

The House at Pooh Corner

Based on the books by A.A. Milne • Adapted by Bettye Knapp

Produced by special arrangement with DRAMATIC PUBLISHING, Woodstock, Illinois

December 7 – 30, 2011



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Cast

TOBY HUGHES	Tasker, Piglet, Tigger
MAGGIE NAGLE	Nanny, Eeyore, Kanga, Roo, Rabbit, Owl
DAVID WARBURTON	Alex, Pooh
DANE BJORNSON	Christopher Robin
TRISTAN MACKID	Christopher Robin
MACKENZIE WOJCIK	Christopher Robin

Creative Team

KIM SELODY	Director
BILL CHESNEY	Set & Costume Designer
SHAWN KETTNER	Puppet Designer & Builder
CATHY NOSATY	Composer
CHEYENNE SCHROEDER	Choir Master
BILL WILLIAMS	Lighting Designer
EVAN R. KLASSEN	Stage Manager
JOSHUA RANVILLE	Child Supervisor
KATHERINE JOHNSTON	Child Supervisor
CASEY SHAPIRA	Child Supervisor
GWEN COLLINS	Child Supervisor

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House at Pooh Corner Study Guide

ABOUT A.A. MILNE AND WINNIE THE POOH

Alan Alexander Milne (1882 – 1956) began his writing career after graduating from Cambridge University. After serving in World War I, he worked for many years as the assistant editor of the British humour magazine *Punch*. A successful playwright, his plays were produced in London and New York. In 1920, his wife Daphne gave birth to a son, Christopher Robin Milne. A.A. Milne's career as a children's author began with the publication of a collection of verses entitled *When We Were Very Young*, illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard.

Christopher Robin's favorite toy was an 18 inch-high stuffed bear purchased at Harrod's Department store for his first birthday. Named "Edward Bear" at first, the bear was renamed "Winnie" after a black bear in the London Zoo. As a young child, Christopher Robin had quite a friendship with the bear, and visited regularly to play games and give Winnie a special treat: condensed milk. Although Milne created a honey-loving bear for us, the real-life Winnie's disliked honey, preferring the taste of condensed milk.

The "Pooh" part of Winnie's name was added even later, "Pooh" having been the name of a swan in *When We Were Very Young*. Milne, his wife and Christopher's Nanny often made up stories with and for Christopher and his growing collection of stuffed toys. Daphne Milne encouraged her husband to publish the stories.

The Milne's home was located at Cotchford Farm near Hartfield, East Sussex (about an hour's drive from London). In the surrounding area were streams, forests, bridges, and the Five Hundred Acre Wood, which was the model for the Hundred Acre Wood of the books. *Winnie the Pooh*, illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard, was published in 1926. It was followed by *Now We Are Six* (1927) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928).

The original stuffed Winnie the Pooh bear, Eeyore, Kanga and Tigger are now permanently displayed in the Donell Branch of the New York Public Library in New York City. Roo was lost in an orchard when Christopher Robin was still a small boy, and the characters of Owl and Rabbit were fictional, but based on animals that lived in the area surrounding the Milne home. The Ashdown Forest is located near Hartfield in East Sussex and welcomes visitors to play Poohsticks on the bridge, walk around the six pine trees in search of Heffalumps, and other sites of interest to Pooh lovers.

The original Milne collection of *When We Were Very Young*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Now We Are Six*, and *The House at Pooh Corner* has sold over 20 million copies. This doesn't even include sales in Canada or in the foreign-language editions that have been printed in more than 25 languages around the world. The fame brought by the books proved to be somewhat difficult for both Milne and his son, who published two books about his experiences: *The Enchanted Places* and *Beyond the World of Pooh*. Christopher Milne operated a bookshop in Dartmouth with his wife for many years, and died in 1996.

THE WINNIPEG CONNECTION

As a young child, Christopher Robin liked to visit the London Zoo, and one of his favourite animals was a black bear, named “Winnie”. Christopher had quite the friendship with the bear, regularly visiting to play games and to give her a special treat: condensed milk. In Milne’s stories, Winnie’s favourite snack was honey, but the real-life Winnie preferred to taste of condensed milk. came to England as the mascot of the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade. Harry Colebourn, young officer on his way by train to join the Brigade, bought the cub from a hunter while the train was stopped at White River, Ontario. He named her “Winnipeg Bear,” after his home town, and later shortened it to “Winnie”. The bear cub traveled with the unit until they were sent to France, and then went to live at the London Zoo until she died.

THEMES

Home	Helping in time of need
Homelessness	Farewells
Friendship	Being lost
Acceptance	Generosity
Belonging	Growing up
Co-operation	

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- This is a play based on a famous story about a boy and his toys. Can you think of any other books, movies or TV shows about “living” toys? (see *Related Reading*)
 - When Tigger arrives in the forest, do the other toys accept and understand him right away?
 - Several of the toys do very nice things for their friends. When did you see someone being kind or generous?
 - Have you ever been lost? What did you do? Who helped you?
 - Has anyone in the group ever moved to a new home? What was that like?
- At the end of the play, Christopher Robin is going away somewhere. Where do you think he is going?

I. ANIMALS AND THEIR HOMES

Game: Kitty wants a Corner (for five or more players)

- An active game about trying to find a home.
- Requires a sheet of newspaper for all the players except for one.

Play in a large, open area. Give a sheet of newspaper to every student except one, who will be “Kitty.” Fold the sheet of newspaper in four, like newspapers usually are folded. Each student chooses a spot in the room and stands on her/his newspaper. Be sure the players are evenly scattered through the space, but not more than about two or three meters distant from each other, closer together



if the students are small. “Kitty” approaches the nearest player and says “Kitty wants a Corner.” The player responds “Go next door.” Kitty goes to the next player and the dialogue is repeated. When Kitty’s back is turned, or when she is at the far side of the space, any two other players switch places with one another. Kitty tries to steal the “home base” of one of the players who is trading places. The player who loses his or her home then becomes “Kitty.” If Kitty has not managed to steal a “corner” after several minutes, ask another player to be “it.”

Activity: Building an Island



- A co-operative game about creating a home.
- Requires wooden crates, sturdy chairs and/or small tables that can be climbed on.

In a large space, create a long winding course of stepping stones using wooden crates, chairs and small tables. The first person in line begins to travel to the end of the course, taking care never to touch the floor. Pretend the floor is a shark-infested sea or a poisonous pond to add drama. The next students in line enter the course, and are encouraged to help each other step from one object to the next. As the first person finishes the course, she or he remains standing on the last object in the line. The other students are traveling the course by now, and the object is to create an island at the end of the course big enough for all of them to stand on, using only the objects in the course. This can be done by handing the first objects in the line up through the line of students to the end where they can be used to build a bigger island.

Other Activities:

- Take a trip to an animal shelter or invite a speaker to come and tell the class about what happens to real animals who have no homes.
- Link this theme to studies in ecology. What happens when a wild animal loses its habitat? As examples, study lemurs in Madagascar or the struggles facing polar bears as the climate changes. (see *Related Websites*)
- Visit the website of the Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee. This is a home for retired circus and zoo elephants who can no longer work and have nowhere else to go. (see *Related Websites*)

II. TOYS THAT COME TO LIFE

Write a story or draw a picture of your favorite toy or toys if they came to life. Think about:

- Where they might live. Could your backyard or neighbourhood become a kind of “Hundred Acre Wood?” What kind of home could each animal have?
- Are the toys always alive or only when no-one else is around?
- What kind of character does each toy have? Is one of them very smart or shy?

III. EXPLORING

Game: I Took a Trip

- An alphabet game for any number of players.

Players sit in a circle and the first begins by saying “I took a trip to...” and adds the name of a place beginning with A, and the name of an object that begins with A. The second player repeats this sentence eg. “I took a trip to Alberta and I took along an ant” and then adds an object beginning with B: I took a trip to Alberta and took a long an ant and a bugle.” The game continues in this way through all the letters of the alphabet.

Activity: Going on an “Expotition.”

Ask the group to choose an imaginary destination, and plan an expedition. Create a map to the place (choose a location in the school or on the grounds to be your “north pole.”) You might have one group of students create the environment at the destination while another group are the explorers. What will they need for their expedition? How will they keep from getting lost? How will they know they have found it? Why are they going there, to explore or to find treasure or to study the plants and animals? Be sure to pack enough provisions for everyone.

Activity: Food for Explorers

- 1) “GORP” is another name for trail mix, and it stands for **Good Old Raisins and Peanuts**. The possibilities are endless, and you can make some that is allergen-free. Fill a number of bowls with a selection of dried fruit, nut- and dairy-free cereals, mini pretzels and so on. Give each child a resealable plastic bag or container and let them create their own combination.
- 2) “Hardtack” was a dried cracker used as a staple food by explorers, pioneers and sailors, who called it “seabiscuit” or “ship’s biscuit.” Civil War soldiers gave it the name “hardtack,” and it’s easy to guess why. Properly made and stored, it would keep for months. The fresh crackers are easily broken, but once dried they are very hard to break. They were often eaten crumbled into coffee, or soaked in water and the wet crumbs fried in drippings. See *Related Websites* for surprisingly interesting facts about a very dull food.

Hardtack

(makes about ten large crackers)

Preheat oven to 375°

4 cups whole wheat flour
4 teaspoons salt
water (about two cups)

Mix the flour and salt in a bowl. Add just enough water and mix by hand until the mixture sticks together, producing a dough that doesn’t stick to hands or rolling pin. Roll it out into a rectangle about ½” thick, and cut into 3x3” squares.

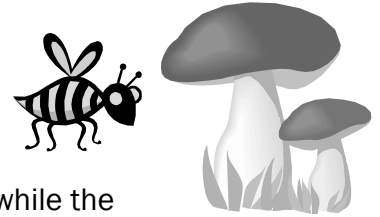
Using a nail or other pointed object, press a pattern of holes into the top of each cracker: four rows of four holes each. It will look something like a modern-day saltine. Do not poke the nail all the way through. Turn the crackers over and do the same thing to the other side. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes. Turn the crackers over and bake for 30 minutes more. Let them dry out for a day or two for an authentic hardtack experience.

IV. BEARS

Game: Honeybees and Toadstools

- A variation on “Duck-Duck-Goose.”

Students are arranged in a circle and curl up in a ball so their back is up and their head down. Or they can sit on chairs. Each student is either a Honeybee or a Toadstool. This can be determined beforehand while the student who is it (the Bear) is outside the room. The student who is chosen to be the Bear walks around the circle and “sits” lightly on each student. If the Bear sits on a Toadstool, nothing happens, but if the Bear sits on a Honeybee, the Honeybee jumps up and races the bear around the circle to try to get to the empty space first. The student who does not get the space is then the Bear.



Activity: The Study of Bears

- Have students research the eight species of bears and their diets, habitats and habits.
- Create stations in the classroom, one for each type of bear, and make a small habitat for each with painted scenes or cutout trees, etc.
- Find out about the relationship between bears and humans. Bears can be dangerous. What should you do if you meet a bear?
- Visit the bears at the Assiniboine Park Zoo. How does the zoo create an appropriate habitat for each bear? What do you think it’s like to live in the zoo?

Activity: The Bear Diaries

Students may choose any type of bear in the world: a wild bear, a bear in captivity, their own teddy bear, a famous bear, or Winnie-the-Pooh. Write the bear’s diary for several days, and include just enough detail so that the other students can guess who the bear is.

RELATED READING

Other Books About Toys That Come To Life

The *Elliot Moose* stories by Andrea Beck

The *Old Bear* stories by Jane Hissey

Nothing by Nick Butterworth

The Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Williams Bianco

Blackboard Bear by Martha Alexander

Other Stories About Related Themes

A Chair for my Mother by Vera B. Williams (about losing one's home, friends helping in time of need)

Hoot by Jane Hissey (about making a new friend)

The Teddy Bear by David McPhail (about a beloved toy, a homeless man and an act of generosity)

Alfie Gets in First and *An evening at Alfie's* by Shirley Hughes (about friends helping friends)

Big or Little by Kathy Stinson (about growing up)

More About Milne

Milne, Christopher. *The Enchanted Places*. E.P. Dutton & Co., 1975

Milne, Christopher. *Beyond the World of Pooh: Selections from the Memoirs of Christopher Robin*. Dutton Books, 1998

Thwaite, Ann. *The Brilliant Career of Winnie-the-Pooh: The Definite History of the Best Bear in All The World*. Dutton Children's Books, 1994

RELATED WEBSITES

<http://www.pooh-corner.org/index.shtml>

The Page at Pooh Corner has lots of good information about Pooh and Milne. Good photos of the original toys and the Cotchford Farm area where the books are set.

<http://www.lavasurfer.com/pooh-guide.html>

Pooh crossword or word-search puzzles.

<http://www.polarbearsalive.org>

Information about polar bears.

<http://www.kenanderson.net/hardtack/history.html>

Everything you ever wanted to know about hardtack.

<http://www.elephants.com>

The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee.