



# Education Resource Pack

# Charlie Cook's Favourite Book

## Little Angel Theatre's Production

Charlie loves reading. Especially books about pirates. But his sister hates it – it's boring! Can Charlie convince her that reading is fun? Perhaps if she read a book about a pirate, who is reading a book about Goldilocks, who is reading a book about a knight...

Our production has a twist on the original book, introducing Charlie's sister, a reluctant reader.

Charlie helps her to delve into a range of books, brought to life with puppetry and enchanting songs, exploring the wonderful worlds inside books.....



Adapted by Barb Jungr and Samantha Lane  
Directed by Samantha Lane  
Music & Lyrics composed by Barb Jungr  
Set & costumes designed by Ellie Mills  
Puppets designed by Maia Kirkman-Richards  
Lighting Designed by Sherry Coenen

The play is based on the original book Charlie Cook's Favourite Book  
-Written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler. Text ©  
Julia Donaldson 2005 Illustrations © Axel Scheffler  
2005 Published by Macmillan Children's Books © 2005

# Little Angel Theatre



John Wright, the founder of Little Angel Theatre, was born in South Africa in 1906. He travelled to England in 1935 and worked as an assistant stage manager for the Ballet Rambert while studying at the Central School of Art and Design. During this time he saw a puppet performance by Podrecca's Piccoli and became hooked. John made his very first puppet in 1938.

In 1961 John and his troupe found a derelict temperance hall in Islington and transformed it into a theatre, designed for the presentation of marionette shows. It opened on Saturday 24th November 1961. This was to be the first purpose built puppet theatre the country had seen for many years and the only one with a permanent long string marionette bridge constructed backstage. The bridge was designed for puppeteers to stand on while they manipulate long stringed puppets who perform on the stage below leaving the audience unable to see the puppeteers. The original bridge is used to this day. The theatre has a traditional 'proscenium arch' and seats 100 audience members.

John Wright died in 1991 but the work of the theatre continued apace with family, friends and supporters working tirelessly to continue in his footsteps to make sure John's legacy would delight generations to come.

**“Over the next 30 years, the Little Angel team created and performed over 30 full-scale shows”**

# Julia Donaldson

## Author Study

Julia Donaldson is one of the most popular children's authors writing today and has won many awards for



her much loved books including *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom* and *The Snail and the Whale*. Her books have been made into films and plays, including Little Angel Theatre's productions of *The Singing Mermaid* and *The Smartest Giant in Town*.

- Julia was born in London in 1948 and grew up in Hampstead.
- Julia loved poetry as a child and this went on to feature in most of her books later in life which often include rhymes.
- Julia studied Drama and French at Bristol University. During her time there she acted in shows and learnt the guitar.
- She met her husband, Malcolm at University and they wrote and performed songs together.
- Julia sent a tape of some of her songs to the BBC and between 1974 and 1978 she wrote regularly for the children's programme *Play Away*, her songs being performed by actors and musicians on the programme. She also wrote occasional songs for other TV shows including *Play School*.
- In 1983 her family moved to Bristol. Julia became a volunteer in her sons primary school, hearing the children read aloud. She devised short plays with groups of children which would then be performed to the class. She noticed that this seemed to build confidence in reading aloud as well as being enjoyable.
- In 1991 Donaldson was contacted by Methuen Publishing to ask if the words of her song "A Squash and a Squeeze" could be made into a picture book for children. The book was published in 1993, with illustrations by a German artist Axel Scheffler, who was living in London.
- In 1995 Julia came across a version of a Chinese story about a little girl who escapes being eaten by a tiger by claiming to be the fearsome Queen of the Jungle and inviting him to walk behind her. She then hit upon the idea of the tiger becoming a monster whose name would end in O (to rhyme with "doesn't he know"). "Gr" sounded suitably fierce as the start to the monster's name, and filling in the middle with "uffal" the name Gruffalo was born. Julia sent *The Gruffalo* to Axel Scheffler and asked him to create some illustrations. It was first published in 1999.
- Since then Julia has published many more books, won awards, been Children's Laureate (2011), and has created performances and plays of some of her books to encourage children to act out stories and improve their reading.



# Curriculum Links

Art and design  
Opportunities for pupils to design and make inspired by the show (suggestions in this pack)

Spoken language  
Opportunities for pupils to use spoken language using techniques such as explaining and convincing language to show and tell



Encouraging composition  
Practice writing in different styles

Encouraging wider reading

Exploring a variety of genres for reading and writing



# Ideas For Writing

## Six Panel Story

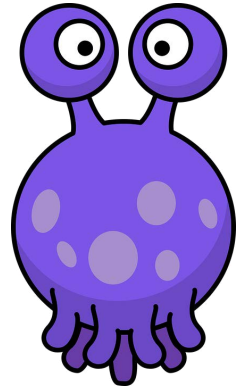
Choose a character from Charlie Cooks favourite book: maybe the pirate? The ghost? The dragon and knight? Aliens? A jewel thief?

Can you create a simple story in 6 panels about your chosen character?

You could add pictures to illustrate your simple story.

### **Aliens**

Aliens land on earth	Aliens see a library full of books	Aliens don't know what a book is, try to eat them?
Librarian spots aliens	They read the books to the aliens	The aliens celebrate



## Book Review

Choose a book that you really love.

It is your job to convince a reluctant reader to read this book!

**Think about what you love about it?**

- The characters?
- The way it's written?
- The pictures?
- Something that happens in it?
- The way it ends?
- Something you have learnt from it?

Talk to the class or a partner about your book and why you love it.

Write a book review (template on next page).

# Book Review

The name and author of my favourite book?

What is my favourite book about?

Why should people read my favourite book?

# Encouraging Reading Through Play

Here are some ideas for exploring books in a more playful and interactive way. These are focused on Charlie Cooks Favourite Book, but all of these can be adapted to any book you are reading.

## Act it out storytelling

Read out a section of Charlie Cooks favourite book, have the children play the roles of the characters in the book and have them act out the story as its being read.

In smaller groups allocate sections of the story and act out themselves in front of the class. They could portray what's in the book but also improvise and add to it to extend the action and explore the characters more deeply.

This could also be done with puppets, or use story boxes (more in this pack on both).

## Embody feelings through action

Look at characters from the book such as the king and the thief, have the students make actions and facial expressions only (no words) to show how those characters feel at different points in the story. When a student is doing an action as a class try to guess the feelings they are conveying. Then the student can reveal if the class was correct or not.

## One word at a time story game

Re-tell or make up your own stories, using one word at a time.

For example:

Child 1: Once

Child 2: There

Child 3: Was

Child 4: A

Child 5: Sandstorm!!!

And so on until the story is complete

You can set challenges, such as only allowing 20 words in the story, making them say words in alphabet order etc.

## Drawing a story

In pairs each child draws their own picture (inspired by a book they've read), they then swap drawings.

Each child must tell a short story inspired by the other persons drawing. It's not a guessing game, it doesn't matter if the story told doesn't match the inspiration story. This is about using stimulus to encourage storytelling and create new stories.





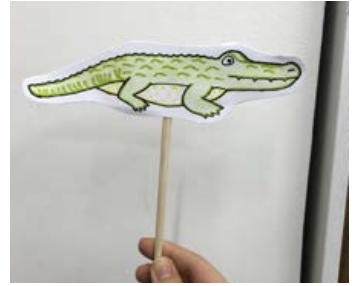
# Encouraging Reading Through Play

## Storytelling Box or Puppet Box

Make a Charlie Cook's Favourite Book Story Box or Puppet Box. Make one box for each of the story settings that feature in the book (or select your favourites). Children can either use what they find in the box to make their own story, or re-tell the scenario featured in Charlie Cook. You could create a mix of puppet boxes and Storytelling boxes depending on the content of the setting.

### **Puppet Box**

Make simple paddle puppets of each of the characters/key objects in the story setting (see example later in this pack). These could be made by the children or pre-made. These could be hand drawn or print out from the internet/copy from the book. Children could also be encouraged to find things around the room to make a setting.



### **Storytelling Boxes**

Here are some examples of things you might have in storytelling boxes inspired by Charlie Cook:

#### **The Pirate Ship:**

- Pirate hats/eye patches, parrots etc.
- A treasure chest (cardboard box decorated)
- Blue fabric for the sea (puppet boat?)
- A book!

#### **Royal News:**

- A crown
- Jewels
- A bin liner/sack
- Toy car/sheep
- Police hats/robber mask



### Use objects to make up a story

**Put together a box of various objects from around the house/classroom.**

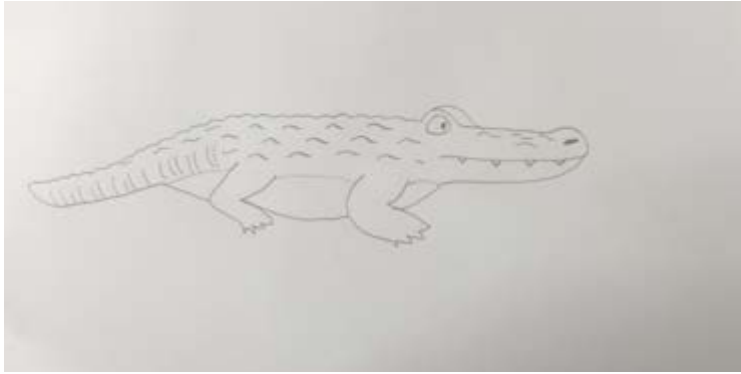
Play a game that involves putting an object in the middle of a circle each child has a turn to go into the middle and use the object in a different way, for example a wooden spoon:

Stirring, brushing hair, digging, scratching back, playing tennis.

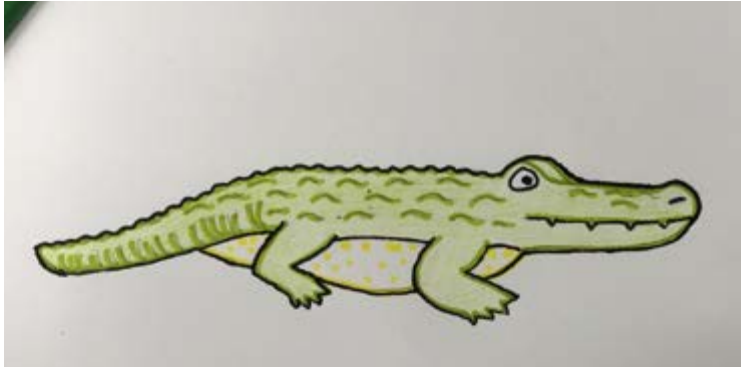
Children can use it in the same way that someone else has if they can't think of a new way.

**Using different household items in the box create a story by taking out an item one at a time and building a story around them. As each item comes out it can be interpreted literally as the thing that it is, or more imaginatively as something else it could represent.**

# Paddle Puppets



Firstly draw your puppet in pencil on paper.



Then colour in your puppet.

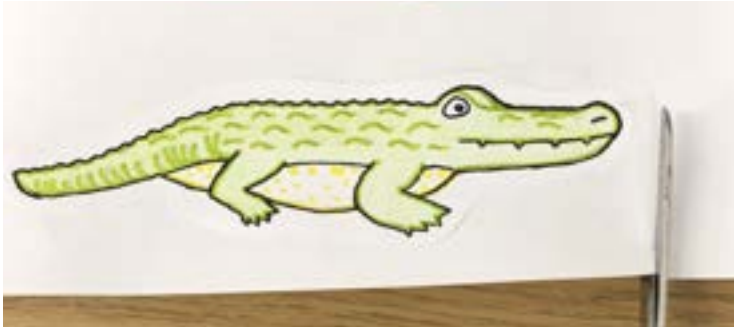


Cut out your puppet. Don't cut out too exactly as you will be gluing it to card



Glue your puppet on to a sturdy piece of card

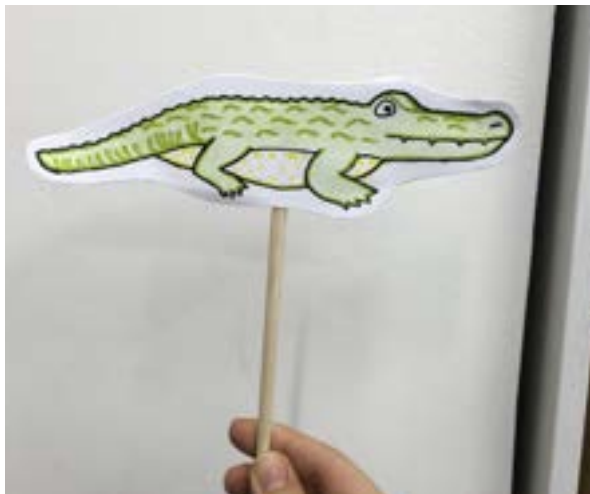
# Paddle Puppets



Cut out the puppet on the cardboard.



With tape , stick a rod (BBQ skewer or chopstick) on to the back of the puppet



Now you have your very own paddle puppet!

# Make a Pop Up Book



Take inspiration from Charlie Cook, or your own favourite book to make a pop up mini book.

Choose a setting and your favourite character to 'pop-up', then write a page for your book.

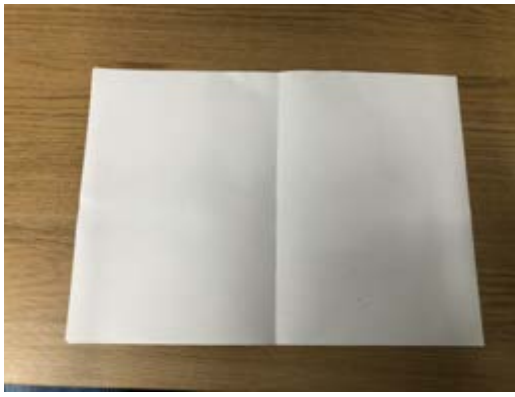
Your writing could be:

- A description of the character
- A description of the scene you've created
- An extract from the story
- A poem inspired by the character/story
- A mini book review of the story you've chosen

What you need

- 1 sheet of paper or thin card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Colouring pens or pencils

# Make a Pop Up Book



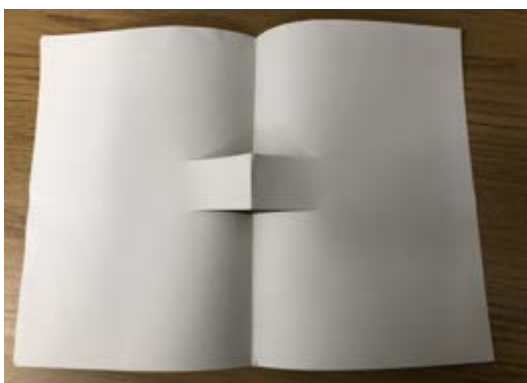
1. Start with an A4 piece of paper.



2. Fold the paper in half.



3. Cut 2 lines into the paper at the fold.



4. The strips should be able to pop out! This is important.



5. Decorate the top half of your paper

# Make a Pop Up Book



6. On a separate piece of paper draw, colour and cut out your character



7. Glue the lower half of the pop up strip



8. Stick your character down, making sure it doesn't sit below the strip



9. Write a book page to accompany your pop-up picture.

# Links and Resources

Little Angel Website:  
<https://littleangeltheatre.com>

<http://www.juliadonaldson.co.uk/>

Julia Donaldson's official website

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqC-3uywep4>

Interview with Julia Donaldson

<https://www.panmacmillan.com/authors/julia-donaldson>

Information about Julia Donaldson and ideas for activities linked to some of her books.

[Play-Based Activities That Build Preschool Students' Reading Readiness | Edutopia](#)

Ideas for exploring books and reading through play.



Education resource pack written by Talia Vardi and Sarah Schofield, for Little Angel Theatre . Production Photographs by Ellie Kurttz.