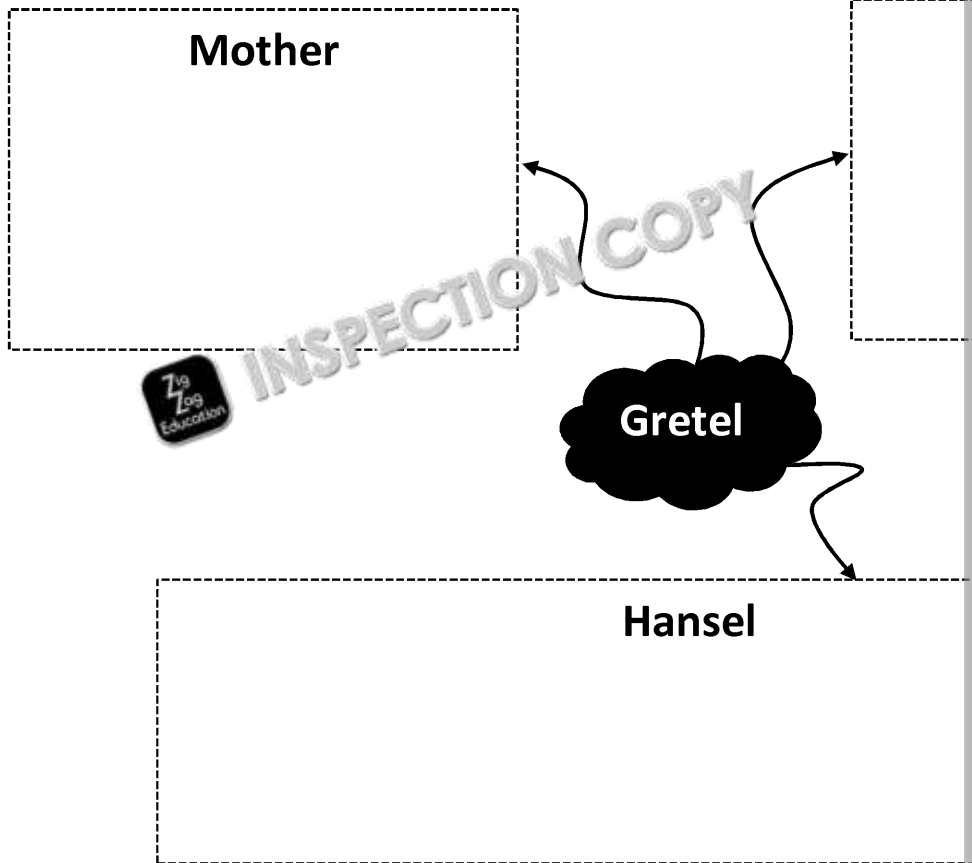
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Character Relationships

Fill in the boxes with what you know about the family relationships in the play. Use what you know from what is said in the text and also from what is implied in the text.

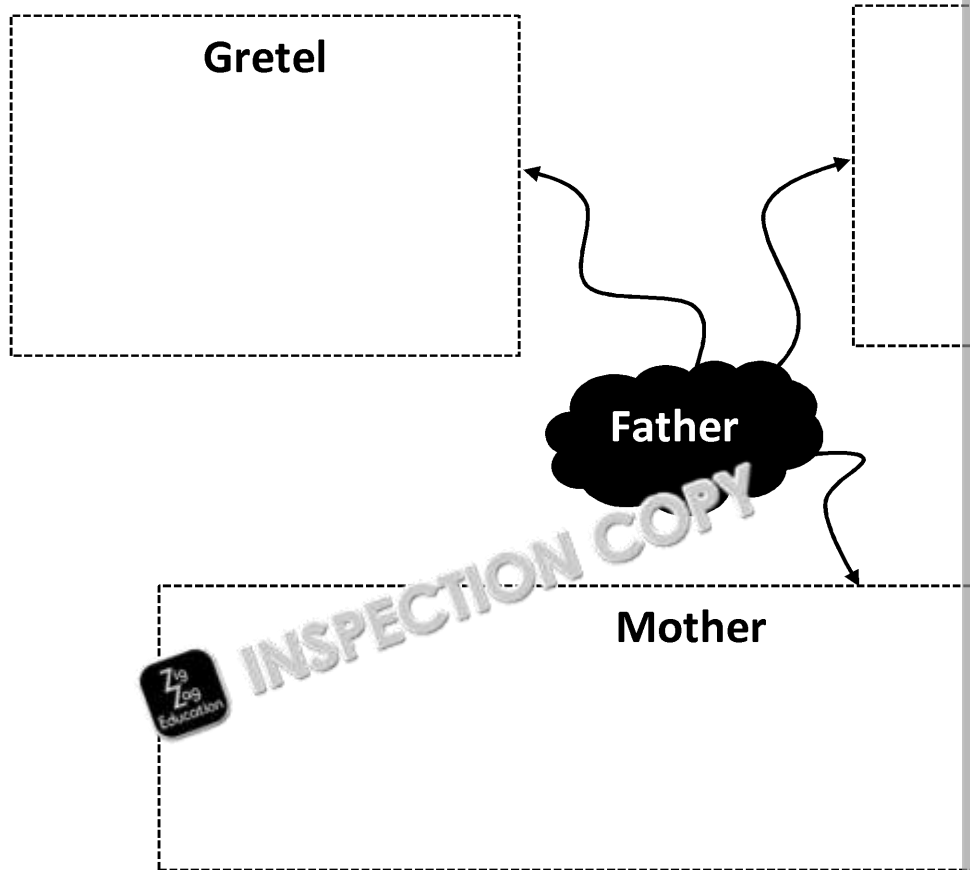
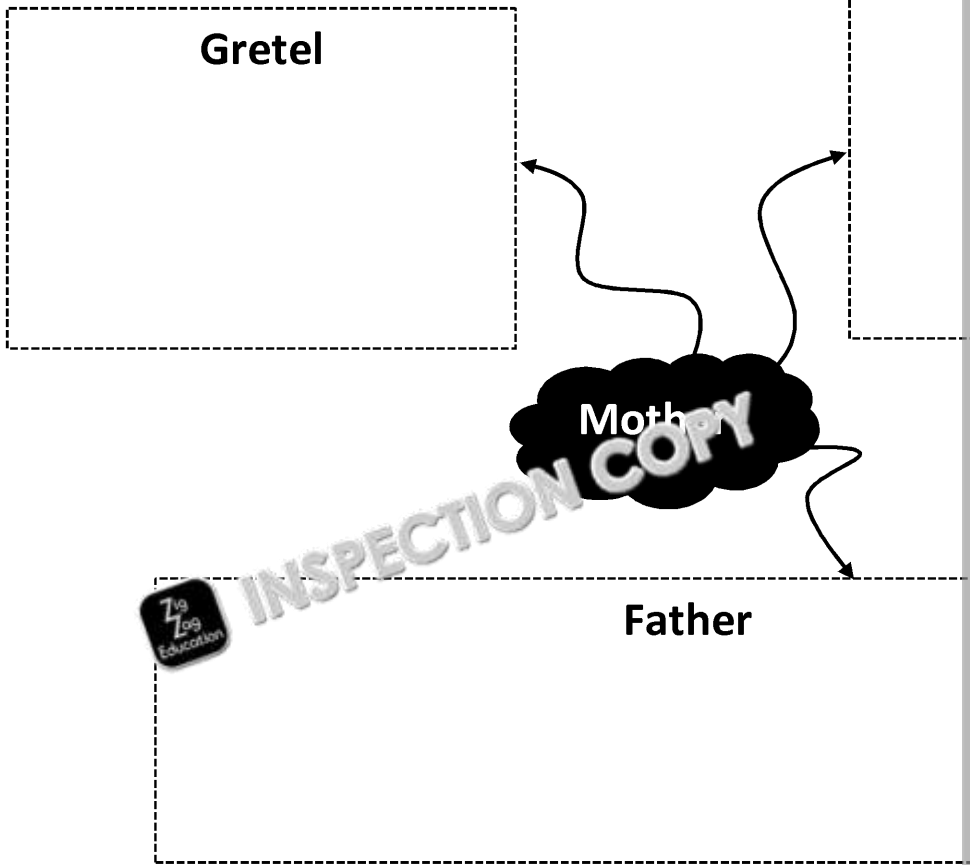


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Exploring Characters through Role-play and Improvisation

This activity is designed to allow students to use quick-fire improvisation in a range of contexts for improvising or devising off text work.

Ask students to divide into pairs and label them A and B. The As stand facing outwards from the room. Ask Bs to stand facing their partner so that two circles are formed. As you say 'go' each pair simultaneously improvise a scene. Allow the scene to develop for 30 seconds before shouting 'freeze'. Ask all of the As to move to the right and one person to the left (which is the opposite direction). They now have a new partner. Give a new prompt to the Bs and the exercise continues.

Before shouting 'go' give students a few moments to consider the line you have given them. It doesn't have to be the most obvious idea, e.g. 'What is that?' could be shouted.

Examples of starting lines:

- What are you looking at?
- Stop it.
- What are you wearing?
- Where do you think you're going?
- Can I sit here?
- I have to tell you something.
- Where have you been?
- I didn't do it.

Next, move onto using lines from the text. In this part of the activity you can tell students who they are talking to.

Rabbit 1: You must take each day as it comes. You never know what might happen.

Maureen: Times are rough. You said this would happen.

Father: There must be some other way.

Old Lady: Why don't you stop eating my house eh?

Mother: We just did what we thought was best.

Witch: The fire is ready.

Hansel: Will I have a ferret in my trousers one day?

Gretel: Don't worry brother. I'll think of something.

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Exploring the Chorus

The traditional Greek chorus contained 12 or 15 people. The primary purpose of the chorus was to provide the audience with information that wasn't explicit in the action on stage as well as to summarise the action and help the audience follow the story. For the ancient Greeks, theatre was a religious event and the chorus was taught and the audience learnt from the characters' mistakes. The traditional point of view and would have reacted in the way that the audience should be reacting. The chorus sometimes gave insight into characters' thoughts and feelings. The end of Kneehigh's work and the chorus often features.

Discuss: What do you think the 'Supernature Chorus' is? What sort of characters could be in a Supernature Chorus? There isn't a dictionary definition of the word 'supernature' but it means the supernatural within nature. Students might consider characters such as nymphs and sprites. They might link these ideas to characters found in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Read through the text for stage one of the play.

SONG

Once upon a time
When suns were trusted to shine
And birds, they sang the songs of May
A saying was often spoke of this way
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes...
Once upon a time
When rivers met up with the tide
And winds, they blew a happier tune
And dusk it hid from the light of the moon
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes
Take each day as it comes...

Choral voice

Unison: A group speaking together. It can sometimes sound more powerful. Focus on being expressive.

Echo: Words or sounds are repeated and become progressively louder.

Canon: Words or sounds are repeated by people one after another.

Chanting: Words spoken in a rhythmic pattern.

Also consider – volume, pitch, emphasis.

In groups of five ask students to decide on what characters are in their group, e.g. Hansel, Gretel, the Witch, the Baker, the Baker's Wife.

When groups have chosen their characters ask each student to stand in a space on stage. Follow the following three steps to allow them to focus on the characters they are creating.

One: Freeze in a stance that is most appropriate for your character. Consider how they hold their arms, their head and shoulder position, their facial expression and their feet.

Two: When you say 'Go' as the students to walk around the space in character. Study their character movements around the space, their speed, proxemics, as well as remember to not speak.

Three: Ask students to walk around the space in character again. Now they must speak. As they pass. Here they must consider how to use vocal skills. Some characters may not speak very vocal. Students should consider the pitch, pace and volume of their speech. Try to use vocal skills with the elements from stages one and two.

Back in groups of five, ask students to annotate their script with their ideas for a performance. Then rehearse this for performance, adapting their ideas as they go ensuring that all characters are included and that some sections are performed using choral voice.

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Exploring the Chorus

Discuss: What do you think the 'Supernature Chorus' is? What sort of characters do you think make up the Supernature Chorus?

Read through the text from page one of the play.

The *SUPERNATURE CHORUS* stand in silhouette and sing:

SONG

Once upon a time
 When suns were trusted to shine
 And birds, they sang the songs of May
 A saying was often spoke of this way
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes...
 Once upon a time
 When rivers met up with the tide
 And winds, they blew a happier tune
 And dusk it hid from the light of the moon
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes
 Take each day as it comes...

Annotate your script with ideas for a choral performance. Make sure that some sections are performed using individual voices and some sections are performed using choral voice.

Choral voice techniques

Unison: A group speaking 'as one voice'. This can sometimes sound monotone so students must focus on being expressive.

Echo: Words or sounds are repeated and become progressively quieter.

Canon: Words or sounds made by a number of people one after another.

Chanting: Words spoken with a strong rhythmic pattern.

Also consider – volume, pitch, pause, pace and emphasis.

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Exploring the Family Using a Split Stage

The scene on pages 12 and 13 shows a very heightened and exaggerated scene of Hansel chopping wood with his father while Mother teaches Gretel how to skin a rabbit.

In groups of four, two students playing Gretel and Mother and two playing Hansel and Father: (*Axe aloft*) Good morning, children! to Father: Congratulations, Hansel!

Ask students to rehearse the scene using a split stage with Hansel and Father on one side and Mother and Gretel on the other. You might ask students to annotate the script first or make notes on the character questions below can be cut out and given to each character.

FATHER: (*Axe aloft.*) Good morning, children!
HANSEL & GRETEL: Good morning, Father!
FATHER: What a beautiful day!
MOTHER: (*From the kitchen.*) Good morning, children!
HANSEL & GRETEL: Good morning, mother!
MOTHER: I've baked a special pie for tea!

A flurry of activity as we see the family in their element – happy, noisy, full of life. GRETEL & MOTHER skin the rabbit behind as FATHER circles with a barrow of wood.

FATHER: Hansel, my boy. Put that damn encyclopedia down. I think it's high time! But first, let's test your strength – fight me, boy.

They take each other's hand and

FATHER & HANSEL: One, two, three, four
I declare thumb war
Bow, kiss... bow, kiss... bow, kiss!

A game of thumb war ensues. FATHER allows himself to be beaten.

FATHER: Well done, boy! You are strong! Come! Meet your log!
HANSEL: Hello Mr Log!
FATHER: Don't get too attached.
HANSEL: Goodbye Mr Log.
FATHER: Observe the way the lines in the wood run.
HANSEL: Is that called 'the grain', Father?
FATHER: It is, my boy. You've been reading your encyclopedia well. Now you war against.
HANSEL: Father? Will this wood-chopping lesson put me on the right path to becoming a wood-chopper?
FATHER: Oh, I hope so, son. I hope so.
HANSEL: 'With the grain, not against it.' Continue.

FATHER offers his axe to HANSEL. MOTHER and GRETEL skin a rabbit.

MOTHER: That's it, dear. Turn around the throat. Now, remove the skin. Rip it! Rip it!
GRETEL: I'll do it, Mother?
FATHER: Yes, Gretel. Take a good strong stance! Now, picture yourself as the wood and glinty – see the target, lift high and

HANSEL chops the wood as GRETEL skins the rabbit. Everyone cheers.

MOTHER: Oh well done, darling! One skinned rabbit ready for the pot.
FATHER: Congratulations, Hansel! Your first piece of kindling!

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**Things to consider – Hansel**

Character: How are you going to create a character that is different from... How will you show his age? What type of character is Hansel? How does he... is showing him? Does he want to learn to chop wood or would he rather...

Movement: How does Hansel move around the stage? Is he fast paced and... relaxed? Why? How does he stand? Is he upright or slouched? Why? Cons... What is Hansel doing while Mother and Gretel are speaking on the other s...

Facial expressions: How is Hansel feeling and how does he show this on h... eyebrows, forehead, mouth, chin, position of your head.

Vocal skills: How will you use your vocal skills to show Hansel's character?... low? Does he speak at a fast pace or is his pace slower and more thoughtf... accent? What volume will you use? Where might you use emphasis? What... Why will you make these choices?

Interaction: How does Hansel interact with Father? What does that tell th... proxemics

Audience: How do you want the audience to feel about your character in...

**Things to consider – Father**

Character: How are you going to create a character that is different from... How will you show his age? What type of character is Father? How does h... teaching his son? How does he respond to Hansel's efforts?

Movement: How does Father move around the stage? Is he fast paced and... Why? How does he stand? Is he upright or slouched? Why? Consider post... Father doing while Mother and Gretel are speaking on the other side of th...

Facial expressions: How is Father feeling and how does he show this on h... eyebrows, forehead, mouth, chin, position of your head.

Vocal skills: How will you use your vocal skills to show Father's character?... low? Does he speak at a fast pace or is his pace slower and more thoughtf... What volume will you use? Where might you use emphasis? What is the t... you make these choices?

Interaction: How does Father interact with Hansel? What does that tell th... proxemics?

Audience: How do you want the audience to feel about your character in...



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Things to consider – Mother

Character: How are you going to create a character that is different from Mother? How will you show her age? What type of character is Mother? How does she show her character? What is she teaching her daughter? How does she respond to Gretel's efforts?

Movement: How does Mother move around the stage? Is she fast paced and relaxed? Why? How does she stand? Is she upright or slouched? Why? Consider her posture. What is Mother doing while Father and Hansel are speaking on the other side of the stage?

Facial expressions: How is Mother feeling and how does she show this on her face? Eyes, eyebrows, forehead, mouth, chin, position of your head.

Vocal skills: How will you use your vocal skills to show Mother's character? Is her voice high or low? Does she speak at a fast pace or is her pace slower and more thoughtful? What accent? What volume will you use? Where might you use emphasis? What tone? Why will you make these choices?

Interaction: How does Mother interact with Gretel? What does that tell the audience about proxemics?

Audience: How do you want the audience to feel about your character in this scene?

Things to consider – Gretel

Character: How are you going to create a character that is different from Gretel? How will you show her age? What type of character is Gretel? How does she show her character? How does her mother is showing her? Does she want to learn how to skin a rabbit or work on the new contraption?

Movement: How does Gretel move around the stage? Is she fast paced and relaxed? Why? How does she stand? Is she upright or slouched? Why? Consider her posture. What is Gretel doing while Father and Hansel are speaking on the other side of the stage?

Facial expressions: How is Gretel feeling and how does she show this on her face? Eyes, eyebrows, forehead, mouth, chin, position of your head.

Vocal skills: How will you use your vocal skills to show Gretel's character? Is her voice high or low? Does she speak at a fast pace or is her pace slower and more thoughtful? What accent? What volume will you use? Where might you use emphasis? What tone? Why will you make these choices?

Interaction: How does Gretel interact with Mother? What does that tell the audience about proxemics?

Audience: How do you want the audience to feel about your character in this scene?

Discussion: After students have performed their work discuss the choices they made for their character in this scene. Examine all of the choices that students made and compare them to the choices that were made in the original story, e.g. Father is enthusiastic about teaching Hansel to chop wood and make energetic movements and a fast paced, high pitched, excited tone of voice. Also discuss choices that might have made that stand out from other people's decisions, e.g. students might choose to have Gretel keen to learn from her mother but someone might portray Gretel as being disgusted by her mother's teaching.

Extension activity: Ask students to recreate the split stage performance but with different characters.

- Father teaching Hansel to bake a cake
- Mother teaching Gretel how to set a trap
- Father teaching Gretel how to sew
- Mother teaching Hansel how to shoot

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Exploring the Family Using a Split

The scene on pages 12 and 13 shows a very heightened and exaggerated scene of chop wood with his father while Mother teaches Gretel how to skin a rabbit.

In groups of four, two students playing Gretel and Mother and two playing Hansel using a split stage with Hansel and Father on one side and Gretel and Mother on the other. Read your script first or make notes on the script as you go.

FATHER: (*Axe aloft.*) Good morning, children!

HANSEL & GRETEL: Good morning, father!

FATHER: What a beautiful day!

MOTHER: (*Dead rabbit aloft.*) Good morning, children!

HANSEL & GRETEL: Good morning, Mother!

MOTHER: Rabbit pie for tea!

A flurry of activity as we see the family in their element – happy, noisy, full of life.

GRETEL & MOTHER: *FATHER skin the rabbit behind as FATHER circles with a barrow of wood,*

FATHER: Hansel, my boy. Put that damn encyclopedia down. I think it's high time! But first, let's test your strength – fight me, boy.

They take each other's hand and

FATHER & HANSEL: One, two, three, four

I declare thumb war

Bow, kiss... bow, kiss... bow, kiss!

A game of thumb war ensues. FATHER allows himself to be beaten.

FATHER: Well done, boy! You are strong! Come! Meet your log!

HANSEL: Hello Mr Log!

FATHER: Don't get too attached.

HANSEL: Goodbye Mr Log.

FATHER: Observe the way the lines in the wood run.

HANSEL: Is that called 'the grain', Father?

FATHER: It is, my boy. You've been reading your encyclopedia well. Now you war against.

HANSEL: Father? Will this wood-chopping lesson put me on the right path to become a wood-chopper?

FATHER: Oh, I hope so, son. I hope so.

HANSEL: 'With the grain, not against it.' Continue.

FATHER offers his axe to HANSEL as MOTHER and GRETEL skin a rabbit.

MOTHER: That's it darling. Cut around the throat. Now, remove the skin. Rip it! Rip it!

GRETEL: Like this, mother?

FATHER: That's it, Hansel. Take a good strong stance! Now, picture yourself as the wood and glinty – see the texture of the grain and

HANSEL circles the wood as GRETEL skins the rabbit. Everyone cheers.

MOTHER: Oh well done, darling! One skinned rabbit ready for the pot.

FATHER: Congratulations, Hansel! Your first piece of kindling!

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Deciding to Leave the Children in the Forest Practical Exploration and Hot Seating

In groups of four, think about the happy family life that is portrayed at the start of the short scene that represents a happy modern family. This could be:

- A family meal
- A birthday
- A trip to the beach
- Christmas Day
- A family walk
- Movie night

The emphasis should be on enjoying how happy the family are together.

After some rehearsal time, ask students to show their work and discuss how students used their family. Discuss what physical and vocal skills were used in developing characters.

Split the fours into pairs and ask students to improvise the following scene:
You have been lucky to have such a happy family life but you have fallen on hard times and put food on the table. One of you decides that the only solution is to drive the children to the forest and leave them there.

Improvise the scene where one parent suggests their idea to the other. What is the reaction of ditching the children? What would most parents do if this was suggested? How would that this was the only option?

Ask students to show their work and discuss the outcomes. What are the limitations of the first century? What would happen if a parent really suggested abandoning their children? What would the other parent actually do? What would twenty-first century children do if they were in the same position as Hansel and Gretel?

What would happen if twenty-first century children discovered a house in the woods and invited them to come in and stay? In threes, ask students to improvise what would happen.

Watch some performances and discuss the outcomes. Would modern children accept being abandoned?

In groups of six ask students to compile a list of questions for Mother or Father, Hansel or Gretel. When they have their list of questions, they should seat three characters on stage. Each character must answer in role in as much detail as they can. A question can ask for more detail or further explanation of their answers if necessary.

This can be a group's exercise for a character or can then be rehearsed and refined.



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Hot Seating Questions

Character	Questions
Mother or Father	 INSPECTION COPY
Hansel or Gretel	
Witch	 INSPECTION COPY

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Monologues

After exploring the characters through hot seating, students could use the answers to create monologues for any of the characters based on the questions they have been asked. Ask them to fill in the sheet in as much detail as they can before they start for this activity:

- Write the monologue and rehearse it for performance
- Write notes and devise the monologue
- Write the full monologue alone and pair up to annotate a partner's work
- Annotate work in pairs
- Whichever method students opt for, it should be followed by rehearsal and performance

Extension: Create a contrasting monologue (e.g. Mother during the family's happiness when she has abandoned the children, the Witch after she has been well fed and Diane after she has been abandoned by Wilhelm or Johann before the twin's birthday party and Wilhelm or Johann after they have given up on the Witch, the Witch as a victim and the Witch watching Hansel and Gretel sleep after they have been abandoned).



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Monologues

After exploring the characters through hot seating use the answers given by the w for any of the characters. Answer the following questions before you start.

Character	
<p>What do you want to express to the audience in your monologue?</p> 	
<p>Why do you think it would be important for the audience to know this information?</p>	
<p>How is your character feeling during this monologue?</p>	
<p>List four physical skills that you think are essential to this performance and why you think they are important.</p> 	
<p>List four vocal choices that you will make and why.</p>	

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Recreating the Animals

Ask students to read the following scenes in the play that involve talking animals:

The Rabbits	Diane and Mother
The Rabbits act as a mini chorus, telling the audience what is happening and commenting on the action.	The chickens are symbols of life afterwards. When they are given a choice,
Pages 9–10 – Introducing Hansel and Gretel. Pages 27–28 – Hansel and Gretel have fallen asleep in the woods. Page 49 – The rabbits are terrified by what they have seen in the Witch’s cottage. Page 62 – The rabbits are happy when the children are safe.	Pages 16–17 – Diane and Mother have a life of plenty. Pages 18–20 – Diane and Mother change after the famine has come away. Page 30 – Diane is alone and Mother fights Mother for the wheat. Page 32 – Mother chases Diane away.

Discussion: What physical and vocal skills would you use to play the roles of the rabbits?

Exploration: Ask students to rehearse one of the scenes above paying close attention to the physical skills.

Extension: Ask students to devise a scene that would fit into *Hansel and Gretel* using cats, cows, pigs, horses. They could adapt the script, i.e. rewrite Diane and Mother's own ideas or create their own script to show the audience another element to the play.

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The Strange Character

We first meet the Strange Character on pages 28 and 29 and, of course, later find her hunting outfit.

A: Suddenly, from the shadows, a strange, cackling character appears with an old hat, her fingertips and brings knives hurtling out of the sky.

B: The Strange Character appears again – this time with a leaf blower. She blasts leaves that have passed over, obliterating the way home.

C: The Strange Character comes to a stop, sniffs the air, and catches a rabbit by the ear.

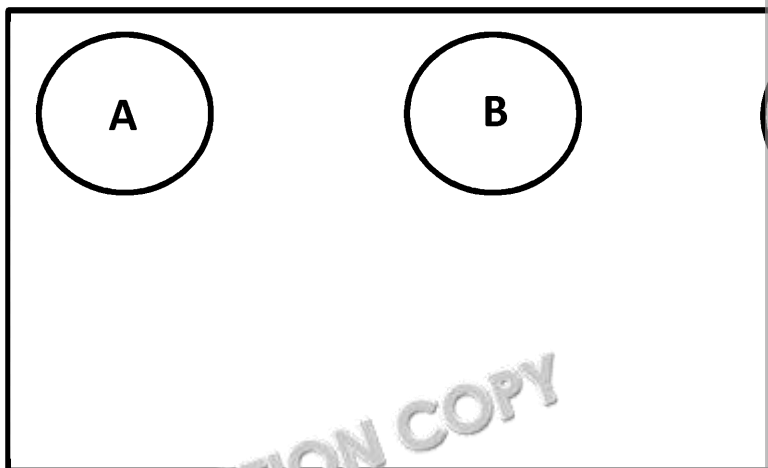
STRANGE CHARACTER: Got you!
(Sings.)

Old Mary's gone a-hunting
She'll never be home again
Old Mary's gone a-hunting
The world had better hide!

In groups of three ask students to rehearse a short scene that incorporates all of the dialogue.

A suggestion might be:

All three actors stand upstage left, centre and right frozen in an image that represents the scene. A – head thrown back, mouth open as if laughing maniacally, fingers pointed to suggest the leaf blower, a joyful but menacing facial expression as if the rabbit is destroyed, C – leaning forward, eyes narrowed, nostrils flared.



Next, one actor from each person animates their tableau and moves downstage towards the audience. There is no dialogue but non-verbal sound might be used.

Finally, as an ensemble students can perform the lines of dialogue. They should rehearse in a choral voice as well as considering how the use of song, pitch, pause, pace, tone, and volume might change their dialogue.

Extension: This performance would be an ideal opportunity for students to experiment with Artaud's cruel theatre concepts.

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Creating the Play through Sound

In this activity you will ask students to retell the story of *Hansel and Gretel* using the suggested chart of scenes to include. Students could be given a totally free reign to choose what they choose or a more guided task. Alternatively, you could discuss what they see in the play or experiment with what sections will offer the best opportunity for sound effects. Students could use songs from the text they might use just a short section. Apart from the songs, the students may need to be inventive with how they create their sounds.

All page references refer to Kneehigh Theatre's *Hansel and Gretel* by Carl Grose, published by Zig Zag Education. ISBN: 9781849430579

Action	Sounds
Opening song Page 9	'Once upon a time, take each day as it comes' Repeated lines in canon, light, airy feeling, the gentle rustle of trees.
Rabbits eating and talking Pages 9–10	Sounds of the rabbits munching. A gasp as they fall into the rabbit snare.
Family activities Pages 12–13	Mother and Gretel skinning rabbits – sounds of chopping and sounds of disgust. Father and Hansel chopping wood – the sound of chopping.
Happy chickens Pages 16–17	The chickens pecking around before Gretel fires the machine and the delight of the chickens.
Johann and Wilhelm Page 17	The arrival of the yodelling musician neighbours.
Hansel and Gretel's birthday Page 18	The sound of celebration and a birthday cake.
The famine wind Page 19	Howling winds, crows circling.
Unhappy chickens Pages 19–20	Sounds of the hungry chickens pecking and lame.
Mother and Father are hungry and weak Pages 20–21	Sighs and groans, angry sounds as they try to find food.
Hansel and Gretel's next birthday Page 22	A marked difference to the birthday before. Perhaps a different version of the same scene.
Mother and Father decide to abandon the children Page 25	The sound of thinking, an idea, a dismissal of an idea, the sound of agreement they have agreed to, a wailing of lament.
The Strange Character Page 29	Cackling, the leaf blower, the rabbit snare.
Sad Diane and the worm fight Page 30	The sound of Diane sadly clucking and scratching, the sound of the worm, a scuffle, the sound of triumph and the sound of the worm being eaten.
Hansel and Gretel return Page 32	The sound of devastated and hungry Mother and Gretel and children return and joy.
The mousetrap Page 35	The sounds of Gretel's contraption moving and the sound of the mousetrap from all.
Feeding up Hansel and Gretel Pages 42–43	Sounds of food preparation and of hearty eating, the sound of Hansel and Gretel prepare food and Hansel and Gretel stuff themselves.
Old Lady goes hunting Page 44	The sound of the Old Lady's sinister cackling and the sound of the rabbit snare.

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Action	Sounds
Page 43	
Trapping Hansel Pages 47–48	Sounds of a struggle as the Witch uses her magic trap Hansel in the cage. The Witch's success and
Gretel's Witch killing contraption Page 59	The sounds of the mechanisms of Gretel's contra
The Witch is dead Pages 59– 60	The sounds of the Witch being pushed into the fi by the rabbits, the skeleton rising and crumbling. dead.
The children return Pages 61–62	Happy children returning home. The surprise and cheers from Johann and Wilhelm.

When the chart is complete and students have rehearsed their ideas you might suggest eight or so ideas and rehearse them ready for performance. When they perform what they think is happening in each scene and at the end compare their answers and



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Ensemble Recreation of the Witch's Death

The ensemble is an integral part of Kneehigh and their works are developed from an ensemble of people. This activity is designed to allow the whole class to work as an ensemble. If you have a particularly large class, you could divide them in half.

Read the following extract:

Page 59 – **WITCH:** (*Staggering blindly about the place.*) What's that? What's going on?
The Witch is Dead! *Everyone cheers.*

Characters: Hansel, Gretel, the Witch, Birdy, Rabbits. Roles for the ensemble work.

Below are some things to include and ideas of how students might create an ensemble.

- Use a group of students to recreate the fire. Five or six students sitting in a circle, using their vocal and physical skills to recreate the movement and sounds of a fire. Singing without rhythm can be quite effective for this. The group must be able to be knocked into them.
- Gretel has been tied to a chair but is released, possibly when the axe falls.
- The axe of the contraption cuts the rope attached to Hansel's cage, the cage falls and knocks the Witch into the fireplace. How will the group create the cage? A group of students holding Hansel up high? This could be done with a group of students supporting Hansel in the air. It could be effective to experiment with slow movement. The group can surround Hansel, physically creating the cage out of their bodies and the movement.
- As the Witch is knocked into the fire, she could sit on the laps of the people in the ensemble, envelope her into the 'flames'. This will give the Witch the ability to leap back into the fire, launched by the ensemble in the fire.
- Hansel's cage ensemble can then move on to form the kamikaze rabbits and use puppets to push the Witch into the fire a second time.
- When the Witch resurrects for a third time as a smouldering skeleton one student can become the skeleton or be the puppeteer for a skeleton puppet.
- There are opportunities for the ensemble to work together vocally – sighs, gasps, etc.

There are, of course, very many different methods that can be effective for ensemble work. Encourage students to try lots of different ideas and see what works.

This type of work is a good opportunity for students to direct. You might allocate different sections to different groups and ask them to direct a short section noting what works and adapting it for the next group.

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Costume Design

Below is a suggested template for guiding students through ideas for their own costume design.

Use the boxes below to design a costume for your character. You must justify each element of your design so that your character's costume might look different at different stages of the story.

Head

Headscarf – Gretel would wear a spotty headscarf/bandana to keep her hair out of her face and eyes. It would be practical rather than a fashion accessory.

Hair – Gretel would have quite wild hair sprouting from underneath her headscarf. It would suggest that she isn't overly bothered about appearances and is a free spirit.

Glasses – Gretel would wear black, heavy-framed glasses to fit in with the stereotypical scientist look.

Make up – Gretel would have smears of oil or dirt on her face from where she has been building something.

Draw your costume here

It would add to students' exploration of costume to have a variety of fabrics to allow them to attach small pieces to their designs and add a textural element to their ideas.

Gretel would wear bright, chunky boots like Dr Martens. They would suggest practicality but the colour would reflect Gretel's personality and that she is a child. The boots would have rainbow laces that echo Gretel's t-shirt.

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Costume Design

Use the boxes below to design a costume for your character. You must justify each part of your character's costume might look different at different stages of the story.

GRETEL

Draw your costume here

Head



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Puppets

People have used puppets for thousands of years to tell stories and although their forms have changed over time, puppets are still a very recognisable convention in the twenty-first century.

Puppet history

It is unclear when the first puppet shows were performed but it is likely that the Roman puppets were easy to travel with so in medieval times they were popular with travelling minstrels. Priests would have used puppets to preach about Christianity using a devil puppet. In Elizabethan times travelling entertainers would entertain rich people in their homes. There is a reference to groups of Italian puppeteers who performed in the streets of London in the 16th century. They used to have used marionettes. The most well-known of these, Mr Punch from Punch and Judy, is based on the Italian Commedia d'ell Arte, was first performed in Covent Garden in London by John Rich and his company in 1662.

Types of puppet

There are four main types of puppet: glove/hand puppets, rod puppets, string puppets and shadow puppets.

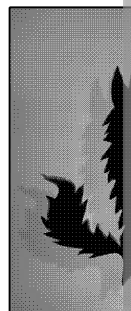
Glove/hand/finger puppets – A performer would usually put their hand inside the body of the puppet to control it. These types of puppets are very familiar to us and most people would have used this type of puppet as children. Popular examples of hand puppets are Sooty and Sweep.

Rod puppets – The puppets are controlled by wooden or wire rods which are attached to the puppet and worked by the puppeteer. Quite often rod puppets feature just the upper half of the body with the lower half hidden by a stage. If legs feature, they often just dangle and are not controlled. Popular examples of rod puppets include The Muppets and Sesame Street characters.

String puppets – Marionettes are controlled from above using strings attached to a control bar. The most popular example of string puppets is on television and the Muppet Show. Other examples include Thunderbirds, Mr. Potato Head and the Muppet Brush.



Shadow puppets – Shadow puppetry is an ancient form of storytelling that consists of flat cut-out figures that are held between a screen and a light source. Effects are created by moving the puppets and/or the light source. A talented puppeteer can create quite a spectacle with shadow puppets. In 2013 a Hungarian shadow theatre group, Attraction, won Britain's Got Talent with their shadow puppetry in which they used their bodies to physically create the shadows and shapes.



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Puppet Design

Use the box below to design your puppet. Annotate your design to justify your character

Character:

Puppeteer

Who is going to control the puppet? If it is an individual puppeteer and not one what will they wear and why?

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Set Design

Use A3 copies of this sheet and ask students to draw their ideas for a set design in
Remember, Kneehigh sets are huge elaborate structures that are often representative
They often don't really change throughout the performance but have the main str

Tip: Photocopy this worksheet onto A3!

Set plan – draw and label your set design in this box



NOTES – you can include the use of projections and important



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Set Building

In groups ask students to share their design ideas and come up with an 'ultimate set'.

Using cardboard and any other useful resources ask each group to build a 3D version of a shoe box. A shoe box would be useful if they choose a proscenium arch.

Extension activity: Using any available resource challenge students to make one of the following:

- The apple contraption
- The chicken feeder
- The mousetrap
- The Witch's trap



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Props

Kneehigh sets are visually stimulating, exciting and challenging as well as being great for the audience. They are often used to create a sense of mystery around the set and items might be concealed under or behind what is on stage or in the background. Fill in the chart below with some examples of props that are needed in the play and how you would coordinate them.

Prop	Who needs it?	When? Why? How is it used? Where is it?

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Staging for a Specific Scene from *Hansel and Gretel*

Discuss the different types of staging and ask students to rehearse the same scene and record their thoughts.

Scene:		
Staging	Pros	
Proscenium Arch		
Thrust		
Traverse		
In the round		
Promenade		

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Lighting – Types of Lantern

You can use lighting in many ways to create mood and atmosphere on stage as well as to tell a story. Just as with acting, design skills including lighting can be naturalistic or non-naturalistic to depict real life or an abstract concept.

As a lighting designer it is important to really understand the play and know what your lighting choices and why. There are many different lanterns that you can use

Lanterns

Fresnel

A Fresnel gives a soft edge to the light and is the most common lantern you would use to create a wash of light. This is where the space is covered in light. You can use a coloured gel on a Fresnel to create a colour wash.

Profile spot

A profile light has a hard or a soft edge. You can focus the light on a small area of the stage. Gobos can be used to create shapes in the light. A gobo is a stencil or template that is placed in front of the lantern to control the shape of the light.

PARcan

A PARcan is a powerful lantern useful for using strong colours. This is something you would use in a non-naturalistic performance. You can also get LED PARcans which do not need colour gels.

Pebble convex

This is similar to a Fresnel, the difference is that the lens has a pebble effect which gives a softer edge, although not as soft as the Fresnel.

Birdie

A birdie is a miniature light that produces a bright pool of light. As these lanterns are small, they can be concealed in spaces where the large lanterns won't fit. Their effect in an unexpected place can be very powerful.

Flood

A flood is a simple lantern that does not have a lens. You can flood the stage with light. You can control the light as you can with other types of lantern.

Strobe

A strobe is a flashing light that can give a jumpy effect to the action on stage. There are many different strobe effects.

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Lighting Design

Pick five key scenes or moments from the play and explain how you would light each scene. You would use, any changes that take place and why you've made these choices. If you choose are using different lighting design suggestions in order to demonstrate

Scene	Lights	How
Page 29 Hansel and Gretel follow the trail before the Strange Character appears.	Blue wash Purple wash Red wash Strobe effect	A blue wash floods the stage and Gretel follow their trail. The leaf blower the lights give a sinister suggestion. The red the audience will understand be feared. The use of the strobe and disorientating effect.

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Sound Design

There are lots of opportunities for live and recorded sound in *Hansel and Gretel*. Fill in the table with ideas for what live or recorded sound you might use and why.

Song/sound	Live or recorded	Explanation	What
Song: Once upon a time (page 9)	Live	The Supernature Chorus sing this opening song. Some of the chorus play instruments such as harp, flute and small, tinkling bells to make the music sound ethereal and mystical to fit in with the chorus of otherworldly forest sprites. The song should be choir like.	The au and fe truste music the sta
Sound: A bird cries (page 10)	Live	Members of the chorus make the sound of the bird as Hansel and Gretel enter. They might use an echo and canon to fade the sound as the bird flies away.	The so unsett forebc come.
Sound: Rabbit snare (page 10)	Recorded	The recorded sound of the snare is loud and echoes around the auditorium to give the audience the same feeling of terror as the rabbits.	The au this so they d comin
Song: Birthday Song (page 18)			
Sound			
Song: Family Song (pages 23–26)			
Sound			
Song: Forest Song (pages 28–29)			
Sound			
Song: Life is Hard (page 31)			
Sound			
Song: There's Warmth in Wilderness (pages 35–37)			
Sound			
Song: There's Warmth in the Wilderness (pages 61–62)			

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Exam-style Questions

The exam will use specific command words. These are denoted as follows:

- **Describe** – set out characteristics
- **Explain** – set out purposes or reasons
- **Analyse** – separate information into components and identify their characteristics
- **Evaluate** – judge from the available evidence

Taken from: <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/drama/AQA-82611-CA.PDF>

Question 1:

Design a **costume for the Witch** to wear in a performance of this section of the play. The costume must reflect the contemporary story-telling style used in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Answer:

This is the costume that the Old Lady transforms into the Witch so at the start of the play she is dressed as the Old Lady. The Old Lady is described as dressing like Fanny Cradock.

Students might describe some of the following aspects:

Before the transformation:

- 50s or 60s inspired fabrics
- 50s or 60s style blouse and skirt combo or dress
- The costume would actually need to be an all-in-one outfit that can peel off
- Practical, low-heeled shoe
- Jewellery, perhaps quite chunky and bold
- Make up – Fanny Cradock was known for wearing very heavy make up in the 1950s
- The dark glasses might be quite large and chunky framed
- An extravagant hair-do in the form of a wig
- Some sort of gloves

After the transformation:

- The Witch peels off the outfit to reveal a saggy, bloated, mouldy, bald monster
- describe the use of make up on the Witch's arms to give the mouldy element
- The Witch's costume is not described so students will have a free reign to design the Witch's outfit.
- They can decide if she keeps her shoes or removes them to reveal hideous feet
- They might decide that the Witch is not clothed really at all but is very muscular
- The wig is removed so students should comment on what is underneath. Is she bald but is this entirely bald or are there some bits of straggly hair.
- The Witch is hideous with dreadful intentions so this should be reflected in the costume.

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Question 4:

As an actor playing the role of the Witch, describe how you would use your acting **the Witch's character** in this extract **and** explain how your ideas work both for this extract and the rest of the play.

Students might refer to some of the following aspects of interpretation of the Witch:

- She epitomises evil in the play. After the famine has struck and the children are in the woods she is the peak of the bad things in the story.
- The Old Lady is kind to the children and looks after them, we see the character where there is the exchange where we see the children begin to get suspicious. In contrast to the strange Old Lady the Witch's persona is quite terrifying.
- The Witch is quite an eccentric character with her other personality as the more terrifying as she literally sheds her Old Lady skin.
- She represents that classic evil that we expect and know is coming in a fairytale she represents one of our greatest fears; the person who will take our children.
- The Witch's archetypal character is engaging and entertaining; the villain is moving forward to.

Students might refer to some of the following acting skills to communicate their interpretation:

Vocal skills

- Pitch, pace, pause, tone of voice, volume, emphasis, accent – choices in an actor's origin of classic fairy tales or students might choose an entirely different one to expect. Changes in volume might add to the fear instilled by the Witch, as a vocal delivery could be quite unsettling.
- Delivery of specific lines/words, timing – although the Witch is terrifying to the children, the character and the timing and delivery of lines can emphasise this, for example, she speaks directly to the audience.
- The Witch might use vocal expressions to show her delight in what she is doing.

Physical skills

- Interaction with Hansel, Gretel and the audience, eye contact or its withdrawal, proxemics.
- Movement, gesture, posture, gait, energy, facial expressions, idiosyncrasy. Hansel's refusal to get into the cage followed by concentration as she uses magic to show a smug/satisfied expression once he's trapped. An expression of pain when Gretel bites her followed again by concentration as she uses magic to tie Hansel. A satisfied look when she takes a bow.
- The Witch might gesture towards the cage when she orders Hansel to get into the cage. Hansel as she speaks. The Witch might use hand movements or gestures when using magic.
- Depending on where Gretel bites the Witch she might lash out at her or gesture. Again she might use hand movements or gestures when tying Gretel to the post.
- As the Witch moves around she might be hunched over with an uneven gait, limping, or heavy on her feet. Students might make reference to the Old Lady's persona to contrast it with the Witch.

In explaining why their ideas are appropriate for both this section and the rest of the play:

- The Witch and the Old Lady are obviously the same person so students might refer to how an actor's skills are affected by the shedding of the Old Lady skin. The Witch's 'Old Lady voice' to entice the children and her real voice might be much deeper.
- Physically she might have been restricted by the Old Lady skin and be more of a physically fit and capable baddie is much scarier than a hobbling villain.

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- The Witch is deciding which child to cook and eat; it's the darkest part of the story as the children are in the most trouble. We know the story and we know they are in trouble so the differences in this tale from the original so far so we wonder if this will end differently.
- As the audience we have warmed to Hansel and Gretel during the play so we want to see their triumph. The harsher the Witch is, the more we want the children to defeat her.

Question 5:

As a designer working on one aspect of design, describe how you would use your ideas to create effects which **support the action** of this extract **and** explain how your ideas would affect the section of the play and the rest of the play.

Students' answers will vary considerably depending upon the student's chosen aspect of design.

Chosen effects that support the action of the extract could include:

- Creating an appropriate setting through set design
- Creating an appropriate mood and atmosphere through set, lighting or sound
- Creating an appropriate impression of the time of day, e.g. daytime, through lighting
- Creating an appropriate humour in the scene through set, costume, lighting, sound or props
- Creating an appropriate impression of period and/or social context, through set, costume or props
- Creating an appropriate fairy-tale context through set, costume or make up

Set design ideas could include suggestions for:

- The type of stage
- Settings
- Scale
- Levels, ramps, steps
- Locations of entrances/exits
- Gauzes/backdrops/cyclorama
- Projections
- Texture and colour
- The creation of an appropriate setting: for the inside of the Witch's cottage in Kneehigh's original production with circular wooden stage and 'construction' poles and contraptions with a table and appropriate tablecloth

Costume design and make up ideas could include suggestions for:

- Stereotypical Germanic folk-tale costume – lederhosen, shirts and long socks for the male characters. Gruesome, practical for her experiments and building work and be more like Hansel's mother with signs of her active life where Hansel might be more pristine as he spends less time in the forest.
- Colour and fabric
- Condition
- Footwear, headgear
- Accessories
- Costume to make a clear difference between the main characters and the supporting characters
- The transformation of the costume from the Old Lady into the Witch

Lighting design ideas could include suggestions for:

- Appropriate lighting design to create the desired atmosphere inside the cottage
- Suggestion of daytime
- Colour/intensity/positioning/angles/focus
- Choice of lanterns
- Specials

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Sound design ideas could include suggestions for:

- Live musicians – the chorus or actors playing instruments which is often fun to watch
- Recorded sound
- Position and use of speakers; volume/amplification
- Naturalistic sound effects from outside of woodland, animals and birds

Birdy is a Canadian Peekaboo Hawk Owl whose real name is Tuk-tay-ak-took. The character was previously a Bolivian Condor called Hamlet and that Birdy can be open to interpretation of actor's nationality. Puppet design ideas could include suggestions for:

- Characterisation
- Audience appeal
- Type of puppet chosen
- Materials
- Structural design, size, shape and scale
- How the puppet can be manipulated and the intentions for the performance

Students could explain why their design ideas are appropriate to the play as a whole by considering the following:

- Consistency in terms of the development of the action and the characters
- Consistency in terms of the style of design
- Consistency in terms of the design methods employed to create mood or atmosphere

Marking criteria based on that provided by AQA in their 2016 sample assessment scheme, see <https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/drama/AQA-82611-SMS.PDF>

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Exam-style Questions

DEAD RABBITS:

Run away children
Hide in your dreams
Things in the flesh
Aren't quite what they seem!

GRETEL: Auntie? I accuse you of being... a witch!

The OLD LADY transforms into a WITCH! Her dress rips off like dead skin to reveal a mouldy, bald monster.

BIRDY: Yes! She is a witch, as it's plain to see! Now which one will the witch

WITCH: Yes, which one's the most succulent? The most falls-off-the-bone? The most tender in your mouth? They're all tough skin and chewy flesh – but I must make my choice. Now which one will it be?

(Pause.)

Birdy? Put the boy in the cage.

HANSEL: You will never get me in that cage, you hag!

WITCH: Get in the cage, boy!

The WITCH uses her magical powers to get him into the cage.

HANSEL: My... legs.!

HANSEL is crammed into a small cage, then hoisted high.

GRETEL: Leave my brother alone!

GRETEL bites THE WITCH.

WITCH: Oww! Sit down you little brat!

The WITCH uses magic to tie GRETEL to a chair.

WITCH: Yes! Yes! Yes!

She takes a

WITCH: *(To audience.)* Oh, thank you for applauding cannibalism. Now, Hang you there and I am going to feed you until you are perfectly plump. Then I shall hang you high, suspend you over the flames and cook you until you are tender... and gobble you up! Oh, I shall gobble you up!

The WITCH exits.

Kneehigh Theatre's Hansel and Gretel by Carl Grose, published by Oberon Books.

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Question 1:

Design a **costume for the Witch** to wear in a performance of this section of the play. Your costume must reflect the contemporary story-telling style used in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Question 2:

As an actor playing the role of the Witch, describe how you would use your voice to perform the lines below **and** explain what effect you intend to create.

Which one's the most succulent? The most falls-off-the-bone? The most melts-in-skin and chewy flesh? We must make my choice over which one to cook! Now!

Question 3:

As an actor playing the role of Gretel, explain how you and the actor playing Hansel will use your performance space and interact with each other to perform the shaded part of the play. **the Witch's wickedness towards the children and their reaction to the audience.**

ANSWER QUESTION 4 OR 5

Question 4:

As an actor playing the role of the Witch, describe how you would use your acting to perform **the Witch's character** in this extract **and** explain how your ideas work both for this section of the play and the rest of the play.

Question 5:

As a designer working on one aspect of design, describe how you would use your ideas to create effects which **support the action** of this extract **and** explain how your ideas work for this section of the play and the rest of the play.

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