



**The Wind in the Willows
By Kenneth Graeme**

In a new touring adaptation by Andy Barrow and Oddsocks Productions

These resources have been developed by Oddsocks as part of their 2014/15 winter tour of Wind in the Willows. Full list of tour dates can be found online at www.oddsocks.co.uk/theatre/box-office/



Full Character List

Mole - A rather shy and polite creature. He becomes very sad when he can't return to his home. Mole becomes frightened very easily as he isn't very brave. Despite his lack of courage, he does quite well in the fight to regain Toad Hall. Mole makes a very good listener to his friends, especially when Toad wants to tell someone about his adventures.

Ratty - Ratty is a huge fan of the river and everything to do with it. A very sensible creature, he likes to take control of situations. Importantly, it's Ratty who makes sure that all the animals have weapons for the final battle for Toad Hall. He is especially brave and not at all frightened of the Wild Wood. Ratty is a dreamer too; he likes to imagine all the adventures he could go on.

Toad - Toad is very excitable, especially when it comes to new things! He often gets into trouble though because he doesn't always think through his ideas. He's a big lover of trying out new methods of getting about - the faster the better! Toad tries to be clever to get out of bad situations.. Mostly situations he's put himself in. Although a little cowardly, he tries to fight bravely at the end of the story. Rich and generous, but not very practical, Toad likes to be at the centre of attention.

Badger - The most wise and thoughtful of all of the animals. A kind soul, caring and well-respected by nearly everyone. Most animals call him "Mr Badger" to respect his intelligence. If you have a problem or want some advice, then Badger is the one to find. Although he appears grumpy at times he is a good friend to Mole, Ratty and Toad. The weasels and the stoats on the river bank are afraid of him.

Otter - A good friend of Ratty who also loves the river. When he appears out of the water for a friendly chat, he is likely to quickly disappear again. He often likes to be on his own but he is a happy and cheerful character with the others.

The Magistrate - The Chairman of the Bench of Magistrates is in charge of the court that tries Toad when they think that he has stolen a car. He is important and responsible for punishing Toad.

The Gaoler - This is the person that Toad is handed over to when he has been given his sentence. The prison is very grim and more like a dungeon and the gaoler's responsibility. He is responsible for making sure Toad doesn't escape from prison!



The Gaoler's daughter - She helps the gaoler lock up any prisoners. She is kind-hearted and feels sorry for Toad, who is very miserable. She takes him meals and Toad tells her all about his life before at Toad Hall. The gaoler's daughter is important because she arranges the escape of Toad from the prison. She gets her aunt, who is a washerwomen, to give Toad clothes so that he can escape in disguise.

The Engine-Driver - Toad tells the engine driver he cannot pay for a ticket and the driver feels sorry for Toad, he kindly gives him a ride in the cab of the steam-train. The police who are trying to chase Toad come after the train and the engine driver makes the train speed up so Toad can escape! When his doesn't work, he helps form a plan to let Toad escape and tells him he should hide in the woods.

The following are characters in the book but do not feature in Oddsocks adaptation

Portly - Portly is the name of Otter's son. In the book, Portly gets lost but is found safe by Mole and Ratty. They find him curled up at the feet of Pan and take him back onto their boat.

The Court Clerk - The Court Clerk advises the Magistrate on what to do with Toad and what punishment he should be given. A very harsh and stern character he decides he thinks that Toad should be sent to prison for 20 years.

The Barge-Woman - When Toad escapes from the steam train he goes through to woods to a canal and meets a barge-woman who gives Toad on a lift on her boat. She feels sorry for Toad because she believes he is a washerwoman - this is because he is still wearing his disguise. She realises her mistake and puts him back on the bank. She gets very angry when Toad steals her horse.

The Wayfarer - The wayfarer character is a Sea Rat and tells Ratty that he travels all over the world and of his adventures. A very thin rat, he wears earrings, bright clothes and has bright eyes. Ratty thinks he is a very exciting person as he travels on boats and comes from Constantinople.

The Chief Weasel - He is in charge of all of the Weasels and the Stouts that have taken over Toad Hall. The Chief Weasel sings a song at a party in Toad Hall just before Badger, Mole and Ratty burst in to try and reclaim the hall! Although he is the chief, he is a coward and tries to run away.

Pan - Pan is a Greek God that Mole and Ratty see on a small island in the river. Ratty says the island is holy and both creatures hear the sound of Pan's pipes. Pan is half man and half horse. His legs are covered in hair and he has hooves, but he has a mans face with small horns on his head and a beard.



Synopsis

It's springtime and Mole, bored of his chores, leaves his molehill to explore. At the riverbank he meets Ratty, a sensible and brave water rat. The two quickly become friends and Ratty introduces Mole to the excitable Toad. When Toad becomes fascinated with motor cars, his increasingly wild driving is worrying for Ratty and Mole, and they seek the advice of wise Badger. Together they try to get Toad to stop driving cars by locking him in his bedroom at Toad Hall. Toad escapes, but his theft of a car finds him in court and he's sent to prison.

Toad is in luck though, when the gaoler's daughter takes pity on him and helps him to escape. He escapes the police in a thrilling railway chase and stumbles upon the people whose car Toad stole. Toad rejoins Ratty and Mole and is horrified to discover Toad Hall has been overrun by stoats and weasels. Back at Badger's house, the four friends hatch a plan to regain control of the Hall. A terrific battle ensues and, with the help of Mole's new found courage, they triumph!

About the Author

Kenneth Grahame was born in Edinburgh on 8 March 1859. He was the third child of a wealthy family and was related to several well known-figures of literature in history. His grand-uncle was a poet and he was the cousin of an author.

Grahame's mother died of scarlet fever in 1864 and his father became a very heavy drinker. All of the children were sent to Berkshire to be brought up by their grandmother. When living with his grandmother it was a very happy time for Grahame. The Thames river was nearby and probably launched his lifelong love for the river and boating.

Grahame went to school in Oxford until 1875 but he wasn't able to go to University as his Uncle refused to pay for his studies. Instead, he became a bank-clerk for the Bank of England and rose to become Secretary in 1898.

Grahame married Elspeth Thomson in 1899 and their only child, Alistair, was born the following year. The character of Toad was created to amuse their son, but it wasn't until years later in 1908 that he published *The Wind in the Willows*. The book wasn't a huge success, but became more popular in 1930 with the first stage adaptation which was written by A.A Milne (who also wrote *Winnie-the-Pooh*)

Grahame's son, Alistair, died in an accident in 1918 and from then on Grahame and his wife spent long periods in Italy.

Kenneth Grahame died peacefully at his home in Pangbourne on 6 July 1932.



Classroom Activity 1- Page to Stage

Below are listed 3 “opening lines” for 3 significant points in the story. In groups, children must begin their scenes with the lines and make choices about how to best tell their part of the story. Remind them to consider the following things:

- What is the most important thing we are trying to communicate to an audience?
- How can we show clearly who is which character - think about how different animals/ characters would stand and speak?
- Think about where you want your audience to sit - make sure that the audience can see everything that is going on
- What action can you put with your script to make it more exciting to watch?

1. *Toad is sentenced to Prison (Clerk, Chairman, Toad, 2 Officers)*

CLERK: Some people would consider, that stealing a motor-car was the worst offence and so it is.

CHAIRMAN: Pull yourself together and try and stand up straight. It’s going to be twenty years for you!

TOAD: Oh no! Twenty years in prison! (*Toad is taken away to prison*)

2. *Toad escapes with the Engine-driver (Engine driver, Toad, Police)*

ENGINE DRIVER: Now tell the truth, what were you put in prison for?

TOAD: It was nothing very much. I only borrowed a motor car!

ENGINE DRIVER: I fear you have been a wicked toad!

POLICE: Stop that Toad! (*A chase ensues*)

3. *Preparing to take back Toad Hall (Rat, Badger, Mole, Toad)*

RAT: Here is what you will need to take back Toad Hall!

BADGER: I’ve already got my stick here, Rat!

MOLE: Ratty, I’m scared I won’t be any use in the fight!

RAT: Just do your best, Mole. Now Toad, don’t your chatter as much as usual.

TOAD: I won’t! Now wait for me! (*A fight ensues*)



Classroom Activity 2 – Chronology

This activity focuses on how well the class knows the order of events. Cut out the boxes below and ask the class/groups to put them in order of what happens. You could also use these parts of the story to do a drama exercise - asking the class to make a still image/ freeze frame of the action at that point. The other groups could be asked to guess which part of the story they are trying to show.

Mole leaves his molehill to explore. At the riverbank he meets Ratty, a sensible and brave water rat. The two quickly become friends and Ratty introduces Mole to the excitable Toad.

When Toad becomes fascinated with motor cars, his increasingly wild driving is worrying for Ratty and Mole, and they ask for the advice of wise Badger.

Unhappy with Toad's obsession with motor-cars, Ratty, Mole and Badger lock Toad in his bedroom at Toad Hall.

Toad escapes from his bedroom and he steals a car.

The theft of the car means that Toad is sent to court, found guilty and sent to prison for 20 years!

Toad befriends the gaoler's daughter who brings him meals. He tells her of his adventures and his life at Toad Hall.

She gets her Aunt (a washerwomen) to bring Toad clothes so he can wear a disguise.

Toad escapes with his new disguise!

An engine driver takes pity on Toad and lets him ride the train for free. There is a thrilling chase as the police try to capture Toad.

Toad is met by the people whose car he stole. They give him a ride and he crashes the car and escapes!

Toad returns back to find Toad Hall has been taken over by stoats and weasels.

The four friends hatch a plan to regain Toad Hall. A fight takes place and the 4 friends are victorious!



Classroom activity 3 – Setting the scene

This activity focuses on the use of language and creating the world of the river bank. It also encourages the classes use of active listening. Each child has a sheet of paper and a pen. As you read the passage below, the class must draw a picture to create the setting that the reader is describing. The more detail they put in, the more they have been actively listening to the language. You could do this for a number of scenes but it would work especially effectively with the passage below.

“It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering 'whitewash!' he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, sinuous, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea.

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!”

Another activity would be to give the class a copy of this extract and ask them to underline all of the language which is used to **describe** the riverbank.

Then ask, what effect does this have when we read it?



Classroom Activity 4 – Open Questions

Listed are a series of topic conversations about the story. They are designed to provoke discussion. Remind the class to try and evidence their opinions using a part of the story.

- Do you think Mole changes throughout the story? Does he become more brave by the end? If yes, why do you think so?
- Toad gets himself into a lot of trouble and in sticky situations. Does this make us like him more or less? Why do you think he has so many adventures?
- Which is the most exciting part of the story to read/watch?
- Why do you think Grahame chose to have these characters as animals not people?
- Who is the best character in the story - what makes you like them?
- Who is the character we like the least and why?

Classroom Activity 5 – Diary Entries

A lot of the characters talk about having adventures or wanting to go on an adventure. Write a diary entry from the point of view of the following characters at the following points

Ratty: When he is worried about Toad's fascination with motor-cars and has made a new friend on the Riverbank called Mole

Mole: When he explores the riverbank for the first time and meets Ratty

Toad: When he has escaped from jail and got a ride to Toad hall thanks to the engine driver

Badger: When they have defeated the stoats and the weasels and regained Toad Hall!

There is also the chance to turn this into a drama exercise, One class member could act out the diary entry while the another character reads out loud. Alternatively, you could read a diary entry aloud and get the whole class to act out what you are describing.



Wind in the Willows Drama Games

Animal Groups

Tell each child the name of one of the animals from *Wind in the Willows* (Mole, Ratty, Badger, Toad) They mustn't tell anyone else what animal they have been given. When you say "Go" all the class must move around the room *as* their animals, only using the *sounds* and *actions* that their animal would make. Their objective is to find out who is the same animal as them without using words.

You could ask them to think about the characters in the book and their character traits - Toad is very excitable, for example. How would they show that to make it really clear which animal they are acting out?

Rat's Riverbank

This game is about developing characters and imagination. Read a descriptive passage about the riverbank to the class, or show them pictures of a 'real' riverbank. Ask them to think of an animal which you might find there. Rat (could be the teacher) stands at one side of the room and says "*Welcome to the riverbank. What sort of animal are you?*" A child moves into the room (acting as that animal) and declares which animal they are portraying. You could ask them to put on a voice which they think that animal would have. Rat then says "Why should I have a _____ along my riverbank?" and the child must give one good quality/character trait which that animal might possess. The Rat then says "*Wonderful. Then, welcome to the riverbank!*" Obviously each animal is welcomed to the riverbank.

There is the possibility at the end of this game to form a parade or freeze-frame of the riverbank with all it's new animals.

Animal Chairs

This is a version of the game often called 'fruit salad'. All the class sits in a circle and is given the name of an animal from the story (there should be 3 or 4 different animal types so the class is split equally) There will be one child who is not in the circle who will begin the game and call the name of one of the animal groups e.g "Mole". All the "Moles" would then change places and the child in the centre of the circle would try and find a place - thus leaving another child in the centre of the circle. The child in the centre would then call the name of another animal group and would attempt to find a place in the circle and so on.

This game could be developed so that the different animal groups would have to move across the circle as that animal might move.