

## Teacher Resources Pack

# The Emperor's New Clothes



*A Polka Theatre, Hiccup Theatre and  
Derby Theatre production*

Written and Directed by **Sarah Bringham**

**PolKA** hiccup theatre



Dear Teacher/Parent/Carer

We are so pleased that you came to visit us at Polka Theatre for ***The Emperor's New Clothes***. We hope you enjoyed seeing the production and visiting our brand-new venue.

Here are a few **activities** to do with your children and young people after you have seen the performance. These exercises are creative and drama based, which is good for **developing speaking** and **listening skills**, as well as expanding **concentration** and **imagination**.

The activities are suitable for children in **KS1 and early KS2** or ages **3 - 8** years. Please pass on any of the activities to your children to do at home to encourage and engage **creative minds**!

We would love to hear what you think about these exercises and how your children got along. Please send any feedback to [creativelearning@polkatheatre.com](mailto:creativelearning@polkatheatre.com).

We look forward to seeing you again soon,

Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team

**Key  
Curriculum  
Links KS1 &  
KS2  
(ages 3 -8)**

The key themes of honesty and recognising the difference between right and wrong link to **Citizenship** and **developing confidence and responsibility**. The importance of **developing good relationships** and **listening** to others respectfully. **Considering social and moral dilemmas**.

To always tell the **truth**, even if you think it might not be the popular choice

To understand the importance of **listening** to one another

To recognize the importance of **honesty** and **speaking up** for what is right

To talk about and share our opinions on **morals** and which ones are **important** to us

In this story, the Emperor loves fine clothing. Two swindlers, arrive in the city claiming to be the best weavers imaginable. They claim that the clothing they make is the finest with beautiful, intricate patterns. The swindlers say that this clothing is also magical and would appear invisible to anyone who was stupid or incompetent.

The Emperor pays the swindlers a huge sum to make these magnificent clothes. The swindlers then pretend to weave and sew the clothing with empty looms and needles without thread. The Emperor sends his advisor to check on the swindler's work. When *Taffeta*, the Emperor's Advisor, realises she sees nothing, she does not want to admit it for fear she would be accused of being stupid and incompetent. So, she lies to the Emperor, saying how the clothing was magnificent.



The clothing is brought to the Emperor on the day of a great procession. The Emperor sees nothing, but he, too, did not want to admit to being stupid or incompetent, so he agrees that the clothing is exquisite. After being dressed in the invisible garments, the Emperor marches in the procession in front of his entire kingdom. Everyone in the kingdom sees the emperor without clothes, but for fear of being accused of being stupid or incompetent, they all sing the false praises of their Emperor's fine clothing.

Finally, *Bobbin* exclaims, "But he doesn't have anything on!". Everyone starts repeating, "He doesn't have anything on!" The Emperor must then finish the procession knowing that the people are right, and everyone knows he is wearing nothing but his pride.

## **Hans Christian Andersen 1805 – 1875**



### **Who?**

Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark, on 2 April, 1805, the son of a shoemaker and a washerwoman. His father loved literature and encouraged young Hans to write tales and put on puppet shows. However, he passed away when Hans was just 11, which meant that the boy was sent out to work in order to support the family. He worked in a tailor's shop and tobacco factory, but was deeply unhappy.

### **Life and Career**

At age 14 Hans moved to the capital city Copenhagen in an attempt to pursue a career in the theatre. He started writing poetry and plays.

Andersen's best known works are his Fairy Tales and Stories, his most famous being '*The Ugly Duckling*' and of course, '*The Emperor's New Clothes*'.

A common theme of Andersen's work is the unfortunate or the outcast. This is likely to have arisen from the experiences of his own life – the teasing he suffered as a child and the rejection he suffered in his personal life as an adult.

During his long writing career, Hans wrote more than 200 stories! Andersen also spent much time traveling throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Andersen passed away on August 4 1875, in Copenhagen. The Danish government began commemorating Andersen's life and work. They placed a statue of the author, whom the government paid a "national treasure".

***I'm intrigued to know why "The Emperor's New Clothes" – was there a reason behind your deciding to remake this book into a play?***

**Sarah Bringham (Director)**

"We decided on this story for several reasons. As everyone knows from the story, the Emperor is a terribly vain man who makes foolish choices and his advisors don't dare tell him otherwise. In the story, the emperor pays huge amounts of money for a special 'invisible' fabric for his clothes – there's actually nothing there, he's nude! But he has more money than sense.

It feels quite reflective of what's going on in the real world in politics when a person in power can state so called facts and no one around them will dare challenge or say otherwise. Others may know what the leader is saying isn't true but they still choose to keep quiet.

It's actually a child in the story – played by Brooklyn Melvin – who challenges the Emperor and exclaims to him "You're nude! You're telling lies!" So although it's definitely a fun family show, we feel it's very relevant to what's going on in society today."

***How did you devise the script for the play?***

**Sarah:**

"We have a small cast this time around as we are devising the dialogue for the show without a pre written script. My aim is to make sure the BSL comes first rather than what's usually done in theatre with deaf actors have to translate a pre written English script.

We work through scenes together, tweaking what's been said and settling on the most appropriate way to perform with the BSL. I couldn't do this with a cast of 14, it'd be too time consuming. The show is delivered half in BSL and half in spoken English dialogue. Our aim is to make sure the BSL feels equal to the English."

*(Interview extract The Limping Chicken, the UK's independently-run deaf blog and news site)*



## **Sculptor Exercise**

This activity is great for getting children moving whilst using Imaginative Play. The children are encouraged to work as part of a team and explore non-verbal ways of communicating. This will help spark creativity and will help build confidence within team working and sharing their ideas with the rest of the class.

### **How to lead the activity**

The children start this exercise standing up, either in a circle or standing in a space around the room.

Ask the children to get themselves into pairs and label themselves A and B.

Working in pairs, one student becomes a sculptor and the other becomes the clay. The sculptor must mould the clay into a statue. They can manipulate the arms, legs, head, body and facial expression to create a statue based on themes or ideas the teacher has suggested.

Ideally, this exercise will be done without talking so that all communication is focused through body language.

Examples of themes/ideas could include royalty or specific characters from *Emperor's New Clothes*.

Ask the students to then switch roles and repeat the exercise.

Once the statues are made, an exhibition can be held so that the sculptors walk around and look at each other's creations. The teacher may want to ask the children to have a guess at what each statue is.



## Identifying Emotions

This activity is great for encouraging children to experiment with the quality of their voice; thinking about intonation, volume and how else they can express emotion vocally. This will benefit the children's speech and language skills whilst encouraging them to speak clearly and confidently to the class.

### How to lead the activity

The children can be sat at their desks, ready to stand up when it is their turn or this activity can be led in a circle.

Ask the children to think of a selection of different emotions. E.g. happy, sad, tired, excited, suspicious.

The teacher can ask the children to imagine they are the Emperor who has just paraded his kingdom with no clothes on! How might this make him feel? Embarrassed, betrayed?

The teacher writes the emotions which the children have come up with on the whiteboard.

The teacher then asks the children at random a simple question. The children have to pick an emotion on the whiteboard and respond to the question in their chosen emotion.

Why not try these questions?

- *What did you have for breakfast this morning?*
- *Tell me about one thing you're looking forward to this week?*
- *What is your favourite animal and why?*

Suggest to the children that may want to change their pitch, volume and pace depending on the emotion



## Crazy Costumes!

This activity encourages imagination and creativity as well as increasing their spatial awareness and physical story telling. It uses imaginative play and encourages children to imaginatively create and act out various costumes using physicality.

### How to lead the activity

Start this warm up activity in a circle

Ask the children to imagine they are dressed in brightly coloured, extravagant clothing with an array of different fabrics. Suggest to the children to be specific with their choice. They could start by picking the item of clothing, e.g. trousers, then think about colour, material, shape.

Encourage the children to be as creative with their choices as possible, there are no limitations!



Once the children have had some time to think about their *Crazy Costume*, ask them to come up with a striking pose that embodies the costume they have created. Suggest to the children that they think of varying levels to their pose, focusing on different body parts and using different facial expressions.

An example would be, if you are wearing a particularly large hat, your pose may be based around balancing it on your head and the difficulty this might cause you.

The teacher will then ask the children to freeze in their poses and go round the circle one by one and ask the children to explain their costume to the rest of the circle.



## Sit, Lie, Stand

This exercise is great for team work and widening imaginations. The children experiment with decision making whilst working in a team and how they can move their bodies to reach an overall goal between them. The physical movement energises the group and brings focus, improving cognitive development and improving physical health and movement.

### How to lead the activity

Ask the children to get themselves into groups of threes and find some space in the classroom.

Explain to the children that during this game at any one time, one of them has to stand, one other sit and the other lie. The teacher will give a scenario and the children have to create a freeze frame between the three of them, bearing in mind the instructions explained above.

Examples of the scenarios could be:

*A party*  
*A Royal Palace*  
*A festival*

When the children are changing their position they must always have someone sitting, standing and lying.

Add a time constraint or countdown to the activity to increase the challenge for the children.



## True or False?

The activity is great for getting the children to practice their presenting and communication skills. The children are encouraged to use persuasive language, increasing speaking and listening skills, and confidence in presenting.

### How to lead the activity

This activity can be completed individually or divided into small groups.

Ask the children to have a think either by themselves or within their small groups, about an idea for a fake news story lasting no longer than a few minutes. Explain that the idea behind these stories is that they are made up, or a fabrication of the truth, but that they must present their stories as if they are real. The news story ideas can be as made up and comical as the children like. Below are a couple of examples:

- *Chocolate is healthier than fruit!*
- *Days of the week at school will be reduced from 5 to 4 days per week!*
- *The Earth is flat!*

The children will need to think about ways they can present their stories in order to make them seem believable.

Ask the children what makes a story teller believable? Encourage them to think of hand gestures, facial expressions, body language and varied vocal ranges to tell their story convincingly.

The teacher then asks the rest of the class whether they think the news story is **True or False?** and how the group presenting have achieved this.

## Top News Just In! Lyrics

This activity is great for getting children writing and using creative language. They will also consider how to integrate physical expression and movement.

### How to lead the activity

This activity can be completed individually or divided into small groups.

Using the lyrics below from *Emperor's New Clothes*, ask the children to see if they can write or speak another verse to the song.

*Read all about it!  
Have you heard the news?  
I saw it on the screen  
so it must be true  
We'll expose the truth for you  
Read all about it  
Like! Subscribe! and Scroll  
We've a headline to weave  
that you won't believe  
The greatest (fake) news  
story ever told*

Ask the children to see if they can spot any rhymes or themes to the lyrics. They might want to use these ideas in their own verse!

The teacher may want to extend this activity by asking the children to think about the rhythm to the song. Ask the children to practice speaking the above lyrics by using call and response. The teacher can then ask the children to think about body percussion. The children can add a beat or multiple beats to the song using a particular part of their body. Eventually, the children will build up a body percussion movement piece to the lyrics of their song.

## Thought Tunnel

This activity encourages children to share and challenge their opinions. Through engaging in discussion and debate they are supported to consider alternative solutions from their peers. This activity also promotes confidence in sharing ideas and speaking to a wider group.

### How to lead the activity

Split the class evenly in two halves and ask the children to form two lines facing each other.

Ask the children to think of an issue or challenge that arises within *Emperor's New Clothes*. Once these ideas have been discussed, explain to the children that each child will take it in turn to explain their chosen moral dilemma from the show and then walk down between the two lines.

As each child walks down the Thought Tunnel, explain to the rest of the class that they must offer their advice for the given dilemma. It can be organised so that those on one side give opposing advice to those on the other to offer a balanced judgement. When the child reaches the end of the tunnel, they make their decision.

Alternatively, you can suggest to the children that they choose a character from *Emperor's New Clothes* (such as *The Emperor*, *Taffeta - The Emperor's Advisor*, *Bobbin*, *Weft*, *Jumble* or *Warp*), then in role you walk down the Thought Tunnel as your character whilst the rest of the group offer their advice.



## Fake News Story

This activity is great to get children thinking and drawing/writing creatively. The children are encouraged to consider what makes a fake news story and how to present this persuasively, in the style of a news story. The children have the opportunity to share their ideas with the rest of the class, working collaboratively and whilst making decisions as a team.

### How to lead the activity

Ask the children to have a think in small groups about possible fake news stories for a newspaper, they can use their ideas from **True or False?** or create a new story. Explain that the idea being behind the news story is to be false and not real.

Encourage the children to be as creative as possible with their ideas. They can use resources such as the internet, books, magazines, newspapers to help them think of an idea.

Bring the class back to your attention and ask the children to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Encourage discussion about their news story, asking the children to offer feedback and constructive criticism.

Once the small groups have finalised their news story, ask the children to draw an image of their news story. Some children may feel confident to write a title for their news story or the teacher can help the children write this.

Use the template below for the children to create their news story. Encourage to use an array of different colours and shapes, the more eye catching the better!





A blank layout template for a book cover or program, enclosed in a rounded teal border. At the top is a ribbon banner. Below it is a horizontal line. The main body is divided into a top rectangular box and a larger section below. The larger section is split into two columns. The left column contains two stacked rectangular boxes. The right column contains a large rectangular box. Below the right column's large box is a section labeled "ABOUT THE AUTHOR" in all caps, which includes a small square box for a photo and a larger area for text.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



We hope these activities have been useful to help bring a bit of *The Emperor's New Clothes* back to your classrooms or homes!

We can also provide plenty of opportunities for follow-up activities. Polka's experienced team of actors, directors, storytellers and puppeteers are on hand to deliver a range of workshops in your school.

We can create tailor-made workshops for you and your pupils based on any theme you like, including exploring the themes and production elements of the performance you have just seen!

For more information, please visit our website:

[www.polkatheatre.com/schools](http://www.polkatheatre.com/schools)

Or contact Elysia, Polka's Schools Relationship Officer to request a workshop enquiry form.

We look forward to seeing you at Polka Theatre again soon!

Best Wishes,

Polka Theatre's Creative Learning Team

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