



A countdown of 10 Amazingly Awesome Activities to do this May Half Term!

Welcome to Polka's treasure chest of favourite creative activities to do indoors, outdoors, with family or friends! These favourite activities have been chosen especially from all of Polka's previous Family Activity Packs, which were inspired by some of Polka's past productions and workshops. You can enjoy the activities in a countdown – following the numbers down from 10 to 1 - or you can mix and match with doing different activities whenever you like.

Alongside this free **Amazingly Awesome Activity Pack** we also have two Polka workshops to watch, including how to create your own Polka puppet and our Top 5 Favourite Drama Activities recorded for everyone to enjoy in their own time. You can access these Polka workshops online [here](#).

Whether you're bouncing with energy or feeling crafty this half term, we have plenty of activities for you to enjoy!

Don't forget you can follow us on social media, stay up to date and tag us when sharing any of the creative activities you get up to over half term!



Happy Half Term!

10. How to Hide the Words

Can you find the words from one of Polka's favourite stories *How to Hide a Lion* in the Wordsearch below?

Lion	Hide	Iris
Townspeople	Hat	Mane
Mayor	Paw	Burglar
Roar	Police	Hero

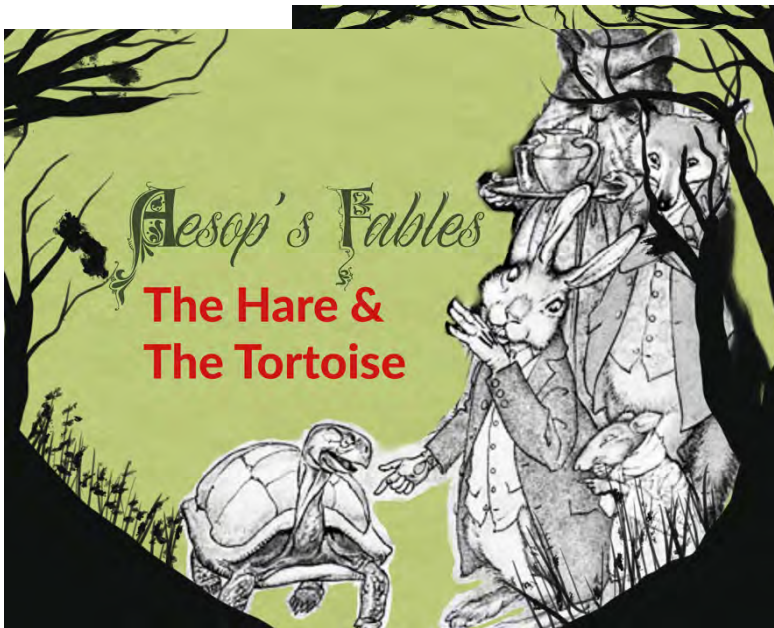
Happy searching for the hidden words...!

W	D	I	R	O	L	Y	D	T	Q	S	V
N	G	U	R	O	A	R	L	E	E	Z	M
Z	B	Y	I	P	W	S	J	L	L	K	B
S	F	L	I	O	N	H	Y	N	P	E	U
P	I	P	Q	W	C	P	B	M	O	N	R
O	Y	R	Z	X	M	A	N	E	E	G	G
L	N	I	W	C	T	W	E	H	P	I	L
I	Q	R	M	A	Y	O	R	A	S	B	A
C	Y	I	U	Y	R	G	D	S	N	H	R
E	T	S	R	E	D	I	H	K	W	M	I
A	X	B	H	Q	K	F	L	A	O	E	I
E	V	M	E	T	O	H	U	E	T	B	N

9. Cheer on the Race!

Next is one of Polka's favourite activities from *The Hare & The Tortoise* workshop. This is such a fun exercise as it involves making, moving and miming out part of this classic fable.

In this famous animal race, cheering helps the racers – Hare and Tortoise - to keep going. Let's make Pom Poms from newspaper to also cheer on each other when out racing around!



All you'll need is:

Spare newspaper sheets that are easy to rip.

Or spare paper and some scissors to cut strips (ask a grown up to help).

The newspaper sheets or spare paper should be ripped or cut up along to one edge – this will make the 'Pom Pom' effect.

Once you have ripped or cut enough to have lots of strands as part of the 'Pom Pom', make another so you have 2 Pom Poms – 1 for each hand!

Now it's time to make a short cheerleading dance by shaking the Pom Poms! Shake them up and down or side to side. Try twirling and swinging your Pom-Poms around. You can move them around anywhere you like as they are so light – you could even try throw them up in the air and catch them at the end of your cheer!

When playing with family members or friends, you could suggest that someone mimes being the Hare – really fast with long ears – and someone else mimes being the Tortoise – low, slow and steady. When they are ready, you can play the race out in mime, so that they can hear your new Pom Pom cheer – hooray! Your cheerful dance will make the Race more fun

8. Sugarplum Fairy's Magic Cakes!

Sprinkle in some fun this half term with Polka's magical baking activity. This recipe to bake fairy cakes was inspired by the character of the Sugar Plum Fairy from the classic story of *The Nutcracker*, which we explored in Polka's online winter workshop last December. Let's get cracking ... with the eggs of course!

For the fairy cakes

60g/2¼oz caster sugar
2 large free-range eggs
20g/½oz unsalted butter
60g/2¼oz self-raising flour
1 tsp mixed spice
3 plums, halved, pitted and chopped

For the buttercream

1 large free-range egg white
60g/2¼oz caster sugar
80g/2¾oz slightly salted butter, softened
½ tsp orange extract
Orange zest
Edible gold glitter

Method

- For the fairy cakes, line a mini-muffin tray with 12 fairy cake cases and preheat the oven to 170C/150C(fan)/Gas 5.
- Place the sugar and eggs in a bowl and whisk at full speed for several minutes, or until the mixture is pale and doubled in volume.
- While the mixture is whisking, melt the butter in a small saucepan. Sift the flour and mixed spice into a bowl.
- Carefully add the melted butter around the edge of the mixture while still whisking.
- Remove the bowl from the mixer, then sift and gently fold in the flour and mixed spice in two batches.
- Carefully put mix into the cake cases. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden-brown and springy to the touch.
- Remove the cakes from the tins and cool on a wire rack.
- For the buttercream, combine the egg white and sugar in a medium-sized bowl.
- Beat continuously with an electric hand-held whisk until the mixture is thick and glossy and all the sugar has dissolved and is thick enough to hold its shape.
- Beat the butter to a soft consistency and start adding small lumps of it to the meringue, a little at a time, whisking well after each addition.
- Beat in the orange extract and zest. Transfer the buttercream to a piping bag fitted with a round nozzle and pipe it onto the cupcakes.
- Carefully top each fairy cake with a plum piece and a sprinkling of edible gold glitter.

7. Drum fun!

At Polka, we often use music for our workshops and to accompany our plays. Music helps to tell a story, by giving it a background, setting or to create sounds for characters to move to. We've selected this favourite music-making activity that is inspired by a past production, as well as, our drama and music workshops, so that you too can make your own music at home. Make your own drum kit for some drumming fun and learn how to create your own buzzing beats!

In the Winter Wood was a devised, storytelling piece that was based on the folktale of *Hey Little Cat*. The lead performer told the story while playing a rhythm on a drum. Phrases from the story are shown here, with beats underneath to highlight when the rhythm is made on the drum. Try and create a very simple beat, while speaking like this:

WORDS	Greedy cat	gobbled the	porridge pot	up
BEATS	1 2	1 2	1 2	1
WORDS	Hear a Sto-ry	Tell a Sto-ry	Write a Sto-ry	
BEATS	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	

And if you haven't got a drum, here is a simple way in which you can make your own.

1. Find an old pot (like a large yogurt pot) to use as the body of the drum. And decorate however you wish.



2. Get the right size balloon. The balloon is going to be the head of the drum so it needs to be tight but large enough to fit around the top of the pot. If the balloon is too small, it might be too tight and break when you drum.
3. Cut off the mouthpiece of the balloon. Use scissors to cut the mouthpiece off of the balloon. Make sure you only cut the mouth piece

and not the body of the balloon. **ALL cutting should be done with adult supervision.**

4. Stretch the balloon on the pot and secure it. Secure the pot in between your knees or ask a friend to hold it securely. Put the balloon over one side of the pot and carefully stretch it over the entire top of the pot. Secure the balloon on the pot by stretching several rubber bands onto the pot or putting masking tape around to keep the balloon in place.

5. Play your drum. Use lightweight wooden sticks to play your balloon drum. Chopsticks, or pencils work great for drumming on a balloon drum.



Alternatively, you can use any plastic or wooden boxes, pots or pans of different shapes or sizes, which will give you lots of sounds to play around with. Either spoons or pencils as drumsticks make good sounds. Just listen to the variety of sounds they make when hitting your boxes, pots or pans at different angles. Once you've had fun playing around, see if you can drum along to the rhythm of one of your favourite songs. It's great fun to learn new rhythms and beats with homemade instruments.

Once you've learnt a rhythm on your new drum, you could have a go at writing your own song or poem to speak out loud with your drumbeat. It can have 4 lines (or more if you like).

Here's an example from our 'Step into Spring' workshop, which uses rhyming couplets (where 2 lines rhyme):

I love to Step into Spring,
When bells begin to Ring!
The blossoms on the Trees,
And the pollen makes me Sneeze!

After practising all the drumming beats and performing your song/poem out loud, you'll be a professional music-maker and songwriter in no time!



6. Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters are a great way to warm up the voice and help us all to speak clearly and confidently. This is the perfect family activity for practicing different voices when telling stories, playing different characters and pretending to be on awesome adventures this half term.

As one of our Favourite Family activities, we challenge you to create a tally sheet and see which family member or friend can say a tongue twister the most times in 30 seconds! Be careful not to jumble the words and twist your tongue – that is the main aim of this game – keep going back to speaking the phrase slowly at first before speeding up to get better and better. You can take the challenge each morning to kickstart your day or just try it once. If you try the challenge again, try and beat your own personal time!

Polka's Top Tip: Break the sentence down and repeat it slowly and clearly. If you like, [watch our Polka video on Tongue Twisters here](#). This may help you before taking the challenge. Join in and have fun learning new tongue twisters, tested to trip our tongues up and into a twist.

Of you go go...!

The Paper Doll pranced and danced all day.

Burgers with Billy and jelly with Jay.

Ticky and Tacky took turns to tell tales.

Busy Buzzing bumble bee.

The Dangerous Dinosaur kept digging into the deep, dark den.

At Lily's they let him be lovely and lazy.

Slippery sliding slug slips and slides sideways.

The troll teases, who's that trip-trapping – trip, trap, trip, trap, trip!

You can also try practicing the classics, such as,

She sells sea shells on the sea shore.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper.

5. Yes & No Game

A classic game with a twist! At Polka, we love guessing games, and that is what the original 'Yes & No Game' is about. You may remember it from our activity pack of *A Christmas Carol* last December, where you had to think of a character in your head and then get your family members to ask you questions about who you were before guessing! But remember it's called 'Yes & No' because the player who is being asked questions can only answer with 'Yes' and 'No'.

Time to first practice playing this fun, fast-paced guessing game! Just follow the rules below:

- 1 family member volunteers to think of something – real or fictional; human or animal; historical or modern.
- Once they have thought of something, the other members must find out what it is.
- The catch is that the family members who are trying to find out, can only ask questions that can be answered with 'Yes' or 'No'.
- Take it in turns to ask questions, and if the answer is 'Yes' you can ask another question before guessing!

Well now for one of our favourite games played in an alternative way. It's been twisted to link to a classic fable called *The Fox & The Crow*. You might also remember that story from Polka's February half term workshops, but it doesn't matter if you don't know or remember this story as it's time to give this persuading game a go!

For this game you only need 2 players. Player 1 holds an object. Player 2 must convince 1 to give *them* the object. You may only use words – you can't touch!

- * First try the game using the words 'Yes' (Player 2) and 'No' (Player 1) only.
- * Now try using "Yes because..." and "No because..."
- * Now have the same conversation with NO words at all, only actions.

Don't forget to swap around! Have fun trying to trick one another into getting the target object!



4. The Taste Test!

This activity is inspired by one of Polka's favourite past productions – it is a much-loved story and play that was programmed twice at Polka called *The Paper Dolls*.



In the story, there are lots of new things that the paper dolls discover on their adventures. Even playing around the honey pot when the little girl is having honey on toast! I wonder if you like honey or jam or marmite on toast?

I wonder if you can guess different tastes with your eyes shut? Could your family members also guess the taste without looking? Ask them all to try the 'Taste Test'!

With help from a grown up, make pieces of toast – 2 pieces should be enough but it depends on how many tastes you'd like to try. With your grown up, carefully cut the 2 pieces of toast into 4 squares, so you have 8 pieces of toast altogether. Now carefully ask your grown up to help you look around the kitchen for different tastes – this could be a spread like jam or a chutney, a cheese, a meat, a salad or a condiment like tomato ketchup or mustard (it can be as yummy or yucky as you like!). Carefully start putting different tastes on to the 8 pieces of toast. Once you have covered all 8 pieces of toast with different tastes, you're ready to begin your 'Taste Test'.

Using a tea towel or scarf, ask the family member who is being tested to sit down and close their eyes while you wrap the tea towel or scarf around the top of their head covering their eyes so they don't peek. Now it's time for them to try different tastes – you can hand them some toast and see if they can guess the taste!

Keep a score to see how many they get right, compared to you when you give it a go. Or you could make a tally sheet like this to show who guessed right:

	Mum	Dad	Big Brother	Big Sister	Little Sister	Little Brother	Me
Honey	X		X		X	X	X
Mustard			X	X		X	X
Butter		X			X	X	

Using your sense of taste is interesting and good fun, even if you don't particularly like the flavour, just be curious like the paper dolls and learn more about your senses. Making it a tally game like above is also fun to do with your family!

3. Time for a... Teddy Bear Picnic!

Another favourite family story that Polka adapted into a play is *The Everywhere Bear*. This activity is inspired by the ending of the story where the school children are reunited with their class bear – time to celebrate! There's nothing better than having your own Teddy Bear Picnic at home, in the garden or even out in a park with family and friends! So, let's get packing...and throw a picnic party!



Find your favourite teddy bear or toy and ask your family or friends to join you.

Put a big blanket on the floor or ground below, assemble your picnic (this could be real or pretend) and sit down together. Treat yourself and tuck into sandwiches, maybe strawberries or even some cake! You could take your Sugar Plum Fairy

cakes from above to make it really special.

Once you've finished your picnic treats, this is the perfect time to read *The Everywhere Bear* book again – if you don't have it you could go on a trip to your local library to borrow it or [find a version of the story being read online like here](#)



At your very own special Teddy Bear's Picnic, you could dress up in costume to be one of the characters from the book, such as, the teacher, the fishermen, Mrs Bishop or even wearing something similar to one of the children in the book. It's up to you!

For a real post-picnic party, you could listen to Julian Butler's wonderful music from the show by clicking onto <http://www.julianbutler.co.uk/music.html> and you can sing along to Polka's *The Everywhere Bear Song*!

"The Everywhere Bear has a home on a shelf

But he doesn't spend very much time by himself.

For each boy and girl in the class is a friend

And he goes home with one of them every weekend.

On Mondays they carry him back to Class One

And tell all the others the things that he's done."



2. Don't Hide a Lion – Become a Lion!

Would you like to be the king of the jungle? Then it's time to become a lion who visits your town like the lion does in *How to Hide a Lion*. Or maybe you're inspired by another famous story about lions: *The Lion King* – ROAR! At Polka, we love dressing up as different characters, especially animal characters, so here's the purrfect family activity to become your own royal pack of lions this half term!

There is a super simple and easy way to make your very own lion mask using a paper plate, complete with pop-up ears and whiskers.

All you will need is:

Paper plate; Pencil; Paint; Paint brushes; Scissors (or craft knife & matt);
Lolly stick (or a stick from the garden or some elastic); Sticky tape



Step 1

Using a pencil, draw your lion's face on your paper plate.

Step 2

Paint your lion however you want.



Step 3

Once your paint dries, use your scissors to cut out different parts of the mask. You can snip around the mask to create a mane. Next, I cut around the ears to make them stick out slightly.



If you have a craft knife and cutting matt you could also cut out portions of the eyes, the nose, and the whiskers and folded them upwards to make the mask more three dimensional.

YOU MUST HAVE ADULT SUPERVISION IF YOU ARE USING A CRAFT KNIFE.

If you do not have a craft knife, you can use the scissors to carefully cut two holes in the eyes so that you can see through the mask.

Step 4

Use sticky tape to attach a lolly stick or any small stick from the garden so that you can hold it up to your face. Or you could attach some elastic on either side of the mask so that you can fix it onto your face. Now prowl around your home as if it is your castle or take it out into the garden and parade around as you've become the King of the Jungle! ROAR!!



Perhaps, you can even play a game of hide and seek with family and friends, while dressed as the lion, acting out part of Polka's play of *How to hide a Lion*. Don't forget to stop roaring if you are hiding!

1. Animal Action!

Now for our final family activity, it's a firm favourite, as you'll know by now that Polka loves the drama of a physical guessing game! Inspired by lots of Polka's plays and children's story books, we created a game that involves all the animals for you and your family or friends to act out.

For this game, you will put your acting skills to the test. Don't forget you can practise your animal acting first before you play the game so that you feel confident in taking part in 'Animal Action!' [Just watch some of our drama activities online here to get you warmed up and ready to act.](#)

The animal kingdom is spread across our world and waters, just think back to our *Passport to Polka* workshops where we explored stories with many animals from different countries, like grazing goats from Norway, cows and chickens from Russian farmyard tales and smaller exotic insects from Indonesia – the Gecko, mosquito and firefly! These ideas might help you to create a list, like the one below, of all the different animals you can think of.

Have a think about some favourite stories with animals in as this will also help you write a list: there are birds, ladybirds and even dinosaurs (that can be a type of animal for this game) in *The Paper Dolls*. There are fish, seagulls and obviously a bear in *The Everywhere Bear*. Then in some of the Aesop's Fables we have explored before, there is a hare (like a rabbit) and a tortoise, there is a fox and a crow and two types of mice. How about all the insects we recently had in our Spring workshops, such as, the butterflies, caterpillars, bees and even worms – there are so many small animals! Finally, you may remember another of Polka's favourite stories that was transformed into a play called *Gorilla*. In this story, the girl talks about how much she loves gorillas. When she goes to the zoo there are lots of other animals in the zoo... How many animals can you think of?

Maybe you have been to a pet shop with family, or on a school trip to a farm? Or have a think about what animals live in the wild. Maybe you could ask a grown up or your family if they have any ideas before you start the game so that you can write a good long list. Or just continue adding animals to this list here:

Goat	Penguin	Dog	Caterpillar
Tiger	Gorilla	Bear	Snail
Snake	Hippo	Rabbit	Butterfly
Tortoise	Crocodile	Mouse	Kangaroo
Lion	Horse	Fox	Dinosaur
Crow	Elephant	Parrot	Bee

Cut around the animal names so that they are all on separate pieces of paper. Then carefully fold them all up and put them in a hat, pot or shoebox. Now it's time to shake them all up and play the game!

This game is for 2 players or more, so make sure you have someone ready to play with you. Each person will take it in turns to choose an animal from the hat, pot or shoebox and will act it out while the other one guesses.

To make 'Animal Action' a bit trickier, you could try acting out the animal with no sound. That means miming the animal through your body movements, facial expressions and gestures. Or maybe you can set a timer and only have 30 seconds to guess? Try different ways to play!

You could even play around as any of these animals in a game of '**Animal Statues**'! Simply play some fun music, like this track from the animal film, *Madagascar* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdcTmPvDO0I> - to dance to – but as soon as the music stops you have to FREEZE as one of the animals! You can take inspiration from the music video to help you with ideas of how to move like the animals – did you spot the Gecko from Indonesia?!



Play around and change your animal statues each time – these images below will help you remember some of the exotic and rare animals:

Gecko
Elephant
Firefly
Buffalo
Mosquito

Thank you for joining us this half term. We'd love to see your creations! Just send them in to creativelearning@polkathatre.com or tag us on social media.

Stay safe, and stay creative.

Team Polka

