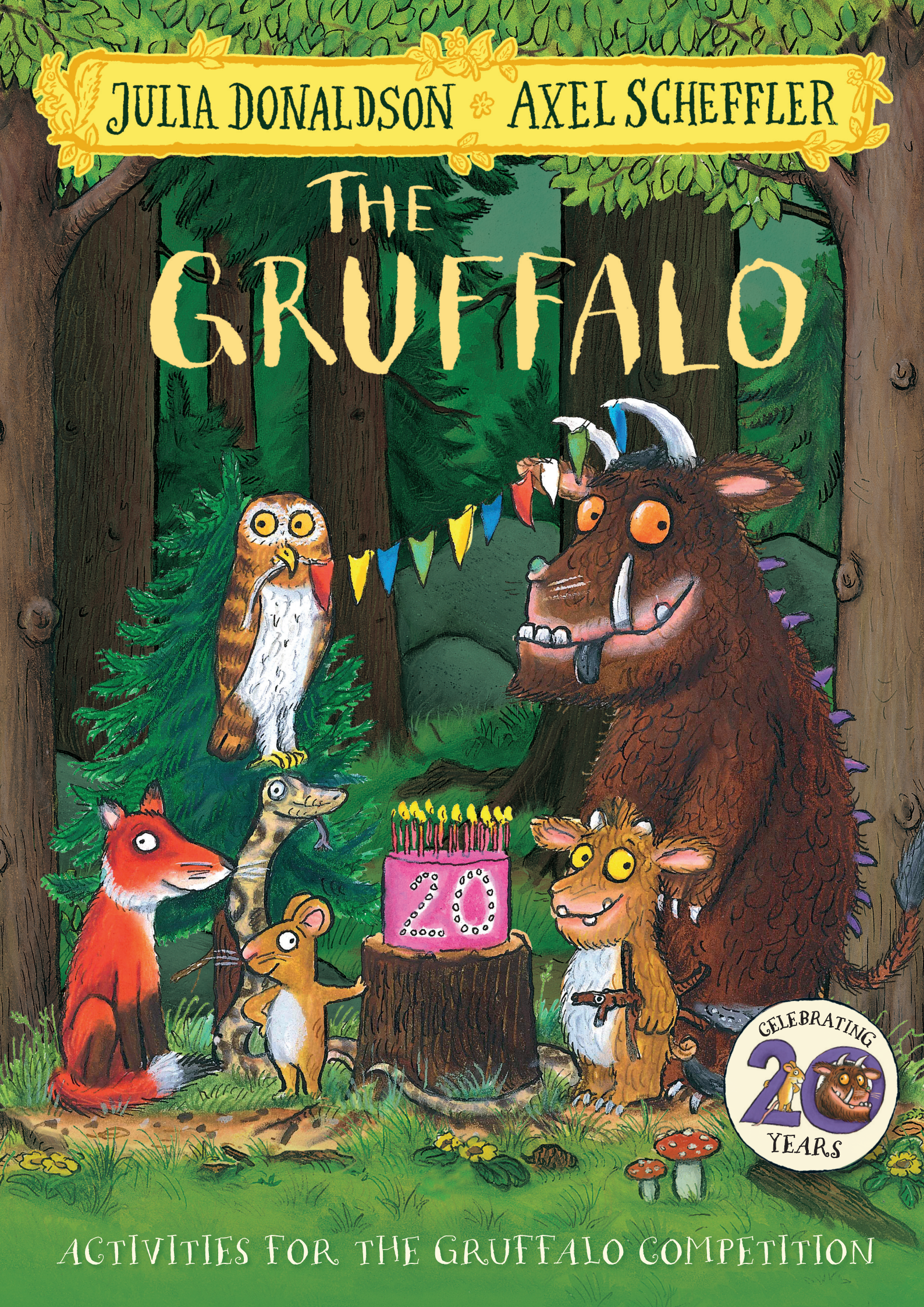


JULIA DONALDSON • AXEL SCHEFFLER

# THE GRUFFALO




ACTIVITIES FOR THE GRUFFALO COMPETITION



# THE GRUFFALO 20 WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? COMPETITION

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*The Gruffalo* has been bringing joy to children and families for the last two decades. The National Literacy Trust is delighted to be partnering with Macmillan Children's Books, and celebrating the work of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler through a fabulous birthday competition.

We are inviting children in primary schools across the UK to participate by creating their very own 'What Happened Next?' Gruffalo-inspired story.

Using their favourite character or moment from the book, children are encouraged to create their own story of what they think happened next. Taking inspiration from Julia Donaldson's wonderful words and Axel Scheffler's iconic illustrations, children can tell their story using prose, rhyme and/or pictures.

We have developed a range of exciting activities to bring creativity and storytelling to life in your school through the magical world of *The Gruffalo*. Activities can be run with individual classes, used across a key stage group or even as a whole-school celebration.

You could also invite parents to participate with a show and tell element – either as part of a sharing assembly or special drama performance.

Children can act out the stories they have created and parents can share their own memories of *The Gruffalo*. You could also hold a Gruffalo Crumble

Party using the ideas found on [www.Gruffalo.com](http://www.Gruffalo.com), which is filled with activities, recipes, party ideas and more.

*The Gruffalo* gives children and families the opportunity to share reading experiences and enables us all to celebrate the wonder of storytelling. So come and join us in celebration of the Gruffalo's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday by telling us what you think happened next to your favourite character!

Visit [literacytrust.org.uk/gruffalo](http://literacytrust.org.uk/gruffalo) for everything you need to take part in the Gruffalo story competition. You'll find templates to accompany the activities in this booklet, a range of exciting posters, bookmarks and certificates for your pupils, and a toolkit to help you transform your classroom or the entire school into the deep dark woods!






# SET THE SCENE

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Bring the world of *The Gruffalo* to life in your school by creating the deep dark wood in and around your classrooms and your school library or reading spaces.

Download the competition toolkit from  
[literacytrust.org.uk](http://literacytrust.org.uk) to help you.



Choose an area in your school to be each of the character's homes in the story – for example, maybe one classroom becomes Snake's logpile, and another becomes Fox's lair. Space permitting, you could create the path Mouse walks on running through the school, perhaps with all paths leading to the school library or assembly space as a centre for your Gruffalo themed activities. Bring the outside in and encourage pupils to get involved by collecting leaves and branches to create decorative displays that represent the deep dark wood.

At the heart of your deep dark wood, use a display board to illustrate a large tree – or if you're able, create a tree from papier-mâché which will become a visual representation of your pupils' character choices (more on this later).

## TO BEGIN

Gather your pupils together – either by year group, key stage or even with a whole-school assembly. It is very likely that many of them will have fond memories of *The Gruffalo* and, if they don't know the story, then this is a great opportunity to introduce them to it.

Read *The Gruffalo* aloud. Invite the children to share their memories of *The Gruffalo* – can they remember when they first heard it? Can you remember when you first read it? Invite pupils to share why they like the story, what their favourite moments are and who their favourite character is. Ask teachers to respond too, creating a moment of shared enjoyment and a chance to celebrate the story.

Now explain to the pupils that they are going to have the chance to tell their own story of what they think happened next to one or more of the characters, through words and/or pictures. Tell them that they will be doing activities in class to help them, with an emphasis on the joy of stories and a celebration of their creativity and ideas.






# IN CLASS

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## 1. STORYTELLING



All children have a story to tell and *The Gruffalo* is the perfect story to help fire up their imaginations. To get your class in the mood for storytelling and in the mind-set of the characters, start by sitting them down in a story circle. Tell them that the centre of the circle is the stage and that you are going to read *The Gruffalo* aloud again but this time they are going to help act it out. Each time you need a character or object, you will invite someone to get up and play that role. If they are not confident you could invite them up in pairs – and also remind them of how brave Mouse is in the story and how they can be brave too!

### NOW START THE STORY

*“A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark wood...”*

Pause and wait for a volunteer or choose someone to stand in the circle to be the mouse – encourage them to act out what you have said by pretending to stroll through the woods.

Each time a specific object or character is mentioned, another pupil can join in the re-enactment. You will be helping them immerse themselves in the story and improvise with movement and expression, focusing on what each character is like and how they might feel and respond to the situation they are in. They will have great fun acting out the characters and you can encourage the whole story circle to join in with sounds such as the Gruffalo *roaring* or Snake *ssssslithering*.

Encourage children to join in with the story verbally, listen out for the rhyming words and say which parts they enjoy most.



## 2. WOULD YOU RATHER...?

Now that pupils have acted out the story, ask them to start to think about which character is their favourite. This will be the character they base their competition entry on. They could choose the one they like the most, the one they like the least or the one they think would help them make the most interesting story. Play 'Would you rather...?' to help them decide.

Place the A4 pictures of the characters from the Gruffalo (which can be found in your competition toolkit) around the classroom.

Ask the pupils to think about the question, then decide.

Ask them:

*Would you rather be a mouse or a snake?*

When you say 'go' the pupils must run and stand next to the picture of their favourite character. Choose one pupil to explain why they've chosen that animal. After you've all heard some reasons, give everyone the chance to change their mind if they'd like to. Say 'go' again, so that anyone who has changed their mind can move over to the picture of their new favourite character. Ask them further questions such as:

*Would you rather live in a log pile house or a treetop house?*

*Would you rather be tall or small?*

Each time they make a choice they can share their ideas with the class.



### 3. WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

Invite pupils to decide who their favourite character is. When they have decided, using the leaf templates provided (see Activity Template 1), invite them to write on the leaf why they have chosen this character and then stick it on your story tree display as mentioned above. Remind them that their stories will each turn out differently, depending on who they choose to focus on and which point of view the story is told from.

Invite the children to really think about what their character is like. Encourage them to think about what personality traits their character has, as well as physical features and where they live. You can do this as a whole class brainstorm or as an individual activity.

For example:

*Mouse – brave, clever, small, brown, likes nuts, lives in the wood*

*Snake – sneaky, likes to eat mice, slippery, lives in a log pile house*

Using the character profile sheet provided (see Activity Template 2), invite pupils to draw their character and write a description using the word bank to help them.

## 4. I'M THE SCARIEST CREATURE IN THIS WOOD!

Ask the pupils to think about how the different characters in the story feel. Explain that how a character feels will often determine how they react and what happens next in the story. For example, Mouse is scared to be faced with lots of animals trying to eat him but, instead of running away, he is very clever and makes up a scary monster to frighten them away.

Help the pupils understand this by asking them to think about a time when they were happy, sad or scared and what that feeling made them do. Invite them to share their experiences in pairs and then as a whole class.

Use the A4 images of the characters again and display them on the board. As a class, invite pupils to share ideas on how each character might be feeling after their day in the deep dark wood. Snake, Fox, Owl and the Gruffalo all tried to eat Mouse and then were scared away! Do they run back home and feel sorry/scared/cross/angry? How does Mouse feel now that he is safe? Tired/happy/relieved? Note their ideas next to the different characters.

Using the template provided (see Activity Template 3), working in pairs or independently, can the class match the emotion to the images?

They can use the space provided to note down their ideas on their character sheet, using the ideas on the board to help them. Then, check if your pupils got them right: 1-C, 2-A, 3-E, 4-B, 5-D.

## 5. WHAT CAN YOU SEE AND WHAT CAN YOU HEAR?

*The Gruffalo* brilliantly brings to life the deep dark wood through words and pictures. Ask pupils to think about the sights and sounds of a woodland walk.

Help them to do this by gathering together some items that you might see if you went for a walk in the woods, such as leaves, pine cones, twigs, feathers, acorns (you could ask pupils to bring items in from home if possible). Encourage them to pick up the different items. How do they feel? Can they describe them? If you are in a school with access to a woodland, take them for a walk as though they were visiting the deep dark wood, and ask them to imagine they are Mouse going for a stroll.

Using the template provided (see Activity Template 4), can pupils list some of the sounds they hear? Can they note down the things they see? Invite them to draw some of the woodland artefacts and label them with descriptive words.

Read an extract of *The Gruffalo* to remind everyone about the wonderful rhymes in the story. Can they spot the words that sound alike? Now encourage them to have their own turn at writing their very own rhyming sentences, using the template provided (see Activity Template 5).

You could create a rhyming wall in your classroom or as part of your Gruffalo display, showing all the words that rhyme in the story.

## 6. STORY SCENE

*The Gruffalo* is full of wonderful pictures that bring the story to life and help us see what is happening. Using the template provided (see Activity Template 6), invite pupils to have a go at describing what is happening in the picture, using the words provided to help them.

Can they think about how the characters are feeling and what they might be doing in the picture? Can they add some speech to the word bubbles? Now see if they can draw what they think happened next in the blank square provided.

Look at how Axel has added in woodland creatures, and other details like different trees and insects. Can their pictures include extra elements like this to help illustrate the story they're creating?



## 7. TELL ME MORE

For this activity you will need the character masks (see Activity Template 7) so that pupils can wear them whilst they are the storyteller.

Now that everyone has had the chance to think about what their favourite character has been thinking and feeling, put the class into groups of three. In their group, each pupil then takes it in turn to be the **storyteller**, the **listener** or the **helper**.

The **storyteller** can wear their mask to help them get into character. They then say one or two sentences about the character they have chosen. The sentences can be something they know about the character after completing the character profile:

*'My favourite character is Fox. He lives in the wood and likes to eat mice. He has red fur.'*

The **listener** then chooses something from the sentence they are more interested to hear more about, with the **helper** providing support to both the **storyteller** and the **listener** by giving them both ideas if they get stuck. The **listener** might say 'Tell me more about ...' – for example:

*'Tell me more about ... the Fox's red fur.'*

And the **storyteller** then gives some more information about Fox's red fur or coat. This can be completely made up and include any ideas the **storyteller** wants. For example:

*'Fox is very proud of his red coat, and thinks that all other animals should have a red coat just like him.'*

Or:

*'Fox sometimes wishes his fur was a different colour – he thinks he would like to sometimes be blue.'*

Have fun with these ideas – the more creative the better! Each time the **storyteller** says a sentence the **listener** then asks for more:

*'Tell me more about why Fox loves red.'*

*'Tell me more about why Fox would like blue fur.'*

The pupils will find themselves telling stories without even realising it, giving them more inspiration for their own story.

## 8. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

There are lots of options for a fun *What Happened Next?* story! Pupils can use their storytelling skills and the ideas they have come up with to think about what happened the day after Mouse's stroll through the deep dark wood.

Everyone has now had the chance to think about character, setting, emotion and stories through pictures. Now, using the storyboard (see Activity Template 8) to help them, they can decide what they could include in their own story. You could put pupils in character groups – for example, all the pupils telling what happened next to Fox could work together.

Encourage them to think about:

- Which character they are focusing on and how that character might be feeling
- Where that character might go – do they visit a different part of the wood?
  - Are any other characters going to be included?
  - What the character(s) might say
  - What new ideas can they introduce? A new character?  
A new place? A new type of food for characters to enjoy?

Remember that pupils' final entries can be written in words, using pictures or both.

Their story should start with the words  
*'The very next day in the deep dark wood ...'*  
and be no more than two sides of A4.



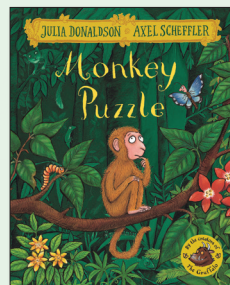
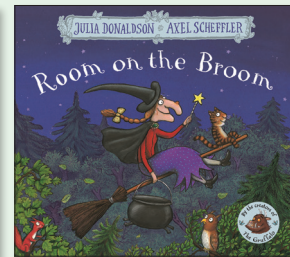
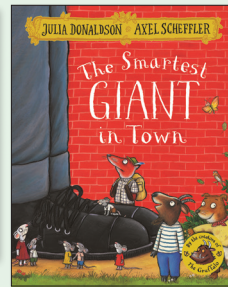
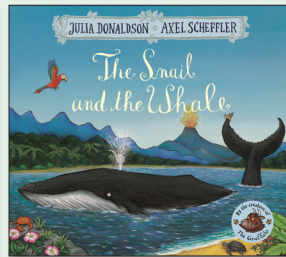
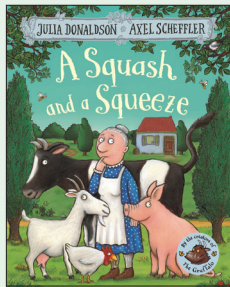
## 9. THE VERY NEXT DAY IN THE DEEP DARK WOOD

Celebrate their creativity by sharing stories aloud with their class. This is where you could invite parents to see their work. You could go back to your story telling and invite pupils to perform their *What Happened Next?* story – this could be in groups or independently.

You could also invite pupils to dress up as their character and bring in a costume from home or use the masks provided. Visit [www.Gruffalo.com](http://www.Gruffalo.com) for some great costume ideas.

In the same way you read *The Gruffalo* aloud and had pupils come up to perform, you could do this with the pupils' *What Happened Next?* stories.

If you've enjoyed *The Gruffalo*, why not visit the wonderful world of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler and try these stories?





Share what you think happened after the Gruffalo  
ran away and the Mouse found his nut.



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.





# GRUFFALO COMPETITION ENTRY

Share what you think happened after the Gruffalo  
ran away and the Mouse found his nut.

