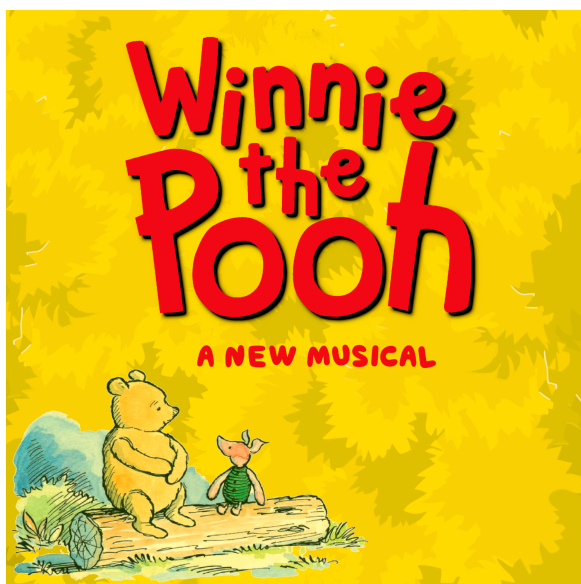


STUDY GUIDE



Curriculum Connections: Literature Based, Music & Dance, Teamwork, Friendship, Acceptance

DEAR EDUCATOR,

As an organization that values the arts and education, we have created this Study Guide as a resource for teachers. Our Study Guides are designed to be a valuable tool for teachers in two ways: helping you to prepare your students before the show, and enriching and extending their experience after.

Our goal is to serve principals, teachers and students in their pursuit of Illinois State Standards and to integrate the arts with your core curricular subjects.

– The ABS Team

ABOUT US: AlphaBet Soup Productions exists to provide Chicago area youth, teachers, and their families a unique theatrical experience that will entertain, inspire, and educate through our professional theatre company.

- Winner of the Illinois Theatre Association Award for Excellence in Theatre for Young Audiences
- Winner of two National Children's Theatre Awards for *Beauty & the Beast* and *The Jungle Book*

Pre-Performance Questions

1. How many of you have experienced a live theater performance? What performance did you see?

2. What are some of the differences between going to the theater and watching television or going to a movie?

- Theater features live on-stage actors. They have spent many weeks rehearsing for the performance.
- The audience is a very important part of the performance. Appreciation and enthusiasm for the performers is shown by close attention and participation and applause at the proper times.
- The theater is a very special place. Its atmosphere is entirely different from your home where the television is always available.
- It is easy to identify with live actors. You can see how they use their bodies and voices to convey different emotions.
- Actors wear clothing and make-up to help create the different characters they play.
- There is much more to most live performances than actors. Special sets, lighting, music, costumes, and of course, the audience add to the total experience.

3. Introduce your students to the following theatrical terms:

Play • Acts & Scenes • Producer • Program • Spotlights

Costumes • Props • Director • Stage • Curtain Call • Stagehand • Lobby • Usher

Musical Theater • Orchestra Pit • Proscenium Arch • Playwright • Scenery • Makeup • Actor

4. Discuss the role of the audience and proper theater etiquette.

- Arrive on time so that you do not miss anything, and so that you will not disturb the rest of the audience.
- It is easier for you (and the rest of the audience) to see and hear the performance if you stay in your seat and listen very carefully.
- In long performances, there will be an intermission. There is no intermission in our production. Each AlphaBet Soup Production runs approximately one hour in length.
- Sing or participate **if** and **only if** you are invited to do so. Your participation is often very important.
- Listen to how the music sets the moods and affects your own feelings.
- Show the cast and crew your appreciation for their hard work with applause. Do this when you like a song or dance or joke, and of course at the end of the show!
- Most importantly... **have fun!**

About Winnie the Pooh

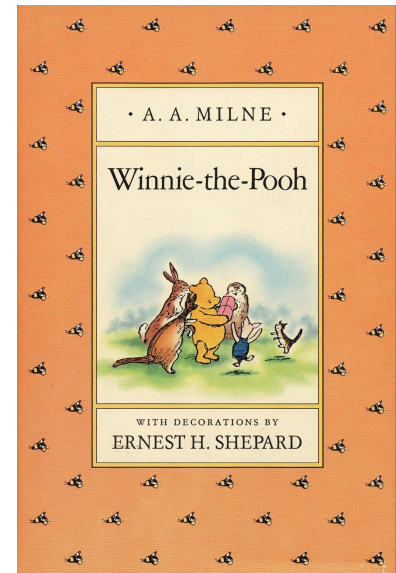
The Story:

The classic stories of A.A. Milne come to life in a brand-new musical adventure! All is not well in the Hundred Acre Wood... Christopher Robin has gone missing! It's up to Winnie the Pooh, Piglet and all their pals to save the day. Along the way, the animals confront their own insecurities while learning the importance of teamwork and acceptance.

Setting:

TIME: The Present and the Past

PLACE: In and around the Hundred Acre Wood



Characters:

Winnie the Pooh - Christopher Robin's stuffed bear and best friend. Always hungry and on the search for honey. Despite being naïve and slow-witted, he is a friendly, thoughtful and sometimes insightful character who is always willing to help his friends and try his best.

Piglet - Pooh's best friend besides Christopher Robin. Piglet often takes his lead from Pooh unless overcome by fear (which occurs more often than not). But increasingly through the stories he shows himself to be very brave when faced with a crisis and given sufficient encouragement.

Eeyore - The ever-glum, pessimistic old gray donkey. Gloomy Eeyore is not a fan of much, other than eating thistles, but his loyalty wins the hearts of his friends every time he loses his tail.

Rabbit - Very friendly, yet capable of being impatient and irritable. He fancies himself the smartest animal in the Hundred Acre Wood, since he is not scatterbrained like Tigger. He insists on doing things his way and is obsessed with rules, planning and order. He often bosses others around, but deep down, he cares a lot about his friends.

Owl - The stuffy and talkative oldest main character who presents himself as a mentor and teacher to the others. Owl (and most of his friends) believe that he is the most intelligent animal in the wood, but he is really quite scatterbrained.

Tigger - Pooh's happy, less-than-responsible and a sometimes troublemaking tiger friend. He bounces around, especially bouncing on others. He is full of energy, outgoing, and likes to have fun and is so overconfident that he thinks that any task is "what tiggers do best".

Christopher Robin - The only human character in the story books, he has a "cheerful" and compassionate personality and is someone whom Pooh and the others look up to. Despite being a child, he is much wiser and more mature than many of the other characters. Pooh considers both Christopher Robin and Piglet to be his best friends.

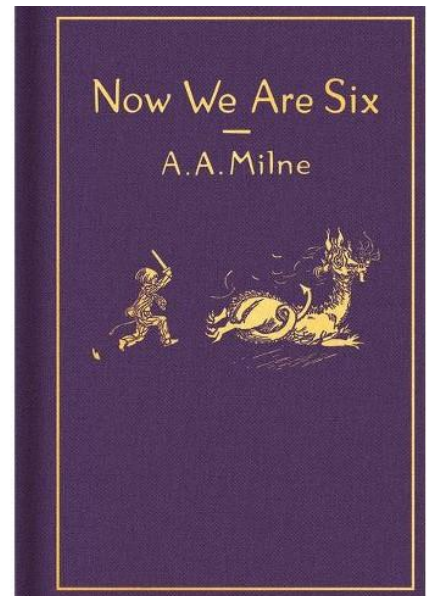
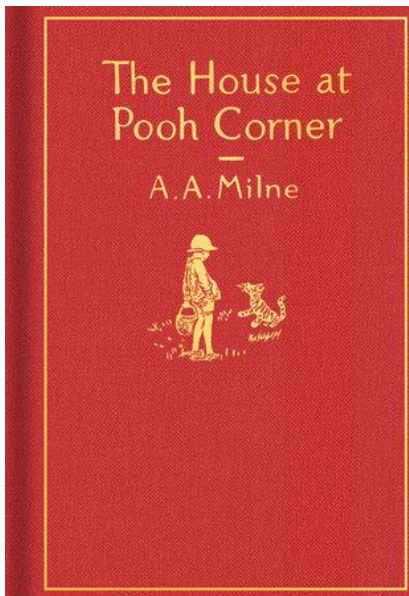
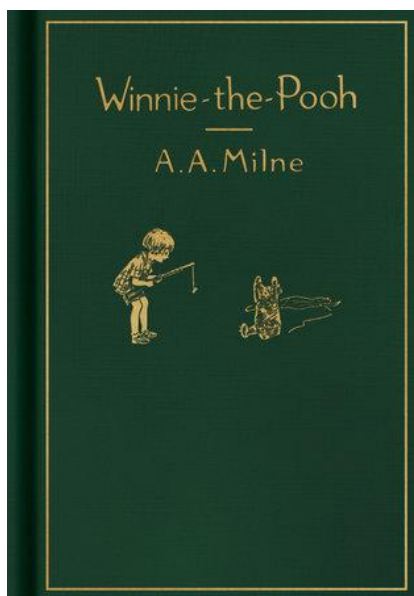
About the Author

A.A. Milne

A.A. Milne (*January 18, 1882 – January 31, 1956*) was an English author popular for his books about the teddy bear Winnie-the-Pooh and children's poetry. Milne was primarily a playwright before the huge success of Winnie-the-Pooh overshadowed all his previous work. Milne served in both World Wars, serving in the main British Army in the First World War and as a captain of the British Home Guard in the Second World War.



Milne was the father of bookseller Christopher Robin Milne, upon whom the character Christopher Robin is based. It was during a visit to London Zoo, where Christopher became enamored with the tame and amiable bear Winnipeg, that inspired Milne to write the story for his son.



Post-Performance Questions

1. MUSIC

- Was music used in the performance? Was it live or recorded? How could you tell? When was the music used? Why? Did it help develop the plot? What types of music was used, or was different types used?
- Can you describe how different kinds of music would make you have different kinds of feelings?
- When a play is a musical, an actor must have additional skills. Can you name some?
- A musical costs much more to produce. Can you name some additional expenses? (i.e. orchestra members and director, a practice piano, a choreographer, etc.)

2. SETS

- Describe the sets used in the play you just saw. What props or details were used to suggest specific times or settings? How could lighting be changed to create a mood, season, time of day, etc.? What materials might have been used in building the sets? How were the sets and props moved on and off the stage? Describe a simple scene (a day in school, a trip to the mall, a ride in the car or on the bus), ask students to describe a basic set for the scene.

3. COSTUMES

- What would you need to know to create costumes for a play (Historical research, sewing, theatrical effects, etc.)?
- Why is the right costume important to the character in the play?

4. DANCE

- Describe the kind of dancing, if any, in the play. How is it different from the kinds of dancing that the class might know? What purposes could dance have in a play?

5. PRODUCTION

- Make a list of all the personnel needed for a play. (director, actors, musicians, author, designers-set, costumes, lights & sound, stagehands, choreographer, producer, etc.)

Coloring Page for Winnie the Pooh



Art & Writing Activity

- Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story. Describe what is happening in your picture below.



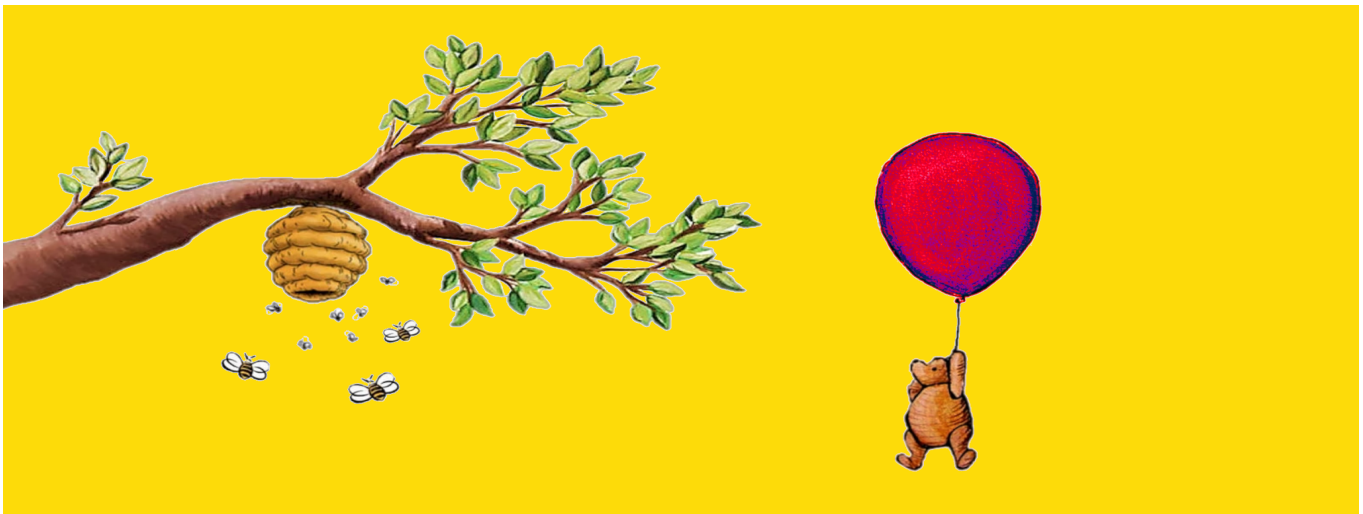
Be an Actor

Activity

Actors have to be good at remembering – remembering their lines and remembering their moves. They also have to be able to change the way they talk and move to play different roles – with lots of people watching too! Some of our actors in our show have to play multiple different parts! Actors must also be good at speaking and singing clearly so that the audience can always hear what they are saying – otherwise they won't be able to follow the story!

- **Choose a character** from *Winnie the Pooh* and make a list of words to describe them.
 - How do they talk? How do they walk?
 - Are they young or old?
 - Are they a human or an animal?
 - Are they smart? Silly? Friendly? Grumpy?
- **Try walking around the room** as each of these character types. How does playing a character make you walk differently? Now give them a voice – how do they talk?
- **Improvise** little scenes with each other, then see if you can swap characters and play the scenes again. How does it change?

Which character do you find it easier to be?



Thinking of Themes

Advanced Activity

Objective:

Using *Winnie the Pooh*, students become familiar with recognizing themes in a story.

Materials: *Winnie the Pooh* or *The House at Pooh Corner* books by A.A. Milne

Vocabulary: Theme, Plot, Characters, Setting

Lesson:

Discuss the meaning of theme?

A theme is an underlying message meaningfully created and connected to the story's plot, characters, and setting.

Ask students to take five minutes to think about the themes shown in the various stories/vignettes in *Winnie the Pooh*.

Think about what message the author was trying to send to the reader. Students can then share their opinions about the theme(s) of *Winnie the Pooh*. Themes will vary from student to student. Point out that sometimes a book is read for the first time and the reader forms an idea of the initial theme. Later, the same book is read again and a different theme emerges depending on the maturity of the reader.

Ask students to choose a particular theme and draw a picture of the scene in which the theme is best articulated to the reader.

Next, students should write a summary explaining the theme, how it is exemplified in the story, and what is drawn on the picture. Ask students to share their summaries and illustrations with the class.