

Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company presents

HOLE\$



by Louis Sachar

directed by
Adam Penford

***TEACHER'S
NOTE:**

This Insight Pack has been created for KS2 & 3, therefore, some sections will be more tailored for certain school year groups. However, all the activities in the Activities Section can be adapted for various ages.



INSIGHT PACK
SAT 31 MAR – SUN 22 APR 2018

**Nottingham
Playhouse**

70
YEARS
1948 - 2018



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Nottingham
City Council

WELCOME TO CAMP GREEN LAKE...

Where the hot sun is burning through the hot air onto the hot sand.

'You want to run away?'

'Nobody runs away from here. We don't need a fence. Know why? Because we got the only water for one hundred miles. You want to run away? You'll be buzzard food in three days.'

For those in KS3, these are an example of Stanislavski's Given Circumstances. A set of circumstances that are true for characters in a certain environment.



SO YOU WILL NEED TOO:

Get up at 4am to have your breakfast at 4.30am



Put on your orange digging suit

Go outside and dig one hole each day, including Saturdays and Sundays



Oh and remember keep a watch out for rattlesnakes and yellow spotted lizards, they are poisonous and deadly!

TAKE A LOOK AT AN INTERVIEW WITH HOLES DIRECTOR, ADAM PENFORD...

Q What are the challenges of staging a play that is so well-known as a book and film adaptation?

A One of the main challenges is that you can't include everything, so you have to pick out the things that resonate personally or with your creative team and cast. I'm not really talking about the plot - **Holes** is beautifully engineered with some great twists and turns and it would be perilous to fiddle with the structure - I mean the elements of the story that you want to place an emphasis on or draw out. You absolutely do have a responsibility to fans of the original, but rather than slavishly trying to recreate the novel on stage, which will never be as good, you have to reinterpret it for a new medium using the unique assets of theatre to your advantage. The great recent stage adaptations of books such as *War Horse*, which has now been seen by seven million people worldwide, and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* captured the spirit of the source material but in an inventive and original way.

WHAT DOES A DIRECTOR DO ON A THEATRE PRODUCTION?

A director has many varied and exciting jobs, here are a few but can you think of anymore?

- They will choose the actors they want to play certain characters in auditions.
- They will work with the designer to create the world of the play and how the production looks.
- A director is responsible for rehearsing the play with the actors.
- The director will also help the marketing department create posters, trailers and a synopsis of the show to help sell tickets.



War Horse



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Q What can audiences expect from this adaptation?

A Louis Sachar gives a real sense of place in the novel. The dried-up lake bed where much of the action takes place is a character within its own right. One reason I'm sure the story hooks younger readers is that Sachar doesn't patronise them by diluting the dangers his characters are exposed to. Stanley and the boys are digging holes in the baked earth under the boiling Texan sun. They get sunstroke, blisters, and have to deal with tarantulas and lethal yellow-spotted lizards. It's dangerous, a place of risk, and the heat is so powerful and captures the imagination.

That's potentially much easier to evoke on screen or in the novel than on the stage. Yet one of the reasons I chose to do this play was because in tackling these challenges it forces you to be inventive and theatrical. We'll be using a theatrical tool-kit including puppetry, music and movement. The set design deliberately has a rough aesthetic, by which I mean it's suggestive and not literal. It forces the audience to use their imagination. Many of the cast are playing multiple roles and a challenge will be making each character specific and vibrant. The costume changes will be minimal and the audience will be complicit in suspending their disbelief.



HERE ARE SOME PICTURES OF OUR ACTORS REHEARSING THE PLAY...

DID YOU KNOW...

The actors have 4 weeks to rehearse the play.



There are 10 actors in our production of Holes but there are far more characters. This means actors will have to 'double' or 'multi-role'.



Holes was made into a Disney film in 2003.



Holes is Louis Sachar's best-selling novel. It has sold over 8 million copies world-wide.



The Director has chosen to cast female actors as male characters. This is known as 'gender-blind casting'

ACTIVITIES SECTION...

GET A NICKNAME

To make friends at camp, you need a nickname like:
Armpit, Zero, X-Ray, Magnet and Caveman.

Write yours here:

.....

MAKE A MAP OF CAMP GREEN LAKE

Working in groups of 5 or 6, on large scale paper, can you all work together to create a detailed map of Camp Green Lake?

Don't forget to include:



The two trees

The hammock

The holes

The Warden's house

The 6 tents



God's Thumb

Sam's old boat

Sam's onion field

Rocks

Rattlesnakes, scorpions and lizards!



CREATE A PALINDROME

Do you know what a palindrome is?

The main character of Holes is a brilliant example of a palindrome: Stanley Yelnats.

The letters are in the same order whether you read them forward or backwards, for example noon, madam, level..

What would your palindrome name be?

.....

CAN YOU MAKE PALINDROME NAMES FOR THE OTHER CHARACTERS IN HOLES?

Zero =

Zig Zag =

Barfbag =

Armpit =

Magnet =

Caveman =

Warden =

DIGGING FOR THE TRUTH - PHYSICAL EXERCISE

FIND A SPACE IN THE ROOM AND CLOSE YOUR EYES.

IMAGINE YOUR SHOVEL IS NEXT TO YOU. PICK IT UP.

- How long is it?
- What do you think of it?
- Is it just a spade?
- Do you think of it as a friend?
- Does it have a name?
- Do you like it?
- How heavy is it?
- What is the handle made out of?
- Is it wood?
- Is it metal?
- Is it hot?
- Is it cold?
- How does it feel in your hands?



WHEN YOU ARE READY OPEN YOUR EYES.

NOW TAKE YOUR SPADE AND START DIGGING A HOLE.

NOW SEE HOW YOUR MOVEMENTS ALTER AS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING DIFFERENT TRIGGERS ARE INTRODUCED:

- The ground is wet and soggy.
- The ground is hard and dry.
- It's daytime, blistering hot.
- You haven't got any water left in your canteen.
- It's the middle of the night, freezing cold.
- You're hungry and exhausted.
- You're on edge and nervous.
- Mr Sir is walking past (you dig faster and harder).
- You see a yellow-spotted lizard.

DISCUSS: How did these triggers influence your movements? Were you leaning into your digging more?

Putting your whole back in to it?

Are your arms aching? Have you got blisters?

Where was the lizard? Was it close by?

On your boot?

A LETTER HOME FROM STANLEY

STANLEY TRAVELS TO CAMP WITH A BOX OF STATIONARY IN HIS BACKPACK SO HE CAN WRITE TO HIS MOTHER.

ACTIVITY: Imagine that you are Stanley and you arrived at Camp Green Lake two weeks ago. Now write a letter home. Consider what you might want to say to your parents, what might you want them to know? Do you want to tell them anything about the other inmates or the Warden or Mr Sir?



TOP TIP:

Think about employing descriptive language. Use all of your senses, what can you see, smell, taste, feel and hear.

EXTENSION: Swap letters with one of your classmates and now imagine you're Stanley's mum or dad reading his letter. Write a letter back to Stanley at the camp, what do you want to tell him, or what else do you want to know about life at the Camp?

A large sheet of lined paper with a red margin line on the left and a vertical line of punch holes on the left edge, intended for writing a letter.

CREATE A CURSE!

The Yelnats family have a curse and song that is passed down from generations before.

Can you create a curse or a song that's passed down in history?

This activity is split into four distinct parts as follows:



PART A) WORD CAMP

Use a big rope to mark out the shape of the camp. All sit around the edge of the rope with your eyes closed. Imagine you are in the Camp about 4 months into your stay.

TEACHER NOTE: Play desert sound effects and instruct the group to do the following with eyes closed:

- Imagine everything “you can see in your mind’s eye”. Consider colours, and textures.
- Imagine what you can smell, conjure up the quality of that smell.
- What sounds do you imagine might be heard, think about distant and near sounds.
- Finally, think about how you feel.

TEACHER NOTE: Whilst they are imagining, place 4 pieces of paper and a pen in front of each participant.

- Open your eyes and write one thing you saw, try and capture in rich descriptive language and detail. Write quite big, filling the page.
- Repeat this on separate pieces of paper for your sound, smell and emotion.
- Now all group members place their pieces of paper at random, somewhere within the rope boundary, try not to overlap and aim for even space where possible.
- Observe that you have created the Camp Green Lake with your own words.

PART B) GUIDED JOURNEY

Group is divided into pairs and label yourselves A and B.

A's are Zero and B's are Stanley. B's close their eyes and A's carefully and responsibly lead B's round the camp narrating softly the words on the pages beneath their feet. You may want to set pairs off in a staggered way, so you don't collide. Then swap over, so B's leading A's.

REFLECT: How was the experience being led and leading?

What did you notice?

How did you feel?

PART C) CREATING YOUR CURSE OR SONG

- Everyone can now go and choose one word that stood out to them, this might, or might not be something you wrote.

TEACHER NOTE: Split the whole group into smaller groups of 5, or 6 and ask each group to find a space within the room away from other groups, they take their chosen words / descriptions with them.

- You have now become the curse-maker, about to perform a newly created curse or song.
- In smaller groups, lay all your group's selected words on the large paper and to order these words, to form a curse / song. You can add, or repeat words, or edit words.
- Next begin to prepare for performance. Once you have an order of words and edited your curse/ song and are happy with it, start adding movement and actions to this. Think about tempo and rhythm. In your group, make decisions about who performs which line, or those lines that are spoken/sung /or with actions, in unison.

PART D) PERFORMANCE

Each camp curse maker's troop now comes up in turn to perform their curse or song to the rest of the group. Don't forget to introduce yourselves using the camp nickname you discovered.

HOLD A MOCK TRIAL

Can you hold a mock trial in your class and see if your jury would convict Stanley of stealing Clyde “Sweet Feet” Livingston’s shoes.



ACTIVITY:

1. Split the whole class in two.
2. Half the group take the view that Stanley is guilty, the other half take the stance that he is innocent.
3. Spend a few minutes in your two halves gathering arguments to support your stance and then hold a debate.
4. Now select a small jury (around 4 people) and a Judge (maybe your teacher) and begin your debate. Try to ensure that every member of your group has at least one point to present during the debate.
5. Ask your nominated jury and group leader to come to a conclusion about what the outcome is for Stanley – is he guilty, or not guilty?

REFLECT: Why was Stanley found guilty, or non-guilty? What was effective in swaying the jury and judge, use of language, logical arguments, or sympathy for the character?

MAKE YOUR OWN YELLOW-SPOTTED LIZARD SHADOW PUPPET

Yellow-spotted lizards represent the deadly aspects of Camp Green Lake. They invaded the area after the life-giving lake dried up and they present a deadly threat to all humans at the camp.

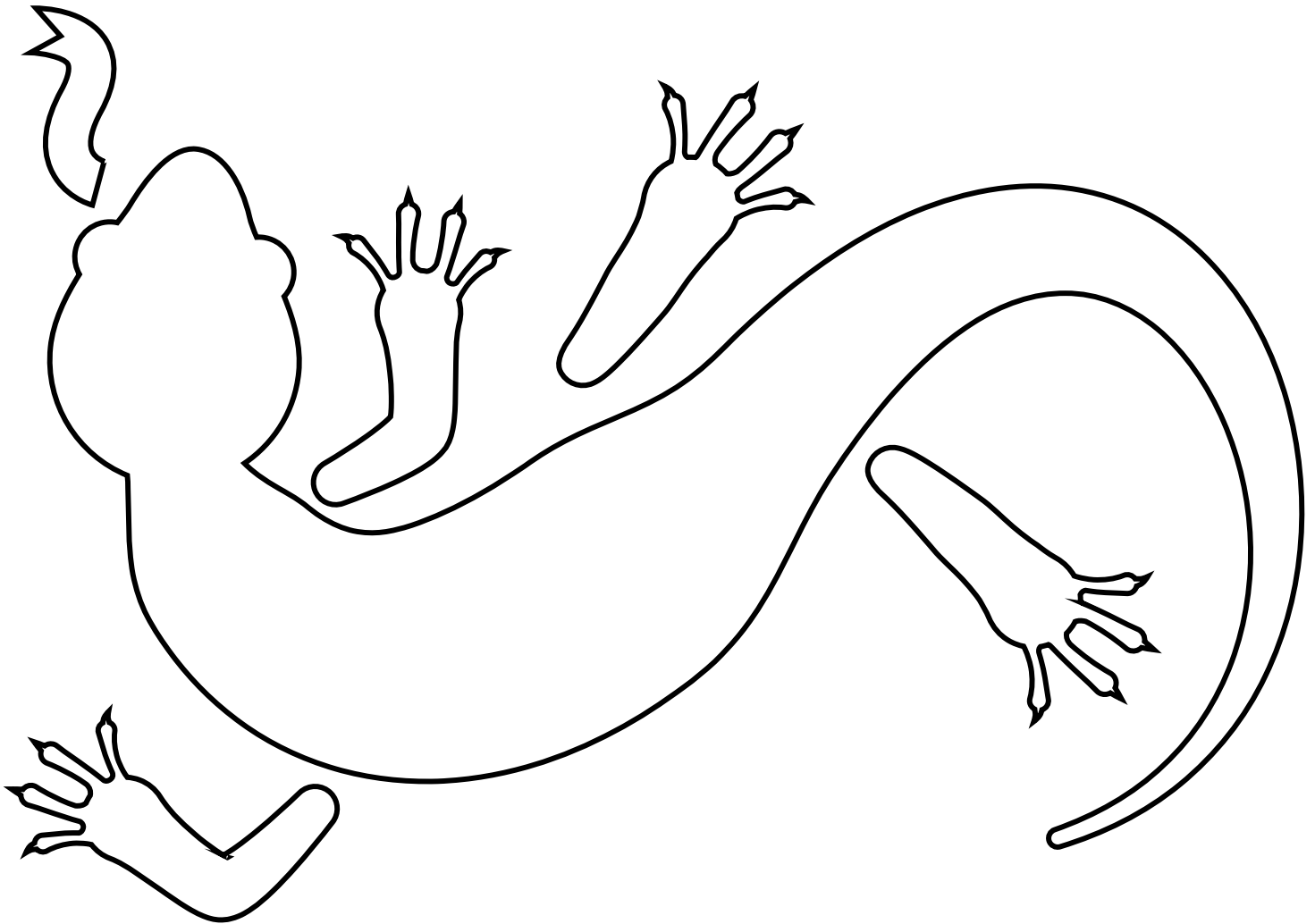
Can you make a shadow puppet of the yellow-spotted lizards at the camp?

YOU WILL NEED:

- Card
- Wooden sticks (i.e. lollipop sticks)
- Splits pins
- A white sheet
- A torch or lamp

Carefully cut out the template below,

Fix on the legs using split pins, and tape the wooden sticks to each leg.



Can you animate your lizard, and make it slither across the camp?

Now try suspending the white sheet from the ceiling and placing a lamp behind.

In small groups take turns at devising a puppetry sequence.
Do you want to consider adding music or sound effects?

HAVE A FINAL DEBATE (KS3):

- As mentioned previously in this pack, director, Adam Penford, has decided to cast female performers as male characters. Why is both gender blind and race blind casting important in the arts?
- Discuss the themes of Holes and decide how these themes are still relevant to today's society.
- Nottingham Playhouse, along with many other regional theatres, believe it is important to produce work for family audiences. What shows would you programme for families and why?
- Adaptations of books are very popular amongst contemporary audiences, here at Nottingham Playhouse we had very successful productions of Kite Runner, 1984 and Pride and Prejudice. What books would you like to adapt and see on stage?

RESOURCES:

Holes, by Louis Sachar

<https://websiteexplorationauthorstudy.weebly.com/fun-facts.html>

<https://heatheractingwork.wordpress.com/2012/12/20/given-circumstances/>

DIGITAL CONTENT:



HOLES TRAILER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R8lYS8GZTw>



NOTTINGHAM PLAYHOUSE: A VISUAL STORY FOR YOUR VISIT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeSJe4RiWaQ&t=4s>

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