

When We Were Wild

Study Guide



When We Were Wild

About the show

A wood filled with magic and memories. Home to wild creatures - the Fox, the Owl, the Badger...and brothers Jim and Pete.

Farmers. Old now. Very old. With bad backs and welly boots.

An old wardrobe in the barn contains all the mysteries of their childhood, when they would sleep beneath the stars and become one with the wild world around them. The owl on her midnight watch, the badger scuffling out of the dark, the fox watching from the woods with its orange eyes...

The brothers have grown up and gone their separate ways. Will they ever find a way back to the wonder they once felt when they were young, and wild?

With astonishing animal puppetry from Helen Foan and live music from Kyron Bourke, this tale of growing up and the importance of nature and art is told in a funny and moving new play written by Charles way, directed by Paul Bosco Mc Eneaney and created by Cahoots, makers of Danny Carmo's Mathematical Mysteries, The University of Wonder and Imagination, Penguins, Secrets of Space, Nivelli's War, Shh! We Have a Plan and Egg.

When We Were Wild is a heartfelt story of family, friendship and growing older, from the award-winning Cahoots, Northern Ireland's leading children's theatre company.

The aim of this production is to tell a powerful story through a vernacular which is poetically rich, alongside the highly visual theatre language of Cahoots, featuring magic, music and puppetry.

When We Were Wild offers a wide range of opportunities for school audiences to engage with curriculum subjects such as: Fine Arts, Language Arts, Science, Physical Education and Emotional / Social Development.

This study guide includes additional activities that can be enjoyed before or after you attend the performance.

If you are a presenter in North America looking for more information on how to bring this production to your community, please contact Holden & Arts Associates at sk@holdenarts.org

If you are a teacher or school group, for more information on how to bring your school to this production please contact your presenting venue.



Fine Arts:

Recreate a Memory

Do you, like the brothers, have a memory that means a lot to you? In *When We Were Wild*, Pete draws the animals he saw when camping with Jim. Try to recreate a memory of yours with paint or pencils, or why not create a collage with photos or fabrics that remind you of the memory?

A Portrait of Nature

Find yourself a spot where you can see the world around you. It may be your garden, your school's playground or even the view from your classroom window. Have a go at drawing the different types of life you can see (This includes people, animals and plants!) Pay close attention to all the little details that make them what they are. Don't forget to sign your work of art!

Puppet Making

Many of the characters that we meet in *When We Were Wild* are puppets, controlled by a puppeteer. Why not have a go at making your very own puppet? You can use anything you have around you; cardboard, paper or even socks to bring your puppet to life.

Think about the personality your puppet might have and how they would move around a space. Once you are familiar with your new friend, introduce them to your classmates!



Language Arts:

Diary Entry

Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the animals we meet in the show. Include what they might see, hear and do in the forest or how they may have felt during the show.

Use your imagination to consider:

Their life in the forest - where do they sleep, what do they eat for breakfast

Their experience with the brothers

Their relationship with the other animals

Nature poem

Take a walk or have a sit outdoors. What life can you see in the sky, on the ground, or even beneath the earth? This includes wildlife and plants! Try to describe your time outdoors in a poem. You can write about exactly what you saw or how it made you feel. Your poem may rhyme or it may not, that's up to you!



Science:

Research Activity

Think about the different animals you met in *When We Were Wild*. Choose your favourite and do some research into their life: do they sleep during the day and come out at night? What sort of diet do they have? Do they live up high in the trees or underground? Can they be kept as a pet?

Pair up with a classmate who has chosen a different animal and take turns teaching the other what you have learned.



Physical Education:

A Scene from the Forest

Think of an animal - it might be one of the animals from *When We Were Wild*, or a new animal altogether. Try to move around a space like your classroom or playground as your chosen animal would. What parts of your body are you using? Are you moving fast or slow? Are you making any noise? The owl might travel quietly and gracefully while the badger scuffles around and doesn't look up. The hedgehog might roll itself into a ball when it notices the fox slowly sneaking up behind it. See if your classmates can guess what animal you are pretending to be!



Emotional / Social Development:

The story of Jim and Pete brings attention to our relationships with our environments and the people close to us. Younger audiences who relate to Jim and Pete in the beginning of the play may wonder why they make the choices they do in later in the story.

Teachers may want to ask their students the following questions to open up a discussion on the themes of the piece:

Why did Pete decide to leave the farm? How did this make Jim feel?

How did the brothers' relationship change as they grew older?

What are some differences between Jim and Pete? What are their similarities?

How do you think Jim felt when he met Pete's daughter?

Why do you think Jim found it hard to leave the farm later in the story?

What do you think is the message of this story?



Further Resources:

More fun nature-based activities

- <https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zyq7qfr>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-kids/games-and-activities/activities/>

More from Cahoots

Cahoots' website

- <https://cahootsni.com/>

When We Were Wild Video Highlights

- www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXYFegOCfGc