

The wonder of Winnie-the-Pooh

A National Literacy Trust membership resource

A Key Stage 1 resource celebrating the enduring wonder of our nation's favourite bear and the joy of storytelling.

Celebrate the enduring appeal of Pooh and his adventures in the Hundred Acre Wood with our creative ideas and activities to help immerse your pupils in the magical world of Christopher Robin and his menagerie of animal friends.



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Use the annual Winnie-the-Pooh Day on 18 January to focus your celebrations and say happy birthday to Pooh. Alternatively, any day could be a Pooh day, as we seek to celebrate and explore the creative storytelling process and encourage the imaginative A.A. Milne inside each one of our pupils.

The resource

The resource is designed as a whole-day celebration with a morning immersing pupils in the world of Pooh and his friends, in preparation for an afternoon of story invention. Pupils are supported in developing their own Hundred Acre Wood tale orally to rehearse and share with peers and parents as they introduce a new character of their own to join the band of loveable friends.

You will need the following resources provided as part of this resource pack:

- this teacher resource – full of activities and ideas to support the storytelling process across the day
- a map of the Hundred Acre Wood
- resources to create your own Pooh Corner:
 - Pooh bunting for colouring and display
 - Pooh and friends cut out images to decorate your 'corner'
- parent invitation letter template

The resource is designed for Key Stage 1 pupils and can be delivered either as a whole-day celebration or more flexibly across several days with an additional writing outcome. To support extension of ideas, vocabulary and prior knowledge, a great idea would be to combine Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in mixed classes for the day, or even recruit some avid Pooh fans from Key Stage 2 to come and share in the story creation process.

'That,' said Piglet, 'is a Grand Idea.'

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The world of Winnie-the-Pooh

In preparation for the day:

- Send out your **parent invitation letter** (provided for you to download as a word document to enable appropriate editing), as pupils will need to bring in their own soft toy for the day to take centre stage in their new invented story just like Pooh did for Christopher Robin.

When storytelling, an audience is a great motivator, and inviting parents in at the end of the day to hear the created stories and share their own Winnie-the-Pooh memories is a lovely way to celebrate the essence of the Pooh story and legacy. You may also want to organise some simple refreshments – maybe some honey biscuits to help with the celebrations!



The original Winnie the Pooh toys. By Spictacular - Own work by the original uploader., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1112066>

- Recreate your classroom as your very own Pooh Corner using the **Pooh bunting templates** and **character images**. Bring the outside in with any woodland resources available. Peg leaves onto strings and bring any potential Pooh sticks or branches to create your own Hundred Acre Wood environment. Involving pupils in the transformation of the classroom will build their engagement and interest ready for the big day.
- Create a display of as many of the Pooh books as you can find. A comprehensive list can be found here by Egmont, Pooh's official publisher:

<https://www.egmont.co.uk/books/category/brands/winnie-the-pooh/437>

Old versions are often intriguing for pupils, after all Pooh is almost 93 years old now! There are also with newer titles such as the marvellous *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood* and not forgetting A.A. Milne's poetry collections *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*. Ask other staff members if they have different versions to display or any Pooh toys to add.

Part one: All things Pooh...

The following activities are designed to help pupils activate and extend their prior knowledge of the Pooh stories, and build their knowledge of both character and setting through paired and collaborative talk activities, in preparation for their own story inventions based on the originals. If you have the opportunity to work in mixed aged groups or recruit older buddies from Key Stage 2 to work alongside younger pupils, the benefits in terms of vocabulary, creative ideas and of course engagement is obvious, and a wonderful way to build a learning community. Older pupils will also no doubt have their own memories and knowledge of Pooh and his friends to share.

What do you know?

Organise pupils into groups of three and get them to share and discuss anything they know at all about Winnie-the-Pooh. Prompts might include:

- Do they have any Pooh toys?
- Have they seen any videos/films?
- How many characters can they name?
- Have they ever heard any poems, songs or even ‘hums’?!
- Have they ever played Poohsticks?
- Can they remember any Pooh stories?

Once they have had some time in their groups to share and pool their knowledge, organise the whole class into one story circle. Use one of your display sticks or small branches as a story stick or select a special story stone to pass. Encourage pupils to share one thing each with the whole class as they pass the story stick around the circle. Additional support staff or your Key Stage 2 buddy helpers could create a mind map of all their knowledge.

Character stations

Set up six character stations, one for each of the main characters: Pooh himself, Piglet, Owl, Eeyore, Tigger and Christopher Robin. You may want to use the **character images** supplied to decorate your stations.

For each station, have one large piece of flipchart paper and some coloured pens. Split the pupils into equal groups and rotate the groups around the stations as a carousel. At each station pupils are encouraged to add ideas, thoughts or knowledge they have about each character and write any words they think might describe the character. As support for the activity, read out and then display a range of possible character words on the IWB (*wise, bouncy, excited, honest, friendly, miserable, practical, etc*).

A useful summary of each main character can be found here for information:

<http://www.just-pooh.com/100acre.html>.

Pupils may know very little but can make predictions based on their character’s appearance and any stereotypes they might have – for example, perhaps Owl would be the wise one.

Time for a story

Allow pupils to get comfortable, go and get their soft toy and settle down to find even more about Pooh and his friends through one of his stories. We forget that one of the great things about the original Pooh books, *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*, is that they are chapter books each with a separate mini story to delight. Choose one of your favourites or allow the pupils to vote for the one they'd like most to hear. In the brilliant style of A.A. Milne, each story helpfully has a distinct title with its own 'In which...' description.

It could be:

Pooh Goes Visiting – In which Pooh goes visiting and gets stuck in a tight place

or

Surrounded by Water – In which Piglet is entirely surrounded by water

Later stories based on the original characters but not written by Milne such as the wonderfully authentic *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood* also follow the same structure, as well as shorter stories such as *The Long Winter's Sleep* or *Pooh's Snowy Day* from the Disney stories.

Action stations

Having now heard a story we are getting to know some of the characters even better. Encourage pupils to go back to the character stations to add any further details or information to their flipcharts. Discuss with pupils why it is always important when creating a story that we know our characters really well. Introduce the idea that this afternoon they will be making up their own stories about Pooh and his friends and that all this knowledge is going to help them do that well.

The Hundred Acre Wood

Print out copies of the map of the Hundred Acre Wood for pupils in small groups to explore or display on the IWB. Is there any further information they want to add to their class character sheets now that they know where some of the characters live? You might want to play the 'A to B' game and challenge pupils to describe different journeys, e.g. if Christopher Robin wants to visit Pooh's house, can you describe the route you think he would take. (Encourage use of prepositions to support them, e.g. *across, through, under, around*, etc.) Encourage pupils to challenge each other and answer the questions on the map.

What do they notice about many of the words on the map? Which character do they think struggles with their spelling?

In preparation for their own stories, allow pupils individually or preferably in pairs to create their own versions of the Hundred Acre Wood map. They can move characters' homes and add as many new details as they wish – extra rivers, paths, meadows, fields, perhaps a garden, bogs and trees. Encourage them to add the details rather than colour and decorate which can be done as an extension or homework follow up activity later.

Part two: Return to the Hundred Acre Wood

Having immersed pupils in the world of Pooh and his friends, we let the pupils take control and support them in their own creative storytelling and invention.

The story of Winnie-the-Pooh

Share with pupils the legendary story of how the Pooh stories came into existence from such simple origins as a father making up stories about his son's toy animals. Explain that just as A.A. Milne did they are going to create new stories using their very own toys.

The book's creators

These stunning stories, which have become part of our heritage and are so well loved were the creation of author A.A. Milne. Milne was an established author and playwright and regularly contributed to *Punch* magazine, where Pooh first made his appearance in a poem called 'Teddy Bear' which was republished in *When We Were Very Young*. It would be lovely to share this poem with pupils or perhaps any of your favourite Milne poems from this poetry book or from *Now We Are Six*.

E.H. Shepard, who so magically brought Milne's characters to life, was an artist and book illustrator. He also contributed to *Punch* magazine as a cartoonist and was introduced to Milne through the magazine. The illustrations of Pooh were actually modelled on Shepard's own son's bear called Growler. You may want to encourage pupils carefully to observe and draw their own chosen toy to illustrate their stories at a later stage. Shepard also famously illustrated *The Wind in the Willows* which you may also want to share with pupils and perhaps add to your display.

Interesting facts to share

- The real Christopher Robin Milne received a small stuffed bear on his first birthday from the famous Harrods toy store in London.
- At first he was called Edward Bear but Christopher renamed him. The distinctive name of Winnie-the-Pooh came from a combination of the names of a real bear and a pet swan. During the 1920s there was a black bear named Winnie in the London Zoo who had been the mascot for the Winnipeg regiment of the Canadian army. Pooh was also the name of a swan in *When We Were Very Young*.
- Following Pooh came the rest of the stuffed animals, which Christopher received as gifts, and which he loved and played with throughout his childhood. Apparently, so did the family dog, which may have contributed to their well-worn appearance. The baby kangaroo stuffed animal (named Roo) was lost in an apple orchard during the 1930s.
- Winnie-the-Pooh had adventures with Piglet, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, Owl, Rabbit, and Tigger in the Hundred Aker (or Acre) Wood, based on the Ashdown Forest in southern England, located near the Milne family home.

Christopher's author father A.A. Milne and his artist friend Ernest H. Shepard decided to bring the animals to life, and the rest, so they say, is history.

Every year thousands of children and their parents visit the original toys of Winnie-the-Pooh and his pals, who now have a home in the New York Public Library, USA.

Adapted from copy written by the New York Library

See images and further details of Christopher's toys as they are today here:

<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schwarzman/childrens-center-42nd-street/pooh#4>

And introducing...

In groups of three, ask pupils to show each other their chosen toys and retell the story of how and when they received them and why they love them. You might want to bring in one of your own childhood toys to model the conversation and let pupils ask any questions.

Share with pupils that over the years, new characters have been introduced to the stories. Lottie the Otter was introduced in *Return to the Hundred Acre Wood*, and in *The Best Bear in All the World*, produced for Pooh's 90th birthday celebrations, the character Penguin joined the friends.

The actual Christopher Robin was said to also have had a nursery toy which was a penguin and was bought in Harrods toy store just like the others. The story was called *In Which Penguin Arrives in the Forest!*

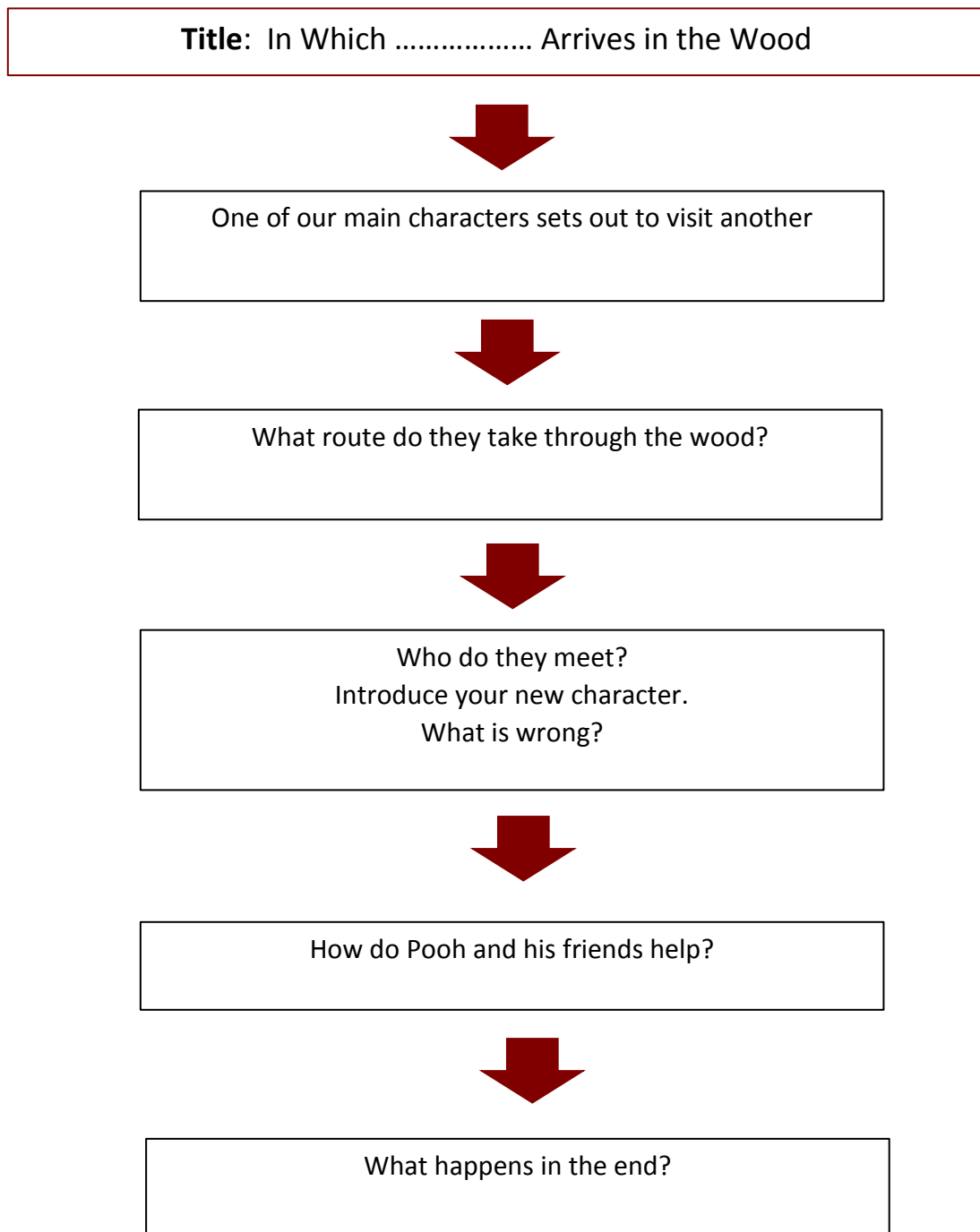
It is now their turn to introduce their own new character to Pooh's world.

In pairs ask pupils to discuss what kind of a character their toy would be. Are they kind like Piglet but also a little scared of things? Or bouncy and a little crazy like Tigger, for example?

In Which...

Use the simple story string below to support pupils inventing a new story *In Which...* their new character arrives. String a washing line and use the story cards provided at the end of this resource one at a time to model the oral invention of a new story, pegging them up on the line as you go. Each card acts as a prompt to help orally plan and then tell the story. The story setting will of course be their own version of the Hundred Acre Wood created earlier in the day.

New story structure



As you model your own story encourage pupils to think about the questions that will help them extend and tell the story well, bringing it alive for their audience and adding lots of extra details.

For example, card 1: One of our main characters sets out to visit another

- Who visits who?
- Did they have a reason for their visit? Have they run out of honey or do they need to ask a favour perhaps?
- What kind of a mood are they in?
- What is the weather like as they set off? Is it winter? Are there snowflakes falling?
- What is the character dressed like?

Organise pupils into pairs and challenge them to invent their own stories using the washing line cards as a prompt along with their own maps of the Hundred Acre Wood to help. If you have invited parents in to hear the stories at the end of the day, it is a great motivator to encourage pupils to get going in preparation for their own special family audience. Pupils can invent one story each and take it turns to tell their story or they can choose to create one story together perhaps taking one part of the story each as they go.

Next encourage pupils to find another pair and then practise retelling their stories again. Remind them that they don't need to be exactly the same every time – that is the joy of oral storytelling, but the more they retell the better the stories will get and the more details they will add. For less confident pupils consider using story mapping techniques directly onto their Hundred Acre Wood map to help them plan and retell their story.

In Which We All Have a Pooh Party and Say Goodbye...

Finally, celebrate your day by greeting the parents, carers and perhaps some pupils from another year group and in groups pupils can share their stories. Parents, in turn, can also share their own stories of Winnie-the-Pooh or their favourite childhood books and characters...and perhaps a biscuit or a honey sandwich too!

You may even want to settle the pupils with their parents and their soft toys and finish the day with another story from the original books. What better way to end the day?

'Pooh, promise you won't forget about me, ever. Not even when I'm a hundred.'

Pooh thought for a little. 'How old shall I be then?'

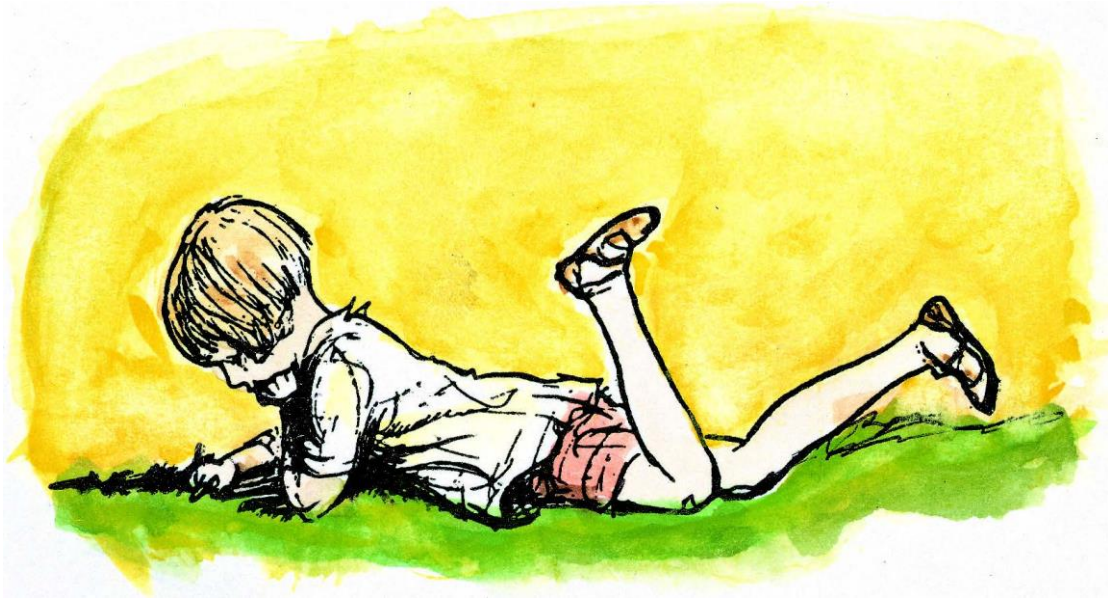
'Ninety-nine.'

Pooh nodded. 'I promise,' he said.

The House at Pooh Corner Chapter 10

And finally ...

Of course, part of our joy in the Pooh Bear stories is that A.A Milne wrote them down for us all to share. As a follow up , you could may well want to use the story cards to help pupils to go on to write their own stories which you could then collate as a whole-class book with a whole host of new chapters *In Which...*



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With huge thanks to The Pooh Property Trust, The Shepard Trust and Egmont Publishing for their supporting resources and images.

Card 1:

One of our main characters sets out to visit another

- Who visits who?
- Did they have a reason for their visit? Have they run out of honey or do they need to ask a favour perhaps?
- What kind of a mood are they in?
- What is the weather like as they set off? Is it winter? Are there snowflakes falling?
- What is the character dressed like?

Card 2:

What route do they take through the wood?

- Are they in a hurry and go straight there or do they wander?
- Do they have to cross a raging river? Avoid a heffalump infested forest ? Put wellies on to cross a smelly bog?
- What do they notice? What can they see? Smell? Hear?
- Do they stop for a game of Pooh sticks on the way?
- Are they worrying? Are they enjoying their walk?

Card 3:

Who do they meet?
Introduce your new
character.

What is wrong?

- Do they hear your new character before they are seen?
- Is the new character hiding? Are they lost?
- Are they crying?
- Perhaps they are stuck up a tree? Stranded in a bog?
- Are they running from a heffalump?
- Are they looking for a new home?
- Are they looking for someone?

Card 4:

Do Pooh and his friends help?

- Does the main character stop and help?
- Are they afraid of the new character?
- Do they scare each other?
- Do they go and get others to come and help?
- How do they help or do they try and avoid the new character?
- Do they make friends?
- Is it dangerous to help?
- What exactly do they do to solve the problem?

Card 5:

What happens in the end?

- Do they all come to help and make friends?
- Does the new character thanks them but doesn't stay?
- Perhaps they all travel together to someone's house to celebrate?
- Maybe Christopher Robin holds a party?
- The new character stays in the wood forever and becomes best friends with Pooh?
- Or perhaps they all build a new house for the new character?
- Maybe they bring their family along to stay in the wood too?