

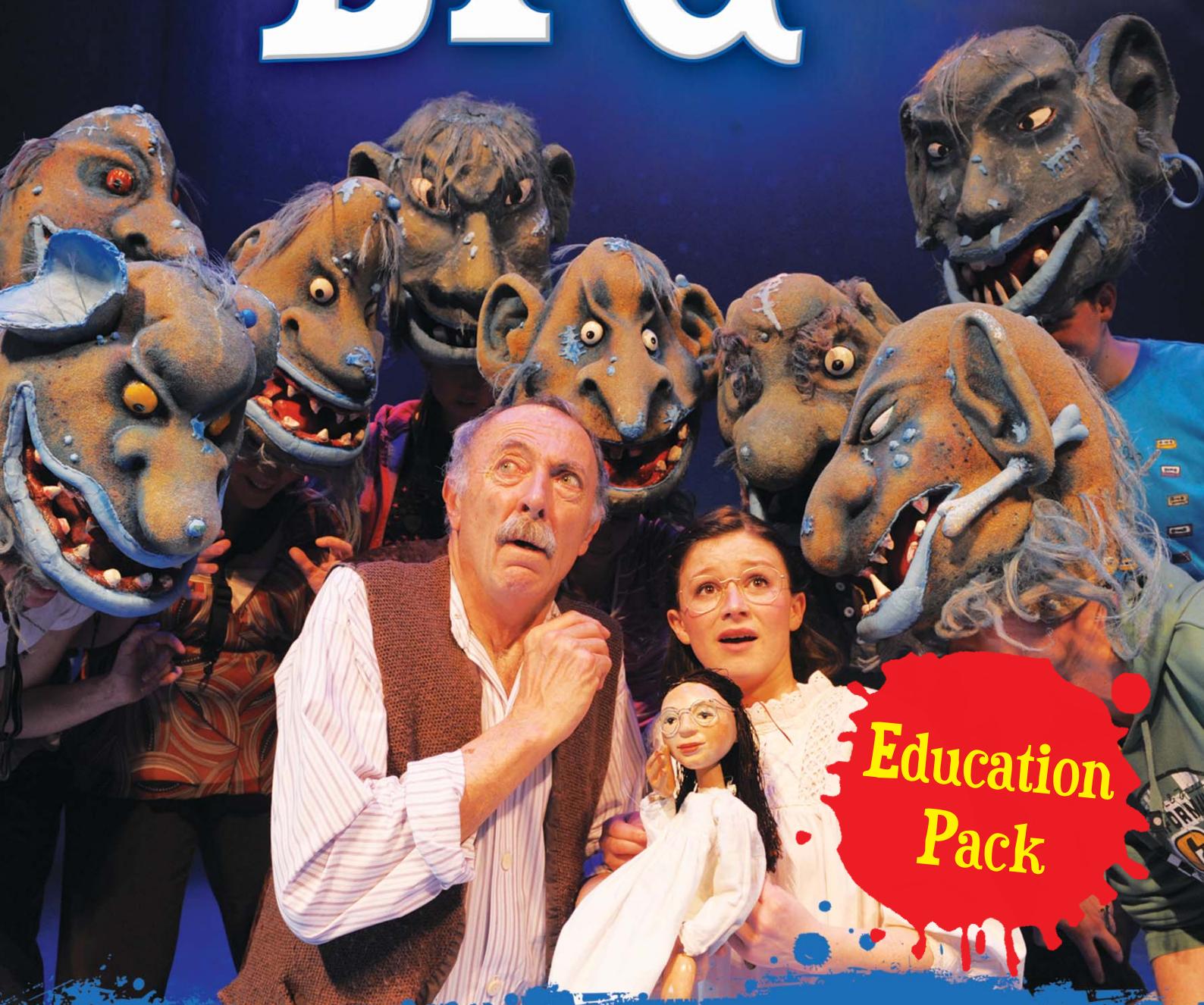
'You won't see a better family show anywhere this year'

Birmingham Post

Fiery Light presents a Royal & Derngate, Northampton production

The BFG

by ROALD DAHL
adapted by
DAVID WOOD
directed by Phil Clark
with Anthony Pedley as The BFG



Whizzpopping fun for all the family



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by ROALD DAHL
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directed by Phil Clark

Education Pack for teachers of Key Stage 2

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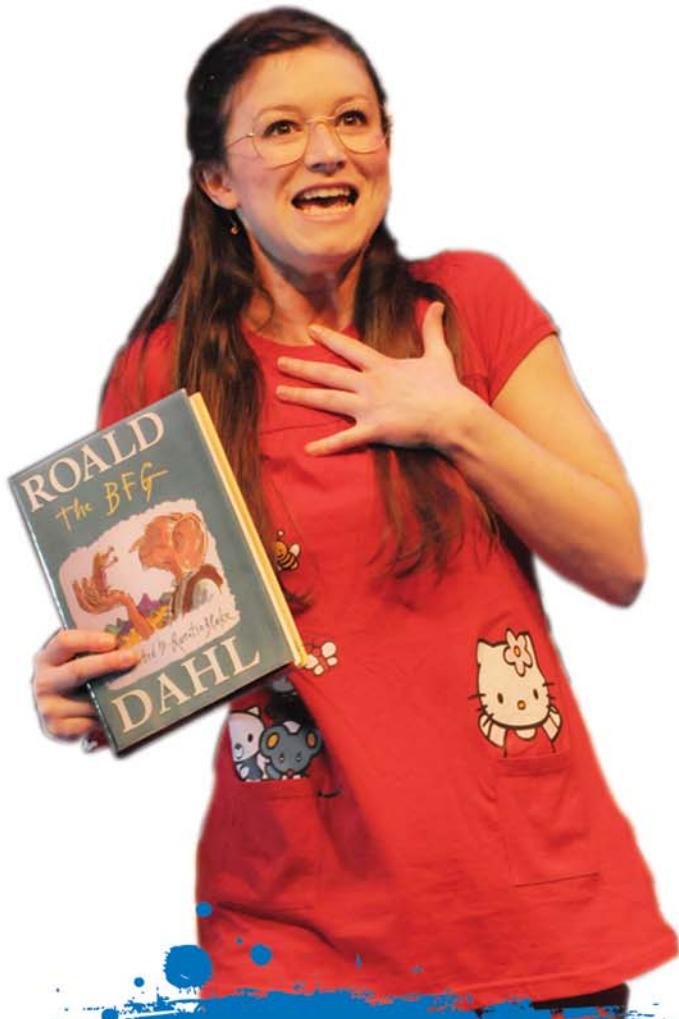
More BFG stuff!

Appendix

Story and play summaries.

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National Curriculum subjects covered:
English, Literacy, (Drama), Art, Maths, Science,
Geography, History and PSHE



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Introductions

Roald Dahl

Roald Dahl was born in Llandaff, Wales in 1916. He worked as a representative for Shell Oil Company in East Africa, an RAF fighter pilot in the Second World War and an air attaché before becoming an author.

Roald Dahl invented the story of the BFG for his own children. The BFG's friend, Sophie, is named after a real Sophie, Dahl's granddaughter. She is the only family member whose name he used for a character in one of his books.

Roald Dahl kept a secret diary from the age of 8. He died in 1990, aged 74.

Roald Dahl's writing tips:

When you get a good idea write it down quickly so you don't forget it.

Make it funny.

Exaggerate good or bad qualities to create interesting characters, so they are not ordinary – they are extraordinary!

For further information about Roald Dahl's life and works go to Roald Dahl - the official website: www.roalddahl.com



The BFG

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Introduction to the play by David Wood

The BFG is a very popular and deeply loved children's book about a twenty-four-foot-high giant and a little girl – not perhaps the most obvious subject for faithful stage adaptation.

But in the knowledge that, if children themselves in a playtime situation wished to act out the story of The BFG, they would undoubtedly find an imaginative and convincing way, I decided to use that very knowledge and have a family and friends act out the story at a birthday party as a 'play within a play'.

Thus, using as props objects in a playroom such as puppets, a doll's house or a fishing net, the actors could tell the tale in an apparently improvisatory manner.

Yet this device, I felt, was not enough. It was fine for the Giant Country scenes, in which the giants could be played by human beings and the only human character (Sophie) could be played by a puppet, thus offering an effective sense of scale. But the scenes in England are mostly populated by human beings, who needed to be played by human beings, thus necessitating the Giant to be played by a giant puppet; this change of scale was, I thought, satisfactorily theatrical and offered the possibility of developing the fantasy of the 'improvised' beginning into a more naturalistic presentation of the later scenes, even to the extent of introducing a complete transformation scene as the world of the imagination took over.



The BFG

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Phil Clark, Director, introduces The BFG - the production

I have been directing the work of Roald Dahl on stage for many years. In the 1990s I was Artistic Director of the Sherman Theatre Cardiff, Dahl's home city. Over twelve years we produced eight stage adaptations of his magnificent stories for young people, four of these were new commissions. The last in that series, DANNY THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, finished a two-year national tour in 2008.

Dahl has this great gift of placing his reader at the centre of the adventure. He sees the world through the eyes and imagination of young people. His heroines and heroes are always children, the grownups are the baddies. The BFG re-addresses this a little. Yes, the grownup is a giant, but he's a big friendly one. It's almost as if Dahl himself is saying to young people, "let me, a big adult, be part of your world...please...some adults can be friendly".

The BFG is a timeless story that challenges the imagination of young people. It is this challenge that makes it great drama. The book is a page-turner and the play should be a real adventure.

This new production of David Wood's now classic stage adaptation will be set in a contemporary world. All the actors will also be musicians and will create the music and sound score live on stage. I will be working with the same artistic team that created DANNY THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD, Designer Sean Crowley, Composer/MD Paula Gardiner, Lighting Ceri Davies and Sound Design Mike Beer. We have been working together for many years and we are all passionate that theatre for young audiences should have real status in the canon of British Theatre.

The chance to create a new production of The BFG in 2009 is extremely exciting and challenging. In a world of video games, television and Nintendos, it's important that young people experience the magic of live theatre. Our goal will be to engage them in a fantastical world that has a real relevance to their lives.



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Pre-show information

Theatre Quiz

Have you been to the theatre before?
Do you know what these places, people and things are?

- a. **Foyer or Front of House?** This is the area where the audience gathers inside the theatre but outside the area which has the seats and stage. **What might be sold in the Front of House area?** Tickets, programmes, food and drink are some of the items that may be on sale in this area.
- b. **Ushers?** These are the people who check your tickets and show you to your seats.
- c. **Front of House Manager?** This is the person in charge of all the staff you see at the theatre in the foyer or the auditorium. The Front of House Manager makes sure the audience are all in their seats before the show begins.
- d. **Auditorium?** This is the area inside the theatre where the audience sits or stands and the area for the part of the stage where the performance takes place.
- e. **Box Office?** This is where you buy or collect tickets for the show. Did you know, in the 17th and 18th century, the only seats that could be reserved in advance were the box seats at the side of the stage? Many people believe this is where the term Box Office comes from. Other people say it dates back to Shakespeare's time when audiences had to put one penny in a box by the door to pay to stand and watch the play. There were boxes on the different levels where people sat to watch the play. The better the view the more pennies had to be put into the box. When the show started, the men went and put the boxes in a room backstage – this was the Elizabethan Box Office.
- f. **Stalls?** These are the seats downstairs and nearest to the stage. In the 17th century, when the first proper indoor theatres were built in this country, the audience sat on wooden benches in this area and there was straw on the floor, a bit like in horses' stables, which is where the name Stalls came from.
- g. **Dress Circle and Upper Circle?** These are the raised seating areas for the audience. Did you know, in the 18th and 19th century the nickname for the Upper Circle was "the gods". This was because it was so high up it was said to be almost like being in heaven!

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Backstage quiz

Apart from the actors, the following people are usually needed to put on a play: Do you know what they do?

Playwright – writes or adapts a story for the stage, like David Wood.

Director – works with the actors and designers to bring the play to life (the production).

Designer – decides how the stage, costumes and props should look.

Lighting and Sound Designers – decides on what lighting, music and sound effects are needed for a show.

Stage Manager – is in charge of making sure the rehearsals and then each performance of the play run smoothly and to plan.

Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) – in charge of knowing all the actors' entrances, exits and movements on stage, as well as the cues or times for lighting and sound. A DSM may also be in charge of prompting the actors – this means telling them their lines (words in the script) if they forget. The DSM will have a copy of the play with notes on all the movements and cues. This is known as "the book".

Assistant Stage Manager (ASM) – in charge of props, the things that the actors need to perform the play and, sometimes, prompting the actors.

Production Manager – in charge of making sure all the things needed for the production of the play are ready in time.

Producer – roles varies from production to production but takes overall responsibility for play, decides which play to stage or asks a playwright to write a new one (commissions), puts the team and actors together, oversees all aspects of the play and raises the money to pay for everything.

Press and Marketing Managers – in charge of making sure people know that the production is on by advertising the show, using posters, leaflets and adverts in different places, such as newspapers, the Internet and shops. They will also invite people to review the show.

Theatre Critics – these are journalists who write what they think of the play and the production, usually in newspapers and also on the Internet.

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About the stage: practical exercises

a. Theatre Shapes

In a group, make the shape of different types of theatres, showing the relationship between the actors on stage and the audience.

In the Round: make a circle.

Traverse: make a corridor.

Thrust: make a semi-circle thrust

End on: make a straight line (with space in front)

Promenade: stand anywhere in the space

Each time, pick two people to move around in the stage-area shape the group has made. They can have a short conversation about an everyday subject, like the weather. They need to think about standing and moving so that the audience can see them. The rest of the group are still, as the audience, except for “Promenade” when the audience can move to where the actors are. Discuss what stage shapes the group prefers and why.

b. The Stage Game

Get the group to imagine they are on stage (end on) looking at an audience. A move to their left is Stage Left, a move to their right is Stage Right, a move as close to the audience as possible on stage is Down Stage, a move far way from the audience is Upstage, stand in the middle of the stage is Centre Stage.

Test their memory of these positions by calling them out in random order, for example: Stage Right, Centre Stage, Down Stage, Up Stage, Centre Stage, Stage Left.



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Post Show Activities

1. Write a review of The BFG (Literacy)

Ask your students to imagine they are a theatre critic. They may work for a newspaper, a radio station or a TV station. They need to write a short review. These could then be presented in a newspaper format or spoken as part of a live discussion for radio and TV.

A review usually gives an introduction to the story or plot of the play. It will usually mention the actors and the set and costumes in the play. A review may also refer to the style of the play, the direction, lights, music and the writing. The critic will state what they liked about the play (the actors and the different elements mentioned above) and also what they did not like and give reasons.

Here is an example of a newspaper review of an adaptation of another well-known Roald Dahl story, *Danny the Champion of the World*, also directed by Phil Clark:

Danny the Champion of the World

Directed by Phil Clark for Sherman Theatre Company,
adapted by David Wood from the story by Roald Dahl
Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea

Review by **Graham Williams** (2005)

Theatre for young people does not come much better than this: Sherman Theatre Company's production of this heart-warming story by Roald Dahl is a sure-fire winner, intelligently mounted and performed, and guaranteed to entrance audiences of all ages. Danny (Griff Jameson) lives with his father (Dafydd Emrys) in a run-down caravan adjoining a petrol station in the midst of a rural community which abounds with larger-than-life characters, who - in typical Dahl style - are painted with big bold strokes: the northern bobby (Matthew Bailey), the vicar's wife (Llinos Mai), the robust lady doctor (Nia Davies) and so forth. Danny and his Dad enjoy a strong bond and are supported by their friends and neighbours, but when local landowner Mr Hazell (Nick Wayland Evans) arrives on the scene, the pair's idyllic life looks set to be shattered.

Unlike so many other works by Dahl, this story has no supernatural or magical elements and is unusually wordy, with the warmth between father and son being underlined in sequences, which are beautifully written and at times very moving. Which of us would not have wished for a Dad as affectionate and caring as this one when we were growing up?

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It says much for the skill of the performers, and for the intuitive approach of director Phil Clark, that, at the performance I attended, an audience comprised of schoolchildren was spellbound even through the wordier scenes: all the more remarkable given the fact that today's generation of children is said to lack the ability to pay attention to anything for more than five minutes at a time.

The by now familiar gimmick of having a cast provide their own music works well here - though to be frank the accordion becomes a little tedious and repetitive after a while - and there are scenes involving puppetry and projection which add much to the feel of the production.

This is clever and engaging stuff which demonstrates just how good Dahl was at tapping into the psychology of children - and if his adult characters seem cartoon-like and heavily caricatured at times, this only adds to the atmosphere of a show in which a child sets out to prove that he can beat those pesky grown-ups at their own game.

By no means just for kids, this is a warm and winning piece of theatre, which proves that productions aimed at children, can be every bit as intelligent and relevant as those aimed at adult audiences.



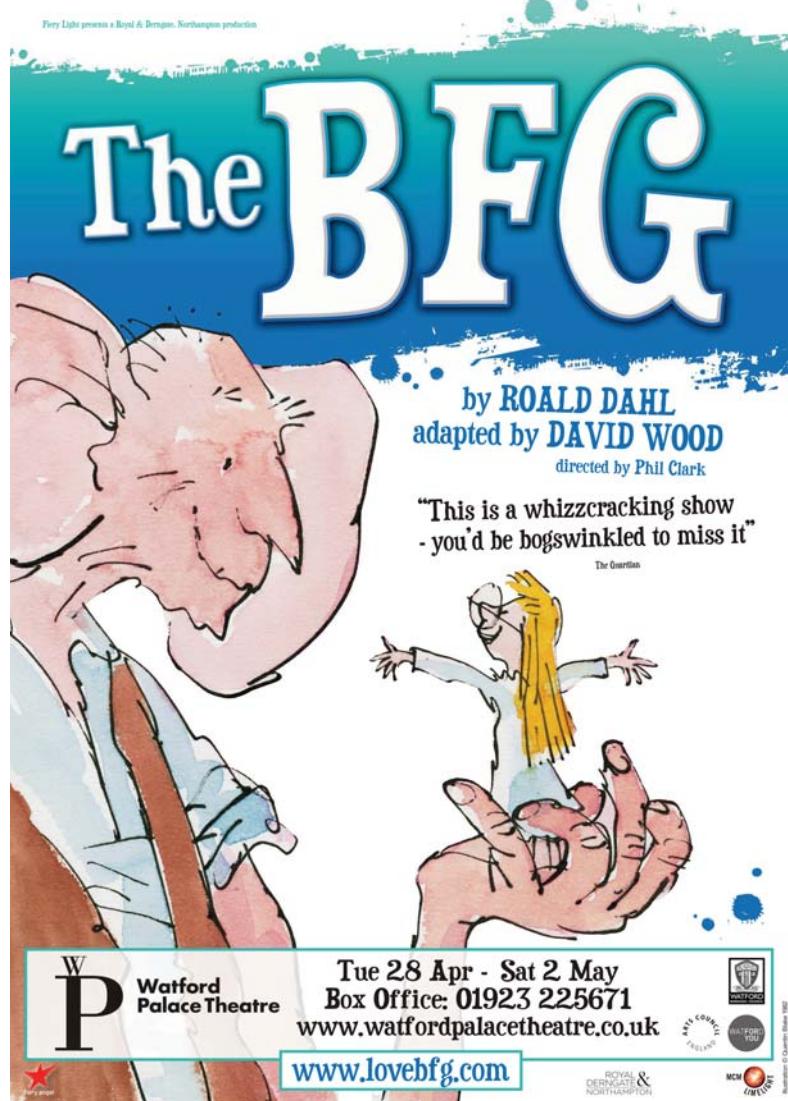
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2. Design a poster for the production of The BFG (Art)

The poster must have the title and the name of the writer and playwright who has adapted it, as well as the name of the theatre, the dates of the performances and the box office number. The most important thing is to create an image that you think would make people want to go and see the show. It could also have a positive quote from your review of the show.

Here is an example:



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3. Theatre Design

Designing for a play

A theatre designer gets ideas from reading the play and the stage directions. This helps them find out about the characters and settings of the play. An extract from the opening scene of David Wood's adaptation of The BFG is given below to read with your students, if desired.

The designer will also talk to the director about their ideas for the production of the play.

The BFG: A designer would ask these questions:

Who are the characters? Where are they from?
What time of year is it? What year or century is it?
What country/ city / landscape is the play set in?

A designer will then sketch images of the play's different settings.

Ask your students to think about these places in The BFG story and draw pictures of how they imagine them to look:

Sophie's room, town street at night, BFG's cave, Giant world, Dreamland, Buckingham Palace Gardens, Queen's bedroom, Queen's drawing room.

Next they will draw pictures of the characters.

Ask your students to choose two characters from The BFG, such as Sophie and the BFG, or the Queen and one of the giants. Ask them to think about what type of clothes the character would wear and what colours they think would suit the characters to show their personality and / or how important they are in the world.

Make a model box:

A theatre designer will make a miniature or model of the stage and the set to show to the production team and the actors.

This is usually done to scale, for instance: 1:25.

For a simple model box, use old cereal boxes or shoe boxes. The part where the roof of the stage would be should be cut away. A simple scale to work on might be 1 cm equals 1 m, imagining the stage size to be 15m x 15m. (The height of the stage would be at least the same if not more but does not need to be accurately represented.)

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Drawings of the different settings can be put inside the model box, including the backdrop and the floor / ground area. Card can be used to make models of furniture, houses or other set items, if wished. In the production of The BFG, the designer also uses perspective, so a scene may be shown from close up or far away (as seen below). This aspect invites further discussion on scale, if desired.

(A simpler approach would be to use two A4 pieces of card, one for the backdrop design and one for the floor. These can be stuck together with sticky tape and propped up on a table.)

Scaled-down sketches of the characters can be placed on pieces of card, with a extra small piece of card at the bottom to stand them up or a long, thin piece stuck to the top of the character to 'fly' them in to the box.

The BFG is described as being 24 foot tall (6m approximately). Sophie is probably about 1 m high or the same height as your students!

Encourage your students to have their own ideas about how the settings and characters would look. The designer for this production of the BFG has made the sky an important part of the set.

Here is a photograph of the model box, for The BFG, designed by Sean Crowly, with the setting for the opening scene:



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4. Theatre lights

Discuss the use of lighting in theatre. Theatre lights are big and powerful. Follow-spots can move and light up the actors. Coloured material called gel can be put over the light to change its colour. What colours would be good to have in a show like The BFG – what moods or atmospheres can lighting create? Use torches to create lighting effects in model boxes.

The Lighting Game: Get some torches and make the room that you are in as dark as possible. Turn on the torches and try putting them in different parts of the room, high and low, to see what the light does, along with other effects such as casting long, tall shadows. Shine lights on different parts of the body, e.g. under the chin and see what this effect is like. Get someone to walk around the room and follow them with torch light (avoid shining light in the eyes). What is the difference if the light is close or far away from the person?



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5. Puppets

- a. There are many different types of puppets. What types of puppets are used in The BFG?

A hand-held doll puppet for Sophie, when the giants are acted out by humans in the first half of the play. A giant puppet for the BFG, controlled by one of the actors, for when he meets the Queen in the second half of the show.

What other types of puppets can you think of? String, wooden-spoon, glove, finger and shadow puppets, for instance.

In the production of The BFG, the audience sees the people controlling the puppets, they are not hidden from view.



- b. Working with puppets:

Ask your students to create their own small puppets by bringing in toys or making them. Simple small puppets to make are wooden-spoon ones or finger puppets. Finger puppets can be made by drawing round one finger on to a piece of card and then drawing on a head and a body and decorating. The cut-out card can be curved round so that the bottom corners of the picture are stuck together and placed on top of the finger.

Have fun playing with the puppets and getting them to move, make sounds and talk.

Golden rule: the person controlling the puppet must always keep their eyes on the puppet so that the audience looks at the puppet and not at them.

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Try out these ideas:

Puppet can – bow, point to self, clap, point, wave, rub hands, tap with impatience, think, cry, sneeze, snore, look, read, pick things up, run, hop, fall over, faint.

Puppet walks on and looks at audience, finally waves and hops off

Puppet is tired, walks on slowly, yawns and stretches, brushes a spot on the floor, lies down goes to sleep, snores and gradually drops out of sight

Puppet walks on, picks something up, nods yes and runs off

Voices – Puppets work well with high or low voices. Try saying: Yes and No, Hello, How are you, All right, Goodbye!

Music – Create different types of music to suit the different puppet scenarios above.

c. **Shadow Puppets** – these are used in the production to create the sequence where the giants are captured.

Shadow puppets can be made out of card and attached to sticks. A screen at table or head height with a strong light from behind the puppets and the screen will create the shadows. Slow and steady movements are the most effective for simple shadow puppets.



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6. Masks

David Wood has also published a series of plays for children to perform based on the story of The BFG. These are published by Puffin Books.

In it, he suggests that masks could be used to bring the giant characters to life. These could be masks that cover the face or stick on top of your head (like in the theatre production of The Lion King).

Making masks

a. On an A3 sheet of paper or card, draw a large circle. This can then be illustrated to make the face of one of the giants. Cut out the circle. Adding wool, straw or bits of material can create hair on top of the head and on the face. Cut a hole for the mouth so that giant noises can be heard!

Use elastic to attach the mask to the head.



b. To create a mask for the top of the head you need to make a head rim to attach your mask to, as follows:

Take a piece of A3 paper length-ways and cut it in half.
Use sticky tape to stick the two pieces of paper together to make one long piece of paper. Now fold this paper over to make one long strip.
Use this strip to fit your head and sticky tape together where it is comfortable to make the rim for your mask.

For the BFG, two large paper / card ears could be created and attached to the rim.

Golden rule: when wearing a mask of any type, use the body as much as possible to show feelings and emotions and move the head slowly and carefully.

Make-up

Make-up in the theatre is also like a mask. Students can do a make-up design for one of The BFG characters by drawing a large face on a sheet of A4 paper and then shading and colouring the different parts of the face using chalks. Hairspray can be used to seal the picture.

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7. Acting it Out! (Drama, English, Literacy)

Drama Games

The Giants are Coming: The game Captain's Coming inspires this. It introduces actions, sounds and words associated with the story of The BFG.

First the students need to learn what actions and sounds / words go with each command below. After this, the commands can be called out at random to test their memory and concentration.

"The Giants are Coming!": everyone crouches on the floor with their hands over their heads, in complete silence and without moving. (They do not want to be eaten!)

"The Journey to Giant Country": everyone takes huge leaps to travel from one end of the space to the other.

"Dreamland": everyone moves around the space in slow motion, bouncing slightly, like an astronaut on the moon.

"BFG": everyone mimes carrying a suitcase and blowing dreams through a long horn.

"Snozzcumbers": everyone says: 'Yuck!, disgusting!' and pulls a face.

"Whizzpoppers!": everyone jumps up in the air and says: 'Yippee! Whee!'

"The Queen": everyone bows or curtsies.

"Head of the Navy / Head of the Air force": everyone stands to attention and salutes.

Officer No.1 Calling Officer No. ... : everyone stands in a circle and imagines they are officers in the Navy or the Air force. Each person is given a number in sequence starting with 1. Officer No. 1 starts and can call to any other officer by saying their number. The officers on either side of that officer must turn and salute. For example, if Officer No. 1 calls to Officer No. 4, Officers 3 and 5 must turn and salute Officer No. 4. If they do not salute they are out and must sit down in the circle. If anyone calls to an officer who is out, they are also out. The game continues until there are only 3 players left – who are the winners or Officers in Charge!

Wink (giant) murder: play this as usual except that the murderer is a giant and Sophie or the BFG is the detective.

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King of the Giants: everyone sits in a circle and is given a different giant name and a movement and sound for that giant. The largest giant is the King and then going round the circle to the smallest giant – BFG at the bottom. BFG starts by making his sign and noise, then makes sign and noise for another giant in circle. The giant signed then follows suit by making its sign and one other. If a giant misses their sign or signs incorrectly, they have become the BFG and everyone else moves up and changes places and giant gesture until everyone has replaced the King of Giants

Giant chase: Take two people out to be BFG and a giant.

Get the others lined up in rows of five or six with spaces in between. Then put arms up to make corridors. Leader shouts ‘Change’ and everyone turns a half turn to make the corridors run the other way. Giants and BFG must run up and down and not go under arms. Let others take turns at being BFG and giant.

Drama Exercises

When you act out a story or act in a play, think about these questions:

What do you do with your eyes? (make contact with the audience)

What do you do with your face? (express emotions)

What do you do with your voice? (speak clearly)

What do you do with your body? (movement and expression)

Here are some group drama exercises and ideas for The BFG:

a. **Big Ears listening experiment:** Try having big ears like the BFG. Everyone sits still, closes their eyes and listens for one minute. There is no need to make a sound, just listen out for the things around us that we don’t normally hear, because we are making too much sound, such as, breathing, heart beating, water pipes, people talking outside the room, cars in the street and other surprising things!

b. **Ha! (giant movement)** – everyone looks at the leader who stands absolutely still for several seconds and then suddenly makes a movement accompanied by the sound ‘HA!’, everyone copies immediately.

Everyone closes eyes, one person is touched – they will lead the ‘HA!’. This time everyone has to be completely alert as they do not know who the leader will be. (good to focus and listening)

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c. Emotions and The BFG. What different emotions do the characters feel in The BFG? Sophie feels lots of different things but she cannot make a sound because of the giants and, later on, in order that the Queen does not wake up too soon. Sitting down or standing in the room, try acting these emotions without making any sounds: frightened, helpless, hungry, happy, embarrassed, excited. How does your body change when you express different emotions?

d. Body language and character. There are many different types of characters in The BFG. Your body can help to express character. Try walking around with different body parts going first or leading, for example: nose, knees, chest, feet. How does this change the way you walk? What type of people walk like this? Try taking big steps, small steps, walking fast, walking slow.

Respond to face: The group agrees to be a character or a group of characters (e.g. Queen, giants). Then someone starts and pulls a face (e.g. Sad, happy, hungry, thoughtful) and the next person has to make a corresponding vocal sound before pulling their own face and so on.

Music and character: Try walking around as the character you have chosen with someone else playing music or making sounds that suit the character or their mood.

e. Voice work. Actors have to breathe properly and warm up their voices so that they can speak clearly on stage.

f. Breathing – Try breathing in while pushing out your chest and stomach and breathing out while pulling in your chest and stomach. Make sure your head and shoulders are relaxed. This type of breathing helps you to project your voice so that you can be heard without shouting and straining your voice.

Face – warm up your mouth and facial muscles by pulling silly faces.

Voice - Try whispering your name but making it as clear as possible, so that someone on the other side of the room can hear you. Try speaking your name with different emotions: happy, sad, angry, and tired.

Try out some **tongue twisters** to help you to speak clearly:

Peter Piper picked a piece of pickled pepper where's the piece of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked?

Red lorry, yellow lorry.

Unique New York, unique New York

She sells seashells on the seashore

Can Kitty cuddle Clara's kitten?

Talk with the tip of the tongue, the teeth, and the lips.

Tiny Tim toddles to the tiny toddlers' toyshop.

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g. Props: In this production of The BFG, props (the things the actor uses) are used in many different ways. Try these exercises to explore this way of bringing a story to life:

Props challenge: find a couple of everyday items such as a bucket, a ball, a spoon, a pen or a book. Get into a circle. For each round, place one of the items in the middle of the circle. The challenge is to get up and use the item as if it were something else, for example: a bucket becomes a hat or a chair. This is what happens in the production of The BFG when the doll's house becomes Sophie's house in the story.

Set game: Just like in the production of The BFG, use simple pieces of furniture to create different settings by using your imagination! In small groups, take two chairs and a long piece of material – try creating a place, an event, a character, for example: a birthday party, a school assembly, a spaceship, and the BFG's legs.

Costume game: Sometimes just one piece of clothing can create a character. Try on hats and / or items clothing to create different characters. Ask these questions: who are you, where are you, what are you doing, when were you alive?



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8. The Story of The BFG Becomes a Play. (English, Literacy, Drama, Art)

There is a summary of the story of The BFG in the Appendix below, alongside a summary of the play version.

What happens when a story in a book becomes a play? The action and atmosphere of the story comes to life.

The writer who is adapting the story for the stage must choose the most important parts of the story to show to the audience.

a. Ask your students to draw a storyboard for The BFG. The storyboard should contain eight to ten key images telling the story of The BFG. Each image must have a title or a sentence summing up what is happening. The characters in the image can also have speech / thought bubbles.

Here is a possible sequence: Capture, introductions, food, dreams, other giants, mission, the Queen, Royal Forces, capture No. 2, BFG's end.

Use the storyboards to act out the story of The BFG in small groups or in a large group circle. Start with still pictures, with other people creating sound effects and narrating. Then bring the pictures to life with characters speaking or thinking out loud.

Think of new scenes for the story of The BFG, for example: scenes just before or after the story starts.

e.g. Sophie's life at orphanage or BFG learning about life in the human world (see status exercise below)

b. Try turning the story of The BFG into a different type of play:

A radio play. Concentrate on sounds, music and words in the story. (See rhythm exercise below) Create an atmosphere using sound, instruments, and music with a narrator describing the scene. (see Giant world and Dreamland sections below)

A mime play or play without words. Concentrate on images and movement, moments of silence in the story. For example: Sophie watching BFG in the street, in his cave and in Dreamland, Sophie watching the Queen's dream or the BFG waiting in the garden.

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directed by Phil Clark

c. Exploring characters in The BFG:

On a large piece of paper write down all the main characters in The BFG. Then think of an action and words or noises to go with the action. For example: stretching up with a cheeky smile, bow and say “I’m the Big Friendly Giant”.

Ask the group to walk around the space, call out a character and they all become that character using the actions and sounds agreed. When you call out ‘Dream’ each person can choose to be their favourite character.

Note: Music, live or recorded, could be added to this exercise.

d. Characters and status.

Actors use status to bring characters to life.

This can be low, middle or high status.

For example:

Low Status – Please help me, what shall I do?

Middle Status – Here’s a message, just doing my job.

High Status – Do as I say, I’m in charge!

Explore status with “teacher in role”

Low Status: the teacher plays the BFG, who is low status - he does not know what Christmas / Easter / Birthdays or any other festivals are. The group show him by miming, playing games, eating, drinking, making shapes, objects or singing songs to teach him about it.

High Status: the teacher or the students in turn play the Queen. The rest of the group have to greet the Queen and speak to her in such a way that she wants to invite them to have breakfast with her.

e. Journeys.

The story of The BFG contains many journeys.

The journey to Giant land from Sophie’s house, the journey from the BFG’s cave to Dreamland or the journey from Giant land to Buckingham Palace.

Explore one of these journeys using rhythm with percussion instruments and the body (claps, clicks, stamps). How fast or slow are the characters moving, what other things are happening around them that may affect the way they move along and feel? Do they stop, change direction, jump, fly? How would this effect the rhythm of the journey?

Extract from the play:

Running, striding, leaping through the night.

Over fields, over hedges, over rivers, each stride as long as a tennis court.

Faster, faster, feet scarcely touching the ground.

Over oceans, over forests, over mountains. To a land unknown to human beings.

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g. Objects and Machines.

In small groups use your bodies and voices to making a machine or another object in the story, for example: a helicopter. An outside person can become a character and try to use the object, for example: a pilot with the helicopter.

h. Media related improvisations:

In small groups, act out scenes for television inspired by the story of The BFG:

- News reports for the capture of the giants.
- TV advert for Frobiscottle
- Chat show or documentary featuring interviews with Sophie, BFG or Head of the Navy / Air Force.

i. The Giants and Giant Country

The nasty giants in The BFG can be used for inspiring character work. They are called:

- The Fleshlumpeater
- The Bonecruncher
- The Manhugger
- The Childchewer
- The Meatdripper
- The Gizzardgulper
- The Maidmasher
- The Bloodbottler
- The Butcher Boy



Most of the nasty giants are only mentioned by name. Some are given a larger role, such as Fleshlumpeater, who is the nastiest of them all and Bloodbottler, who invades the BFG's cave early in the story. It is also remarked that each giant has his favorite hunting ground, though they vary at times. Because all humans taste differently, the giants have certain preferences. This is because the flavors supposedly reflect the names and/or principal exports of their native land: therefore, Greeks taste greasy, Danes taste canine and Swedes taste both sweet and sour.

Jack is mentioned as the only human the giants fear.

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Here are some ideas for exploring the giants further:

Group / chorus work:

Try moving around like giants. Taking large steps, lumbering from side to side, yawning, stretching and scratching your body in a giant-like fashion. Use mime, movement, sounds and words to explore Giant world. What does it look like, smell like, sound like, taste like, feel like?

Choose one person to be the leader and everyone follows what they do, then change and everyone move around individually.

Consequences drawing game:

Everyone has a piece of paper and they draw a giant head and face at the top and then fold it over so only the neck can be seen by the next person who draws the giant's body in the middle and folds it over again for the last person who draws the legs and feet. The next person opens the picture and gives the giant a name and perhaps a prop, such as a stick. The giant can also be given a thought or speak bubble.

"I feel, I smell, I want"

Suggested Names: Fleshlumpeater, Bloodbottler, Bonecruncher, Childchewer, Mealdripper, Gizzardgulper, Butcherboy, Maidmasher, Manhugger, Keennibbler, Bootslurper, Greatburper, Slushsucker, Boybasher, Sickswallower, Grannygrizzler

Bring the picture of the giant to life:

Recreate the pose and try walking around and making noises, as if you were that giant. What kind of voice does your giant have? How would he complete the sentences below:

I like to eat children they taste of ...

My favourite part of a child's body to eat is ...

The BFG and the other giants have their own unique way of talking. Make up your own version of giant-language, for example: speaking in verse – using rhyme or alliteration. Or put two words together to make a new one for example: marvellous and fantastic becomes marvelltastic

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Invent different sounds for each Giant:

Blow across bottles, squeak your fingers along blown-up balloons, trickle rice onto greaseproof paper, scrunch up different papers or use instruments to make hard and heavy walking sounds

Costumes:

Play the costume game but this time wear clothes / hats in a funny way to create giants visually, for example: putting on a jacket backwards, putting a hat under your jumper!

Act out “a day in the life” of your giant: sleeping, waking, washing, hunting, eating, drinking, and sleeping.

Giant families: students, as their giants, gather together in groups of three or four to make a family. Then someone else takes imaginary photographs of them showing different emotions: happy, sad, surprised, eating, sleepy, grumpy, hungry, and angry.

Giant conversation: in pairs, imagine that you are two giants meeting for a chat. What would they talk about?

j. Dreamland:

What does Dreamland look like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like?
Does it taste of anything? Does it smell of anything?

Suggested activities:

Draw a picture of Dreamland.

Use musical instruments to create a soundscape for Dreamland.

Sing a song about dreaming. Here is one you may know:

*Happy, hap, hap, hap, hap, happy talk
Talk about things you like to do
You've got to have a dream
If you don't have a dream
How you gonna make a dream come true?*

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Find some pieces of materials that make you think of dreaming.

Write down what smells and tastes remind you of dreams?

Think of different types of dreams: funny, sad, and scary.

A lot of the dreams in The BFG are funny (see the extract from the play in Appendix below).

Write about a dream you remember having or one from your imagination. What would be a fantastic or funny dream to have?

Ask yourself these questions:

What would taste better if it were sweeter?

What would be more fun if it were faster?

What would be better if it were quieter?

What would be more exciting if it went backwards?

What would happen if all the trees in the world were blue?

What would happen if all the cars disappeared?

What would happen if you could fly?

What would happen if you never had a bath?

Once you have written your dream, try expressing it in different ways. Draw it or paint it. Write a poem about it. Turn it into a dance with music, rap or song. Act it out with sound effects and words.

Act out the Queen's dream from the story of The BFG. Show the Queen dreaming and Sophie watching what is happening in the dream.

Make a Dream-catcher:

Draw or paint different images from your own dream ideas and cut them out to make a mobile, using string and lollipop sticks. Attach your mobile, with sticky tape, to the inside lid of a see-through plastic jar.

Alternatively, fill a plastic jar or bottle with water and then add different materials such as leaves, twigs, grass, pebbles, shells, glitter, paint, food colouring, ink, oil, shiny paper shapes or small plastic toys to create a magical environment, just like the dreams described in The BFG.



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9. Creative Writing inspired by The BFG

Extraordinary: Roald Dahl said ‘create extraordinary characters that are extremely good or extremely bad’. Think of characters that are really good or bad (heroes and villains) that you know from stories. Invent and write about two such characters. What are their names, where are they from? Why are they good or bad? What do they want to do and why? Do they have special abilities or magical powers? Are they human, animal or another type of creature?

Funny stories: Roald Dahl said to make stories funny. The shortest type of funny story is a joke. Write down all your favourite jokes. Can you turn any of them into a longer funny story? Or think of your journey to school everyday. Can you turn it into a funny adventure where silly things happen along the way?

A funny or awkward situation: When one person knows something the other doesn’t, this can sometimes create a funny situation, for example: Sophie, the Queen and the BFG talking about whizzpopping.
Can you think of any other funny situations to write about?

Points of view: Sometimes it is interesting to tell a story from a different character’s point of view. Try writing the story of The BFG and Sophie from the point of view of: The Queen, one of the Queen’s servants or either the Head of the Army or the Air Force.

What do you think would happen if: Sophie and the BFG met Jack from the Jack and Beanstalk story? Write about it.

What other adventures might Sophie and the BFG have together?

The BFG has a special suitcase: What things would be useful to carry in a special suitcase? Write a poem about your ideas starting:
“I will put in the suitcase.....”,
for example:
“.... all the colours of the rainbow”
“....the touch of a feather and the taste of sugar”

Diary work: Roald Dahl wrote down his thoughts and ideas for stories in a diary. Ask your students to write diary notes every day for a week or once a week for a month, jotting down things they find funny or interesting that might make a good story. These notes could be developed into story writing or story telling exercises.

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10. BFG Art

a. Strange vegetables and other things!

What does a snozzcumber feel like? A touch and feel exercise: make a box to place different items in or ask students to close their eyes and feel different objects, such as: sponge, cold wet cloth, pebble or rubber. Which one feels most like a snozzcumber or maybe something weird and wonderful. Encourage your students to make up something fantastical.

b. Crazy fruit.

Get students to make different shapes out of balls of paper, then paper maché, paint and decorate them to create a new type of fruit or vegetable. Then ask them to write about their fruit. What is it called? What countries does it grow in and at what time of year? What does it taste like?

Students could also design a poster advertising their fruit or vegetable.

c. Crazy drink.

Use plastic bottles to create a version of Frogscottle or your own fantastic drink. Mix paint and PVA glue together and pour into the bottle to give it colour. Then decorate the outside with glitter, different shapes, cut out pictures from magazines or your own designs. As above, then ask students to write about their new drink. What is it called? What does it taste like? What makes it different to other drinks? They could design a poster or even make up a rap / song to advertise their drink.



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d. Skyscape / Dreamscape

Reflecting further on the design for The BFG and the work on dreams. A chalk drawing on black paper can show the sky at different times of day or the world of dreams.

Materials needed: black paper, coloured chalk, scrap paper and shape cutters (biscuit or dough moulds of different shapes).

1. Take your scrap paper and rub your coloured chalk over it to create 'chalk dust'.
2. Take the black paper and place your shape onto it. Now rub your finger in the chalk dust. Rub the chalk dust inside the shape.
3. Be creative: make different patterns with your shapes and the chalk dust.

e. Make a mini-helicopter

Inspired by the helicopters that capture the giants at the end of The BFG. Try using them in shadow puppet play too.

You will need: 2 pencils, sticky tape, scissors, 2 pieces of card and glue

1. Take the two pencils and tape them together to make a T shape.
2. Cut two strips of card.
3. Fold card over so each piece makes the shape of an aerofoil (curved on the top, flatter on the bottom). Do this by gluing the ends down so they look like teardrops. Use a bit of tape to stick airfoils to the pencils. Make sure they are pointing in the opposite directions.
4. It works really well but the higher you drop it from the better it works.



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11. Experiments

Frobscottle and whizzpopping experiments

Frobscottle is a gravity defying drink. Here are some experiments inspired by its amazing qualities:

a. Hard liquid: Liquid can't be hard can it? Well, custard can be!

You will need: 200g custard powder, mixing bowl, water, spoon and potato masher.

Pour most of the custard powder into the bowl and add water. Mix with the spoon. When adding your ingredients, always use less at first, that way you can add some more if you need to. It should be like soft ice cream. 2. Gently rest the potato masher on surface of custard and watch it sink into the custard. 3. Take the masher out and try hitting the custard with more force. It should bounce back.

Custard doesn't act like a liquid should - small forces act like liquid, bigger forces thicken and act like solids.

b. Fizz Fountain

You will need: a sheet of A4 card, sticky tape, a toothpick, mints with a hard outer and soft centre, diet fizzy drink in a plastic bottle

Roll up piece of card into a tube to make a launcher - end is same size as top of the bottle - and use some tape to stick it down.

Take a toothpick and push it through the tube near the bottom. This is to stop the sweets falling all the way through before you are ready.

Open the bottle and put the launcher over it.

Next you need to move quickly. Pull out the toothpick and let the sweets drop then grab the launcher. Watch the fizz fly.

Do this outside with some plastic sheeting on the ground to catch the fizz!

c. Make your own Frobscottle

Try Roald Dahl's Revolting Recipes for Frobscottle, published by the Roald Dahl Foundation. The Frobscottle recipe in this fizzes like mad!

Otherwise, make lemonade like this, call it Frobscottle, and watch what the bubbles do:

Ingredients: 4 lemons

4 175g raw brown sugar

900 ml boiling water

Method: Scrub the lemons, halve them, and squeeze out the juice and pulp and put in into a large bowl with the sugar. Pour 300ml of the water in and stir until the sugar dissolves. Add the lemon halves and another 600ml of water. Stir well, cover and leave to cool. Strain, squeezing out the juice from the lemon halves, then serve.

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12. More BFG stuff

(History, Geography, Maths, PHSE)

a. Design a class Wanted poster:

The Giants were “wanted” for what they were up to.

This can be balanced by a piece of group writing about Sophie’s disappearance. Get the children to think of newspaper headlines, which would fit both the wanted poster and the disappearance.

b. Map making. (This can, with drama, work on the BFG’s different journeys.)

- Street maps of London can be used to retrace the BFG and Sophie’s journey to Buckingham Palace.
- Creative map-making can be done for the BFG’s journey from giant world to Dreamland.

c. Nationalities: The giants travel to many different countries to find people to eat.

Roald Dahl makes jokes about what these people might taste like. Ask your students to report on these different countries and what the people who live there are really like.

Topics might include: the weather, food, leisure activities, famous sights / places / events / festivals.

Countries mentioned include: Sweden, Greece, New Zealand, Denmark, New Zealand, Chile and Turkey.

d. The Royal Family – Time Travel:

What if Sophie and the BFG had lived in the time of another Queen of England, such as Queen Victoria or Elizabeth I?

How would the story have been different?

What kind of place would Sophie (an orphan) have lived in?

How would the dreams of the children be different? (School, family life, entertainment, famous people of the day)

What kind of food would the BFG have eaten for breakfast at the Queen’s palace?

How would the Queen’s men have captured the giants?



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e. Sums:

Multiplication work can be done on the number of humans eaten by the giants over the course of one night.

Also, on working out how the BFG would fit into the palace. (Everything must be multiplied by four.)

A six-foot man requires a chair with a two-foot high seat; a twenty-four foot giant will require a chair with an eight-foot high seat.

Breakfast for an average sized person of two eggs, four rashers of bacon, three pieces of toast, and two sausages x 4 for the BFG

f. Big and small:

Use the idea of Giants to talk about size and what it is that makes us grow. This can link up with work on the skeleton. You can make life-sized drawings of your students by getting them to draw round each other on large pieces of paper.

Then think about how tall the BFG was in relation to them. You can make an enormous BFG or show just how tall he is using chalk on the playground.

How many children would fit into the height of the BFG?

g. Extraordinary People:

Tallest man in medical history was Robert Wadlow who was 2.72m.

www.guinnessworldrecords.com

The students can find out about more extraordinary people from Guinness World Records, write and talk about them.



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h. Beans:

The BFG talks about human “beans”. How many other types of beans are there? Encourage a discussion about different types of beans and send your students on a fact-finding mission to create a file on a particular type of bean with pictures, information (what country do they come from? how do they grow? savoury or sweet?) and recipes (if appropriate). Can they think of a new type of bean? What would it look and taste like?

Haricot or baked beans, kidney beans, jelly beans, runner beans, pinto beans, black beans, aduki beans, green beans - to name a few.

Bean Game

Try out this fun movement game to do with beans:

The following commands and actions are taught to the group and then called out at random:

Runner beans - run on the spot

Jumping beans - jump up and down on the spot

Jelly beans - wiggle and wobble your body like jelly

Frozen beans - freeze

Baked beans on toast - lie down on the ground with legs and arms straight

French beans - say ‘Ooh, la, la!’



The BFG Appendix



1. Summary of the book:

One night when Sophie cannot sleep, she sees a giant blowing something into bedroom windows down the street. The giant notices her; although she tries to hide in her bed, he reaches through the window and carries her away to his home.

Fortunately for Sophie, she has been abducted by the world's only benevolent giant, the **Big Friendly Giant** or *BFG*. The BFG catches good dreams in Dream Country and blows them via a trumpet-like blowpipe into the bedrooms of children. When he catches a nightmare, he explodes it, bottles it forever, or sometimes uses it to start fights among his neighboring mean giants.

The other giants are not so pleasant; each night they go out into the world to steal and eat "human beans", especially children. There is little else for them to eat where they live; the BFG, because he refuses to eat people, must survive on a revoltingly bitter and sour vegetable known as a **snozzcumber**. Luckily he is also able to make a delicious drink called **frobscottle**, which is fizzy and infinitely refreshing. It is rather unusual in that the bubbles in the drink travel downwards and therefore cause the drinker to break wind instead of burp; this causes noises known as **Whizzpoppers**.

Sophie and the BFG become friends. Eventually, Sophie persuades the BFG that something must be done to stop the giants. Together they develop a plan to get the Queen of England to help them. The BFG mixes a dream which will show the Queen what the giants do; when complete, it is the worst nightmare he has ever encountered. They set off for Buckingham Palace and blow the dream into the Queen's bedroom. The BFG then leaves Sophie on the Queen's windowsill and retreats into the palace gardens to hide.

When the Queen awakens, Sophie tells her that all of her dream was true. Because the dream included the knowledge that Sophie would be there when she woke up, the Queen believes her and speaks with the BFG. After considerable effort by the palace staff, the BFG is given a lavish breakfast, and the Queen begins work on eliminating the other giants. She calls the King of Sweden and the Sultan of Bagdad to confirm the BFG's story, then summons the Heads of the Army and the Air Force.

Eventually a huge fleet of helicopters follows the BFG to the giants' homeland. While the child-eating giants are asleep, the Army ties them up, hangs them under the helicopters, and after a brief struggle with the **Fleshlumpeteer**, flies them to London, where a special large pit has been constructed from which they will not be able to escape.

As punishment for their lifetimes of child-eating, the giants are forced to eat snozzcumbers for the rest of their lives. The BFG is given a nicer place to live and a personal teacher to teach him English, and he eventually becomes a writer, while Sophie lives next door in a little house.



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2. Summary of the play

The BFG has enchanted children throughout the world as a children's book. David Wood's adaptation uses the theatrical device of a play within a play to enable the characters to come alive on stage. Using props and puppets the audience is transported into the world of giants. Then our imagination can take over.....

Cast of Characters/suggested doubling

- ACTOR 1: Dad / BFG
- ACTOR 2: Mum / Childchewer / Miss Plumridge / the Queen of England
- ACTOR 3: Sophie
- ACTOR 4: Guy (Sophie's brother) / Fleshlumpeater / Headteacher / Mr Tibbs
- ACTOR 5: Daniel (Sophie's friend) / Bloodbottler / Classmate / Ronald Simpkins / Head of the Army
- ACTOR 6: Sam (Sophie's friend) / Bonecruncher / Classmate / Sam Simpkins / Head of the Airforce
- ACTOR 7: Katherine (Sophie's friend) / Meatdripper / Classmate / Mary
- ACTOR 8: Rebecca (Sophie's friend) / Gizzardgulper /Rebecca (dreamer) / Undermaid / Queen of Sweden

All the cast help set the scenes and act as puppeteers

The action of the play starts in Sophie's attic playroom/bedroom and moves to the BFG's cave in Giant Country, Dream Country and Buckingham Palace.

Act 1.

At her birthday party Sophie is playing party games with her friends Rebecca, Katherine, Sam and David when her older brother Guy interrupts them and gives Sophie a copy of her favourite book 'The BFG'. When the entertainer fails to turn up at the party Sophie persuades her friends to act out the story.

Sophie tells the story using a doll's house as the set and her doll as the Sophie in the book. Her dad pretends to be the BFG and mimes Sophie's kidnap to the land of Giants.

In the BFG's cave Sophie learns about Giants who snatch 'human beans' from all over the world and eat them. However, the BFG only eats snozzcumbers - so Sophie is safe with him - and the two become friends. The other giants nearly catch Sophie but after a narrow escape she is cheered up by the BFG who introduces her to the delights of frobscottle – his favourite drink.



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That night Sophie wakes up when the BFG is about to go to work and he reluctantly agrees to take her to Dream country and show her how he catches dreams and blows them into the bedrooms of sleeping children.

Afterwards the BFG shows Sophie some of the dreams he has caught but the Giants who are on their way to England to eat children interrupt them! Determined to stop them the BFG and Sophie come up with plan to alert the Queen to the danger by making her dream about the Giants. Armed with this dream Sophie and the BFG set off for England.

Act 2.

Everyone is singing 'happy birthday'. Sophie blows out the candles and part two of the play within the play begins.

This time Sophie's mum plays the Queen. The BFG blows the dream and the Queen wakes up telling her maid about her nightmare. When Sophie actually arrives she knows her dream was true. The BFG (now represented by a giant puppet), the Queen and Sophie have breakfast and the Queen sends for the commanders of the Army and the Air force. Once they have been introduced to the BFG they follow his instructions on how to rid the country of The Giants. (A sequence performed using large shadow puppets).

When the Giants are found and captured they are lowered into an enormous hole in Regent's Park. Fleshlumpeater nearly succeeds in dragging the BFG into the Giant's pit but Sophie saves him – although she is nearly eaten herself. The BFG only managing to rescue her by blowing a trolleyhumper (a nightmare) towards the Fleshlumpeater.

Having saved the day the BFG decides to return to his home where he will continue his work creating dreams and distributing them to children as they sleep.

However, it is not goodbye. Sophie and the BFG agree to meet every year ... on her birthday!



3. Extracts from The BFG, the play:

Extract One

ACT I

SOPHIE'S ATTIC PLAYROOM/BEDROOM IS AN EXCITING SPACE WITH COLOURFUL TOYS AND BOOKS ON SHELVES, A ROCKING HORSE, A DOLL'S HOUSE, A TOY GRAND PIANO, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS INCLUDING A TRUMPET/HORN, A FISHING NET, A PUPPET BOOTH, TOY HELICOPTERS, A SUITCASE, A DRESSING-UP CHEST, PLUS A RAIL OF DRESSING-UP CLOTHES AND MASKS, WIGS, CROWN, ETC, CUDDLY TOYS. THERE IS A CHEST OF DRAWERS, A GRANDFATHER CLOCK, SOPHIE'S BED, A DOOR TO THE LANDING, AND PERHAPS A DOOR TO CUPBOARD.

A MAJOR FEATURE OF THE ROOM IS A LARGE STUDIO WINDOW WITH CURTAINS, IN FRONT OF WHICH IS A PLATFORM, WHICH CAN BE USED AS A THRUST STAGE. SMALL STAIRCASES LEAD UP TO IT.

CHAIRS HAVE BEEN PLACED TO ONE SIDE TO GIVE SPACE FOR SOPHIE'S BIRTHDAY PARTY, WHICH, AS THE CURTAIN RISES, IS IN FULL SWING. A BANNER PROCLAIMS 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SOPHIE'. HASTILY UNWRAPPED PRESENTS LIE AROUND.

SOPHIE AND HER FRIENDS, DANIEL, KATHERINE, REBECCA AND SAM ARE PLAYING BLIND MAN'S BUFF. DANIEL IS BLINDFOLDED AND ADVANCES, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, TOWARDS THE OTHERS, WHO CIRCLE HIM.

GIGGLES AND SHRIEKS AS HE MAKES A FEW NEAR-MISS GRABS.

EVENTUALLY HE GRABS SOPHIE, WHO SCREAMS WITH DELIGHT.

DANIEL: Gotcha! Now who have we got here?

SOPHIE: (DEEP VOICE) It's me. Sam!

LAUGHTER.

DANIEL: No it's not. It's... Sophie!

LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE. DANIEL TAKES OFF THE BLINDFOLD.

SOPHIE: Very good, Danny. Now, let's play Grandmother's Footsteps!

REBECCA: Bags be Grandmother.

SOPHIE: Right. Becky's Grandmother.

REBECCA TURNS HER BACK AS THE OTHERS STAND IN A LINE.

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REBECCA: Ready.

SAM: No peeping.

THEY ADVANCE ON TIPTOE. REBECCA SUDDENLY TURNS, BUT CAN'T CATCH ANYONE MOVING. ANOTHER GO. THIS TIME SHE CATCHES DANNY MOVING.

REBECCA: Danny.

DANNY GOES BACK TO THE 'START'. REBECCA TURNS HER BACK AGAIN. ALL ADVANCE TOWARDS HER. KATHERINE RUSHES TO REBECCA AND TAPS HER ON THE BACK.

(WITH A JUMP) Katherine!

KATHERINE: O.K. My turn.

SHE TAKES REBECCA'S PLACE; THE OTHERS GO BACK IN LINE AND THE GAME STARTS AGAIN.

SUDDENLY LOUD, BOOMING FOOTSTEPS ECHO FROM OUTSIDE.

ALL FREEZE IN FRIGHT.

KATHERINE: What's that?

DANIEL: A very fat Grandmother!

NERVOUS LAUGHTER.

SUDDENLY A VOICE BOOMS FROM OUTSIDE.

GUY: (V.O) Fee, fi, fo, fum. I'm coming to gobble you up!

THE CHILDREN SCREAM AND CLUSTER IN A GROUP WATCHING THE DOOR, WHICH BURSTS OPEN. GUY ENTERS.

GUY: It's only me! Fooled you!

SOPHIE: Guy! It's Guy, everyone, my boring big brother.

ALL RELAX.

GUY: Hi everyone. Happy birthday, Sophie.

HE PRODUCES A PRESENT FROM BEHIND HIS BACK.

The BFG

by ROALD DAHL
adapted by DAVID WOOD
directed by Phil Clark

SOPHIE: (OPENING IT) Thanks. (FINDING A BOOK) Hey! The BFG! My favourite book! I've borrowed it from the library three times!

GUY: You've got your very own copy now!

REBECCA: What's it about?

SOPHIE: A huge giant.

GUY: (ADVANCING ON THE GROUP) Fee, fi, fo fum!

SOPHIE: Shut up, Guy. And thanks!

ENTER MUM AND DAD, RATHER FLUSTERED.

MUM: Hallo, everyone.

ALL: Hallo.

SOPHIE: Look what Guy's given me, Mum.

MUM: (NOT REALLY NOTICING) Lovely, Sophie. Now, listen, everyone. I don't know quite how to tell you, but ...

DAD: You see, for Sophie's party we booked an entertainer ...

THE CHILDREN CHEER.

No, no, listen. He's just 'phoned to say he's very sorry but he's been taken ill. A tummy bug or something.

MUM: So ... no entertainer. Sorry, folks.

SILENCE.

GUY: Oh, come on, kids, it's not that bad. We'll just have to make our own entertainment.

SOPHIE: (SUDDENLY) I know! We'll do the BFG!

DAD: Do the what?

SOPHIE: Tell the story. Act it out! Please! We've got the dressing-up box. I'll be Sophie, the girl in the story. (TO THE CHILDREN) You can all be giants. Guy can be Fleshlumpeater.

THE CHILDREN ALL RUSH EXCITEDLY TO THE DRESSING-UP BOX.



DAD: Well, that's settled then. Have fun!

HE AND MUM START TO GO.

SOPHIE: (STOPPING HIM) Dad! You can't go. You're the BFG!

DAD: Me?

SOPHIE: You. And there's a great part for Mum later.

MUM: Really?

DAD: All right, then.

THE CHILDREN CHEER.

We'd better get ready.

MUM AND DAD JOIN THE CHILDREN PREPARING, FINDING PROPS AND BITS OF COSTUME. SOPHIE FINDS HER NIGHTIE UNDER HER PILLOW, PLUS A 'SOPHIE' DOLL.

SOPHIE: (PUTTING HER NIGHTIE ON OVER HER OTHER CLOTHES)
Stand by, everyone. Music! Lights!

ONE OF THE CHILDREN TINKLES ON THE TOY GRAND PIANO. EVENTUALLY THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR TAKES OVER. ANOTHER CHILD LOWERS THE LIGHTS.

(ANNOUNCING) The BFG!

HOLDING A TOY TRUMPET, ONE OF THE CHILDREN SOUNDS LOUD FANFARE.

(STARTING THE STORY) It was late at night ... (SOMEONE MAKES AN OWL HOOTING NOISE) ... in the orphanage.

SOPHIE LOOKS AROUND AND SEES THE DOLL'S HOUSE. SHE MOTIONS TO GUY, WHO PLACES IT IN A PROMINENT POSITION. FROM NOW ON, THE CAST 'MAKE THE STORY HAPPEN', IMPROVISING PROPS, SETTING UP SCENES, AND ALSO ACTING AS AN AUDIENCE.

In the dormitory, Sophie couldn't sleep.

SHE OPENS THE DOLL'S HOUSE AND PLACES THE 'SOPHIE' DOLL INSIDE.

A brilliant moonbeam was shining right on to her pillow.

SOMEONE SHINES A TORCH ON THE DOLL'S HOUSE.

She slipped out of bed to get a drink of water.

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MUM: (VOICE FROM THE DARKNESS) Sophie! Get back to bed this instant.
You know the rules.

SOPHIE: Mrs Clonkers. Sophie went back to bed. She tried very hard to doze off. The time ticked by. The house was absolutely silent. Perhaps, thought Sophie, this is what they call the witching hour, that special moment in the middle of the night when everyone is in a deep, deep sleep, and all the dark things come out from hiding and have the world to themselves. She crept to the window. And suddenly she saw ... a giant!

SINISTER MUSIC AS DAD, IN A CLOAK AND CARRYING A SUITCASE, APPEARS AS THE BFG. HE LOOMS OVER THE DOLLS HOUSE, THEN PROCEEDS TO ANOTHER PART OF THE ROOM, ACTING OUT THE NARRATION.

He stopped at the house opposite, bent down to look in a bedroom window and then ...

THE BFG OPENS HIS SUITCASE, TAKES OUT A JAR AND POURS ITS CONTENTS INTO THE END OF A HORN-LIKE TRUMPET. THEN HE BLOWS THROUGH IT INTO THE IMAGINARY WINDOW. HE REPLACES THE JAR AND TRUMPET IN ITS CASE. HE TURNS TOWARDS THE DOLLS HOUSE.

(WITH A GASP) He saw Sophie. She pulled back from the window, flew across the dormitory and jumped into her bed and hid under the blanket, tingling all over.

THE BFG APPROACHES THE DOLLS HOUSE AS THE MUSIC INTENSIFIES. HE PEEPS IN THE WINDOW, AND, WITH A GROWL, PUSHES HIS HAND THROUGH THE WINDOW AND SNATCHES THE 'SOPHIE' DOLL.

Aaaaaaaah!

THE BFG TUCKS THE 'SOPHIE' DOLL INSIDE HIS CLOAK AND GOES UP ON TO THE PLATFORM STAGE.

THE CURTAINS ARE DRAWN, REVEALING THE WINDOW. THE AREA IS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH BACK LIGHT, IN WHICH THE BFG BEGINS SLOW-MOTION, ON-THE-SPOT, RUNNING. A HOWLING WIND BLOWS.

ACTORS: Running, striding, leaping through the night. Over fields, over hedges, over rivers, each stride as long as a tennis court. Faster, faster, feet scarcely touching the ground. Over oceans, over forests, over mountains. To a land unknown to human beings.

THE BFG SLOWS DOWN AND WALKS OFF THE PLATFORM STAGE. THE CURTAINS CLOSE AND THE LIGHTING FADES.



Extract Two

Act 1: Dream Country and Dreams

LAUGHING THEY RETIRE AS THE BFG CHECKS THE 'SOPHIE' DOLL IS ALL RIGHT UNDER HIS CLOAK, THEN ESCAPES THROUGH THE DOOR.

MUSIC AND SOUND OF A WHISTLING WIND AS SWIRLS OF MIST ENVELOPE THE STAGE. COLOURED LIGHTS GLOW AND DANCE ON THE SMOKE.

EVENTUALLY:

SOPHIE: (PLUS OPTIONAL OFF-STAGE ECHOES)
(NARRATING) The BFG, clutching Sophie tight to his chest, ran and ran, leaped and galloped and flew ... till at last ...

THE BFG ENTERS THROUGH THE MIST.

HE TAKES THE 'SOPHIE' DOLL FROM HIS CLOAK. SOPHIE TAKES THE DOLL AND MANIPULATES IT ONCE MORE.

BFG: We is here!

SOPHIE: Where?

BFG: We is in Dream Country. Where all dreams is beginning.

...

BFG: Let us see what dreams we is catching!

HE HOLDS UP THE GOLDEN JAR.

Oh my! It's a phizzwizard! A golden phizzwizard!

SOPHIE: Is that good?

BFG: The best. This will be giving some childer a very happy night when I is blowing it in.

SOPHIE: How can you tell?

BFG: I is hearing the dream's special music. I is understanding it.

SOPHIE: Gosh.

BFG: Shall I be showing Sophie this dream?



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SOPHIE: Oh, yes please. But how?

BFG: Concentratiate. Watch and be listening!

AS THEY STARE AT THE JAR, THE LIGHTING FADES FROM THE CAVE AND COMES UP IN ANOTHER AREA. BUT THE JAR'S GOLDEN GLOW CONTINUES TO SHINE.

ON SOPHIE'S BED LIES REBECCA, ASLEEP.

SUDDENLY, TO EERIE MUSIC, HER HEAD STARTS TO TURN FROM SIDE TO SIDE.

REBECCA: I'm dreaming ... I'm dreaming ... I'm

SHE OPENS HER EYES, THEN GETS OFF THE BED. SHE ACTS OUT HER DREAM.

at school ... in class ... and my teacher, Miss Plumridge, is droning on in a very boring way about William the Conqueror and the Battle of Hastings ...

MUM ACTS THE TEACHER, AS THOUGH TALKING TO THE CLASS AND WRITING ON THE BLACKBOARD. DANIEL, SAM AND KATHERINE PLAY OTHER CHILDREN IN CLASS.

... when suddenly I can't help myself humming a little tune. (SHE HUMS)

MUM (MISS PLUMRIDGE):

Rebecca, cease that humming this instant!

REBECCA: ... but I can't help myself humming my little tune, and I hum it louder ...
(SHE HUMS IT LOUDER).

MUM (MISS PLUMRIDGE):

Rebecca, how dare you! I said stop ...

SHE SUDDENLY FREEZES. THE OTHER CHILDREN HAVE JOINED IN THE HUMMING.

REBECCA: Suddenly she freezes, then slowly but surely she starts to dance!

MUM (MISS PLUMRIDGE) SLOWLY STARTS TO DANCE, UNSURE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TO HER. THIS BUILDS INTO A WILD, UNCONTROLLED ROCK 'N' ROLL KIND OF SHAKE, ARMS FLAILING, LEGS KICKING. THE CLASS HUMS AND 'LA LAS' LOUDER, THOROUGHLY ENJOYING THE FUN.

SUDDENLY THE DOOR OPENS AND THE HEADMASTER BURSTS IN.

THE HUMMING STOPS. BUT MISS PLUMRIDGE GOES ON DANCING.

REBECCA: The Headmaster!

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GUY (HEADMASTER):

What's going on in here? (SEES MISS PLUMRIDGE) Miss Plumridge! How dare you dance in class. Go fetch your coat and leave this school for ever! You are sacked! You are a disgrace!

HE FREEZES AS REBECCA STARTS TO HUM AGAIN. THE OTHERS JOIN IN.

SUDDENLY THE HEADMASTER STARTS TO DANCE TOO, UNABLE TO RESIST. HE TOO STARTS JIGGING AROUND, AND BUILDS UP INTO A WILD EXPLOSION OF MOVEMENT.

THE CLASS ENJOY IT EVEN MORE WHEN HE STARTS JIVING WITH MISS PLUMRIDGE. BOTH STILL LOOK SHOCKED.

THE CLASS CLAP IN RHYTHM AND JOIN IN THE DANCE, STILL HUMMING AND 'LA LA-ING'. DURING THIS, REBECCA RETURNS TO BED.

EVERYTHING REACHES A CLIMAX, THEN SUDDENLY STOPS. ALL CLEAR TO REVEAL REBECCA ON THE BED.

KATHERINE (AS MUMMY) V.O.:

Rebecca!

REBECCA: Then suddenly I hear Mummy's voice ...

KATHERINE (AS MUMMY) V.O.:

Wake up! Your breakfast is ready!

REBECCA JOLTS UPRIGHT, AND LOOKS DISAPPOINTED, THEN, REMEMBERING HER DREAM, ROARS WITH LAUGHTER.

THE LIGHTING FADES AND COMES UP AGAIN IN THE CAVE, WHERE THE BFG AND SOPHIE GAZE AT THE GOLDEN JAR, AND LAUGH.