House at Pooh Corner

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Educator Resource Guide

Every thing in this guide is great for students between Pre-K to Grade 3.

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This Resource Guide was written for Manitoba Theatre for Young People's original production of *House at Pooh Corner*. Everything in the guide is great for students between Pre-K to Grade 3.
Creative Team and Cast

Based on the book by A.A. Milne

Adapted by Betty Knapp with revisions by Kim Selody

Produced by special arrangement with DRAMATIC PUBLISHING, Woodstock, Illinois

**Director:** Kim Selody

**Puppet Creator:** Shawn Kettner, Patient Puppets

**Composer:** Cathy Nosaty

**Music Director:** Arielle Balance

**Lighting Designer:** Brad Trenaman

**Set Designer:** Shizuka Kai

**Costume Designer:** Barb Clayden

**Stage Managers:** Pamela Jokobs, Giselle Clark-Trenaman

**Lead Technician:** Holly Karpuk

**Head of Wardrobe:** Alain Hamer

**The Cast:** Victor Mariano, Advah Soudack, & Tom Pickett
About A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh and The Hundred Acre Wood

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. Christopher Robin’s favorite toy was an 18-inch-high stuffed bear purchased at Harrods Department store for his first birthday. Named “Edward Bear” at first, the bear was renamed “Winnie” after his favourite black bear at the London Zoo. 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.

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. The “Pooh” part of Winnie’s name was added then. “Pooh” came from the name of a swan Milne and his son met on vacation. *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 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.

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 50 millions of copies worldwide and has been translated in over 50 languages. 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

Harry Colebourn, a young Canadian soldier and veterinarian, on his way to join the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade, bought a black bear cub from a hunter at a train station in 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 for the remainder of her life.

As a young child, Christopher Robin liked to visit the London Zoo, and one of his favourite animals was 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 the taste of condensed milk.

Harry Colebourn and Winnie
Photo from the Manitoba Provincial Archives, 1914.
House at Pooh Corner Booklist

Kindly prepared by the Children’s Library, Vancouver Public Libraries

Book on this list are about celebrate friendship and are inspired by the magic of hundred acre wood.

Best for 3-5 years old

Touch the Brightest Star, Christie Matheson
Explore the night and discover the magic of nature in this interactive story. Perfect for a bedtime snuggle.

Hooray for Amanda & her Alligator, Mo Willems
Amanda and her toy alligator love to play together. But what happens when Amanda’s grandfather gives her a new stuffed animal? Through Willem’s classic style, we learn about sharing our friends.

Henry and Leo, Pamela Zagarenski
Henry believes his toy lion and best friend, Leo, is real, but no one else does. When Leo goes missing, Henry’s family doubts that he will find his way home, but he just might? A touching tale of love and friendship.

Best for 6-9 years old

Toys Go Out: Being the Adventures of A Knowledgeable Stingray, A Toughy Little Buffalo, and Someone Called Plastic, Emily Jenkins
Lumpy is a tough little stuffed buffalo, StingRay is a know-it-all stuffy, and Plastic is a curious and hopeful plastic object. Together they explore the mysteries of backpacks, beaches, birthdays, and the terrifying washing machine. First in a series.

The Mouse Mansion, Karina Schaapman
Follow the adventures of Julia and Sam, two tiny stuffed mice that live and play in an incredibly detailed real-life dollhouse with over a hundred rooms to explore.

Cody and the Rules of Life, Tricia Springstubb
Cody’s friend Pearl wants to trade stuffed animals. But Cody regrets agreeing as soon as she hands over her favourite toy. When her brother’s bike is stolen, Cody must decide who she can trust. One of a series of books that feature Cody and her diverse friends

Best for the entire family to share

The Velveteen Rabbit, Or How Toys Become Real, Margery Williams Bianco
A boy and his rabbit share the wonders of childhood together in this timeless, classic tale.

Finding Winnie: The True Story of the World’s Most Famous Bear, Lindsay Mattick
Enjoy the tale of the real Canadian bear cub that inspired the legendary book character Winnie-the-Pooh. Named for Winnipeg, the bear travels from Canada to England, where Milne’s son, Christopher Robin, played with her at the London zoo.

The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup and a Spool of Thread, Kate DiCamillo
Despereaux, a tiny mouse with giant ears, becomes fascinated with a fairytale about a knight who rescues a princess. Little does he know that he is soon to have a life-changing encounter with a real princess.
Themes

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

Questions for Discussion

1. 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)
2. When Tigger arrives in the forest, do the other toys accept and understand him right away?
3. Several of the toys do very nice things for their friends. When did you see someone being kind or generous?
4. Have you ever been lost? What did you do? Who helped you?
5. Has anyone in the group ever moved to a new home? What was that like?
6. At the end of the play, Christopher Robin is going away somewhere. Where do you think he is going?
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.
- Visit the website of the Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee at [www.elephants.com](http://www.elephants.com). This is a home for retired circus and zoo elephants who can no longer work and have nowhere else to go.

**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? Very shy?

Photo by Mike Peters Media
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 "Exposition"
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? Be sure to pack enough provisions for everyone.
- 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?

Activity: Food for Explorers
"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-free and dairy-free cereals, mini pretzels and so on. Give each child a re-sealable plastic bag or container and let them create their own combination.

"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.
Recipe for 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 (clean) 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.
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 taps the other students lightly on the head. If the Bear taps on a Toadstool, nothing happens, but if the Bear taps 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.
MTYP’s Book List

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
- 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)

Photo by Mike Peters Media