SNOW WHITE

A SPARKLING NEW VERSION OF THE FAIREST PANTO OF THEM ALL

Chelmsford Theatre
Education Pack

Snow White Education Pack

This is a specially created education and activity pack, designed just for schools to be able to pick up and take straight into a lesson! You will find stories and activities to explore the tale of Snow White and traditional pantomimes.

What you will find in this pack?
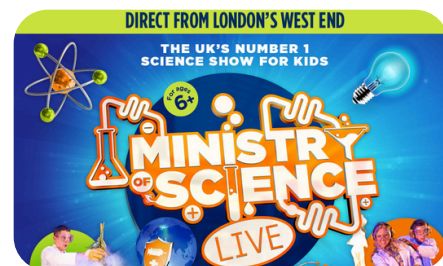
Educational shows

In Other Words
Thu 13 Mar

Horrible Histories: Terrible Tudors and Awful Egyptians
Fri 4 Apr to Sun 6 Apr

Ministry of Science Live
Mon 7 Apr

Discover at Chelmsford Theatre

Welcome to the Chelmsford Theatre Pantomime Education Pack! We hope that this pack is filled with informative, fun, and most importantly useful resources for you to use in the classroom. This year's pantomime of Snow White has a modern twist on a classic fairytale, but still full of those classic pantomime principles that we will be jumping through in this pack. For example, introduce your students to some stock characters on pages 5 and 6, or quiz them on conventions after doing the task on page 17.

Some students have also been lucky enough to take part in Chelmsford Theatres specialist Pantomime workshops in their own school. We have visited over 150 students explored pantomime stock characters, performed parts of this year's script, and slapstick comedy through practical activities. We will be running workshops like this again next year, so be sure to enquire about workshops when you book to visit us in 2025.

Since it's inception, the Discover department has been growing its connections with schools and community groups all over Essex. We are always keen to support teachers, schools and young people as much as possible, so if you would like to work with us, we would love to hear from you. Just message our Creative Engagement Officer, Megan, on megan.crisp@chelmsford.gov.uk.

Our Discover department has also developed a Theatre holiday workshop programme. Check out what we have coming up, we would love to see some of your students there.

Discover Workshops

Play in a Day
Mon 17 Feb
5 - 10 year olds

Technical Theatre
Wed 19 Feb
13 - 18 year olds

Jazz Technique Masterclass
Fri 21 Feb
13 - 18 year olds

History Of Panto: True or False Game

Get your students understanding more about the history of the British cultural staple that is Pantomime.

Objectives:
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of significant events in the history of pantomime, including its origins and evolution.
- Foster a sense of fun and enjoyment in learning about theatre history in an interactive way.

Task:
- We have compiled a list of statements, some are true, and some are false! Each statement has the answer, you could either read them out to your students or put them into a PowerPoint to display.
- Go through each one and allow students to vote by holding up their true or false cards.
- You can then reveal the answer, and why that answer is true or false.

These statements can create great discussion points, so encourage students to explain why they think it is true or false, and can they think of any examples to back up their idea.

Resources:
- True or false cards

Statements:
1. **Pantomimes were originally silent – TRUE**
   - Originally pantomime was based on a type of masked performance called commedia dell'arte. So originally all performances were silent and mimed with dance scenes.
2. **Pantomime was only ever performed by women – FALSE**
   - For the first few decades of pantomime performances, it was only men who performed as women weren't allowed on stage!
3. **The hero character, like Peter Pan, or the Prince, are traditionally played by women – TRUE**
   - When women were allowed to start performing, they were placed in male roles so they could cover up more. Since then, it has been a very traditional addition some theatres chose to make.
4. **Evil characters always enter from the left – TRUE**
   - Good characters always enter from stage right, and bad characters from stage left. This stems from history where the left used to represent hell, and the right heaven.
5. **The longest pantomime ran at four hours long – FALSE**
   - It was actually five hours long! It took place at Dury Lane Theatre in 1900. Now, Pantomimes are typically around 2 hours.
6. **Pantomimes always have a happy ending – TRUE**
   - Pantomimes always have a happy ending, typically a wedding!

TRUE

FALSE

An Introduction to Stock characters

Stock characters are an essential part of a Pantomime, and no matter what show you see, you will meet the same stock characters. These are a great way to introduce young people to characterisation, as the set attributes make the characters easier to create and perform.
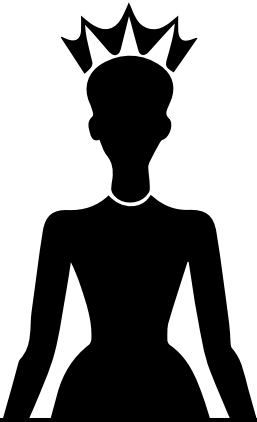
This task can be completed in class by cutting up the descriptors and mixing them up, ready for students to match the character traits with the characters stock name. Or, this document could be set as a piece of flipped learning homework. Have the students take home a copy and learn about the characters, ready to apply it to the script next lesson!

The Heroine	A good character, not necessarily a princess
	Sassy and stands up for what is right
	In modern pantos they can end up saving the day
	Gentle and well loved
	Nearly always ends up with the prince or hero
	Enters from stage right

The Principal Boy	A good character, who is typically a hero or prince
	Defeats the baddie with help from their friends
	Traditionally played by a woman but doesn't happen as often now
	Brave and loves to show off
	Their traditional move is a thigh slap
	Enters from stage right

The Comic

Best friend to the main character
Friendly, clumsy and talks to the audience the most
Enters from stage right
Silly, energetic and happy to make a fool of themselves
Involved in slapstick comedy scenes

The Dame

Most iconic character
Usually the mother of another character
Friendly, talks to the audience and usually picks on a man to take part!
Played by a man
Wears flamboyant costumes and wigs
Enters from stage right

The Villian

Gets Booed by the audience
Is a threat to the other characters, but is not too scary
Enters from stage left
They never win
Sneaky, mean and has a useless sidekick

Stage Direction: The Game

Understanding stage directions is an important, basic skill to have, especially for pantomime, as each stock character has a specific side they enter from. This active game requires a bigger open space.

Objectives:
- Students will be able to accurately identify and define common stage directions (e.g., upstage, downstage, stage left, stage right, centre stage).
- Students will be able to identify and demonstrate the side each of the five key pantomime stock characters enter from.

Task:
Activity One:
- Students all start standing the middle of the space, let them know this is centre stage.
- Direct students to go to each of the marked spaces on the below diagram, upstage, downstage, stage left and stage right. Repeat this a few times if needed to all students know the positioning.
- Stage left and stage right are <u>always</u> the actors left and right as they face the audience, and down stage requires you to move <u>down</u> to the audience.
- Have students return to centre stage and explain in this game you will call out a stage position, and the students must run to the correct position. The last one there is out!
- Run a few practice rounds to ensure students understand the rules, then start playing competitively till you have a winner.

Activity Two:
- If you have already covered stock characters with your students, see if they can remember the side each of the stock characters enter from.
- If not, let them know that all the good characters (The heroine, the principal boy, the dame and the comic) enter from stage right. The bad characters, like the villain, enter from stage left.
- Returning to centre stage, the game can restart. However, this time, as well as calling out stage positions you can also call out stock characters! For example, if you called out principal boy all the students should run to stage right.
- Repeat this like the last game till you have a winner.

Extension:
- To add more challenge and get the young people thinking about characterisation, you can add in an additional clause.
- This time, every time you call a character, as well as running to the correct location they have to pose in character when they get there.

Resources:

The below diagram of the stage positions would be helpful for the game leader to have to ensure the students are going to the correct place.

	Upstage	
Stage Right	**Centre Stage**	**Stage Left**
	Downstage	

Audience
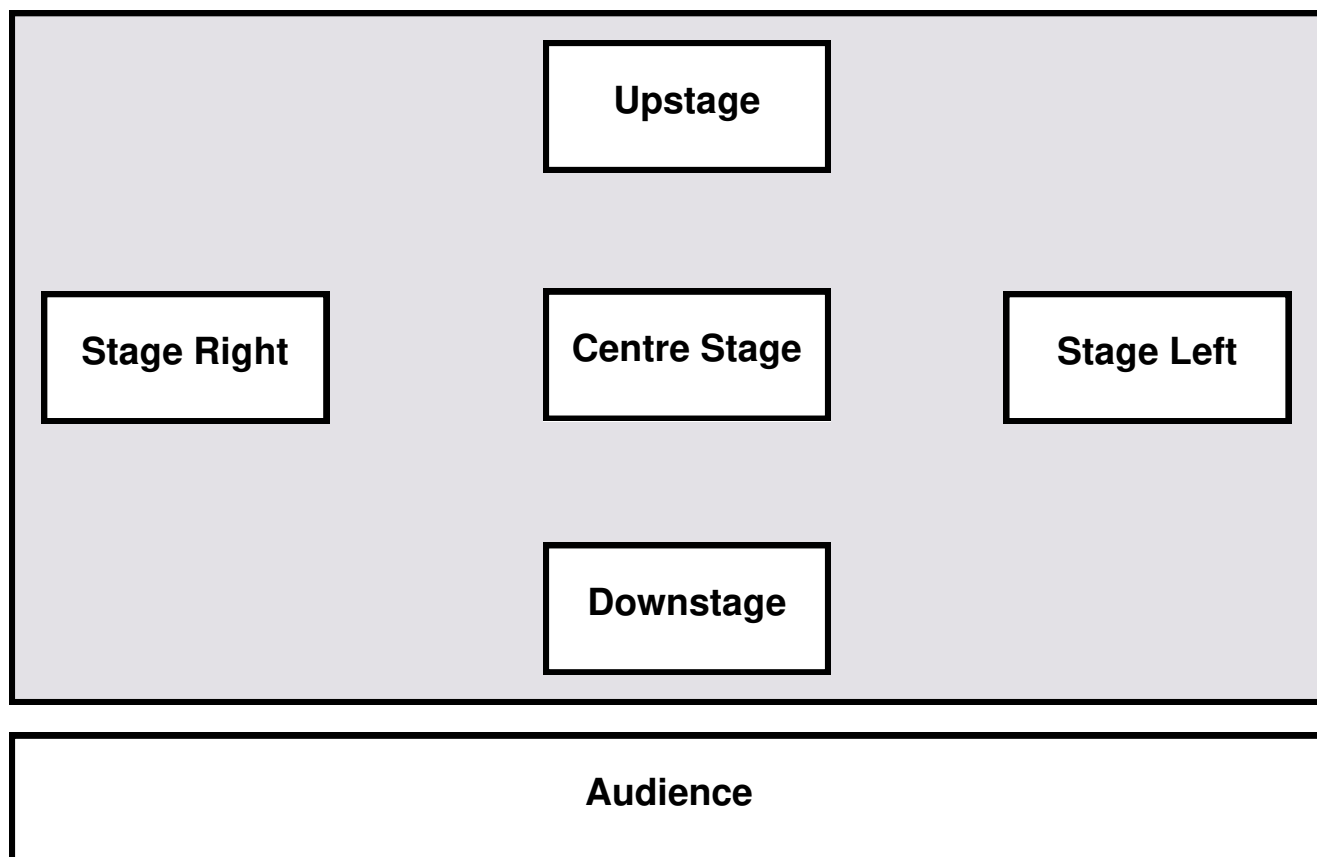
Pantomime Performance Lesson

This task has two main elements, building a character and then bringing that character to life, using an extract from this year's script! Task one can be done in the classroom, task two will need more space. Students will need to know about the stock characters before taking on this task (pages 5 and 6).

Objectives:
- Identify the common stock characters in pantomime (e.g., the hero, the villain, the comic) and their typical characteristics.
- Make specific choices on their characters facial expressions, body language and use of voice to enhance character emotions and reactions, understanding their importance in conveying meaning without words.
- Collaborate with peers to create a performance, focusing on how characters interact and develop relationships on stage.

Task:
Activity one: Character Building
- Students can work in pairs and should start by going through all the different voice and physicality cards, which are colour coded for the different skills. Voice cards are blue, and physicality cards are pink.
- Question students on what some of these different terms might mean, and make sure everyone has a clear understanding, as these terms will be the basis of our next task!
- We have created a simple glossary, that can be used by the teacher or staff to support the learners understanding.
- Using the cards, the pairs should choose four key vocal traits for the principal boy, and three for the heroine.
- Be aware, some cards don't apply to either at all – like low energy! So they need to make their choices carefully.
- Have the students share their answers and explain their choices. We would expect to see lower pitch, loud volume etc for the principal boy, and higher pitch, soft tone etc. for the heroine.
- Repeat this task for the physicality – get them thinking about how they would communicate their character if they couldn't talk!
- Have the students share their answers and explain their choices. We would expect to see the principal boy doing their signature thigh slap and doing large gestures. We would expect the heroine to be gentle and smile a lot.

Activity Two: Practical Beginnings
- Now the students have built the basics of their character, they can now move onto bringing it to life!
- In their existing pairs, after collecting a copy of the script, the young people should read through their script together. They can assign roles between themselves.
- Their first challenge is to create a still image (a frozen snapshot) of their characters at the start of the script. We want to see clear, exaggerated characters!

Pantomime Performance Lesson Continued

- Have half the group show their still images, while the other half sit and observe as an audience. Get feedback on what are the clearest characters, and why.
- Now, they can move and talk! Each person chooses one line for their character. Give them 30 seconds to rehearse how they would like to perform their one line, they can use the character cards for guidance.
- Spotlight a few principal boys and heroines, get students to discuss what the performers are doing to create their clear stock characters.

Activity three: Rehearsal and Performance

- This is a great time to establish with your students the aims of a rehearsal. We want them to not only create the performance, considering
  - Positioning
  - Characterisation
  - Audience sight lines
  - Character relationships
  - Stage directions
- But rehearsal is mainly the time to experiment! Encourage students to try new things, offer suggestions and do things differently.
- Give students time to rehearse, to make decisions about their performance and try new things.
- Base your rehearsal time on how much time you have in your lesson and the ability of your students, we would suggest between 15 – 25 minutes.
- After rehearsing, have your students set up as an audience with space for a stage. Allow groups to come up and perform and get feedback from the audience after the piece. You may want to ask the following questions to the audience:
  - How did the actors change their voice to show their character?
  - Tell me two ways you could tell they were playing the heroine/principal boy.
  - They did (insert observation) in their performance, why do you think they made that choice?
  - If you were to swap in with the principal boy/heroine, what one change would you make and why?
  - If they hadn't been speaking, would you still have known what characters they were playing? Explain your answer.
  - Explain what moment got your interest the most as an audience member.

Resources:

- Glossary of terms
- Character creation cards (cut up so they are all separate)
- You may opt to also add in some of the information cards and photos from pages 5 and 6.
- Script extracts – one each.

Characterisation Cards

These cards can be used as a tool to help students understand the building blocks of their stock character, and can then be reused or adapted for future learning!

Straight posture	Slouched posture	Slow walking pace	Fast walking pace
Angry facial expression	Happy facial expression	Excited facial expression	Confident facial expression
Thigh slap	Gentle gestures	Graceful movements	Strong movements
Sharp gesture	Soft, flowing gesture	High energy	Low energy
High pitch	Low pitch	Loud volume	Quiet volume
Fast pace	Leaves dramatic pauses	Long pauses	Never pauses
Slow pace	Scared tone	Confident tone	Soft tone
Charming tone	Positive tone	Always louder than others	Hesitates when they talk

Glossary

These cards can be used as a tool to help students understand the building blocks of their stock character, and can then be reused or adapted for future learning!

Term	Meaning
Emphasis	Emphasis refers to the special attention or importance given to a particular word. It's like putting a word in bold, but when you are speaking!
Energy	In drama, energy means the amount of "power" or "spirit" an actor uses when they perform. It's how much they move, talk, and show their feelings to tell the story. If someone is excited, they might jump up and down or speak loudly and quickly—this is high energy.
Facial expression	Facial expression is simply how we use our face to show emotion. Think about how you show you are happy, with a big smile – that is a facial expression.
Gesture	A gesture is when you use your hands or arms to communicate with other people. Pointing is an example of a gesture.
Pace	Pace refers to how fast or slow we move or speak. Think about some animals you know, which ones have a fast pace (move quickly)?
Pause	Pauses are when a character stops talking or moving for a little while, intentionally. Pauses can be important because they help make the story clearer and more exciting.
Pitch	How high or how low your voice sounds. People in charge often speak with a lower pitch to sound more powerful.
Posture	Posture is how a person holds their body. This could be when they are standing, sitting or laying down!
Tone	Tone is how someone talks to show how they feel. It helps us understand if they are happy, sad, angry, or excited just by the way they speak.
Volume	Volume is how loud or quiet someone talks, and it helps us understand what's happening or how someone feels. A loud volume might show excitement or anger.

Script Extract

SNOW WHITE: So, you're a Prince?

PRINCE: I sure am.

SNOW WHITE: So, what are you doing around here?

PRINCE: I'm on a quest, to find a Princess.

SNOW WHITE: Oh yeah?

PRINCE: Yep. There's a Princess here in Chelmsford called Snow White. She's having a party tomorrow.

SNOW WHITE: And you're hoping to meet her?

PRINCE: Yeah, like every other Prince in the land.

SNOW WHITE: Sounds tough.

PRINCE: Yeah, I don't mind, I meet some nice people. I would like to meet someone special. Doesn't have to be a Princess. Could be anyone, could be a girl I met in the woods. It's not like I'm doing it 'cos my dad told me to.

SNOW WHITE: Did your dad tell you to?

PRINCE: Yes. But I'm not doing it 'cos he told me to.

SNOW WHITE: So do you know what you're going to say to her?

PRINCE: No, it doesn't matter, I don't stand a chance anyway. There's always so many other Princes, more handsome, cleverer…

SNOW WHITE: There won't be any other Princes. I didn't post the invites.

PRINCE: What! Oh! Oh no!

SNOW WHITE: Yep!

PRINCE: Oh my god, this is embarrassing. Why did I not see it!

SNOW WHITE: Yep!

PRINCE: It was staring me in the face

SNOW WHITE: It was!

PRINCE: HOW did I not see it!

SNOW WHITE: I know!

PRINCE: You!

SNOW WHITE: Uh huh!

PRINCE: You work for Snow White! Oh wow, you didn't post her invites, she's gonna be mad at you

Costume Design Task

This design task focuses on not only giving students a chance to be creative, but also to learn more about the process costume designers go through.

Objectives:
- Students will create innovative and original costume designs that reflect their unique interpretation of the character while adhering to traditional pantomime elements.
- Students will consider the practical aspects of costume design, including comfort, mobility, and ease of dressing, ensuring that designs are feasible for live performance.

Task:

Activity One:
- This first activity is designed to get students thinking like a costume designer, ready to create their own designs.
- Using the costume planning worksheet, students should mind map all the things a costume designer needs to consider. This can include things like colour, material, hair/wigs, stage makeup, costume changes, location, who they are on stage with, amount of space, the characters personality and more!
- Students then can select which of the stock characters they would like to design their costume for, and add this to their worksheet.
- If you haven't covered the stock characters yet, you can have students think about a character they are expecting to meet in this year's panto.
- To prepare for designing their costume, students should brainstorm all the things they think are important for their character, or think should be included. For example, a dame should have a huge extravagant multi-coloured dress. However, the villain may need something they can sneak around in, and a colour that shows their evil intent.
- Students can work individually, in pairs or groups.

Activity Two:
- Turn into a designer! With their knowledge on characters, and what a costume designer must consider, it is their turn to step into the role.
- Using the costume design page, students can create their own costume design.
- This would be a great time to bring in additional design skills, like decoupage or colour theory.

Extension:
- Either to a partner, a group, or the class, students can explain why they made the decisions they did and what makes their costume design a good choice for their stock character.

Resources:
- Costume planning page
- Costume design page
- Drawing and colouring pencils

Costume Planning Worksheet

What must a costume designer think about?

I will designing a costume for.... _____

My Characters Costume

Costume Design

You have been tasked by Chelmsford Theatre to create a costume for a pantomime this year, Snow White! Focusing on your chosen character, you will design a costume in the space below. You should consider everything you brainstormed in the previous task, making sure its extravagant and colourful.

This costume is for... _____
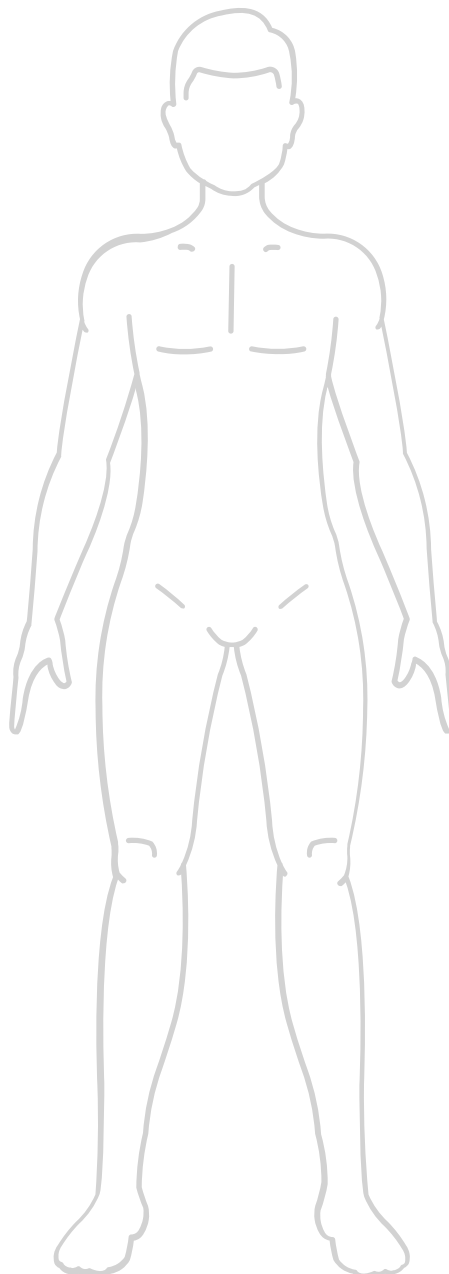
Conventions Card Sort

What is a convention?

A set of rules, or performance technique, used in a type of performance. For example, jump scares are a convention of horror films!

This task can be completed in class by cutting up the conventions and their descriptions and having students match them together. Alternatively, this page can be set as a piece of flipped learning. Students can read this in their own time then come in ready to apply it to their future work.

Ghost Gag/Ghost Routine	You may know this as the 'he's behind you' moment. After getting lost, a group of characters are kidnapped one at a time till just one of them is left. There is usually lots of funny songs, dances and tongue twisters throughout the scene.
Slapstick Comedy	A physical comedy routine, that is heavily exaggerated. Usually involves accidental and intentional violence. Everything always goes wrong!
Slosh Scene	The messy scene. This involves something like a pie or some kind of liquid being thrown at a character.
Audience Participation	Members of the audience being encouraged to take part in the show, by coming on stage or answering questions.
Audience Interaction	The cast talk to the audience from the stage, the Dame and Comic do a lot of this.
Aside	A line of dialogue is spoken aloud, but the other characters pretend they cannot hear it, only the audience can hear it.
Entrances	A great example of this convention is the comic coming on stage right, and the villain coming on from stage left.
Swapped Gender Casting	The principal boy is traditionally played by a girl, and the Dame is always played by a man.
Adapted Songs	The writers chose well known songs and change the lyrics to match the characters situations.

Pantomime Bingo

Objectives:
- Students will be able to identify key elements of pantomime, including story structure, characters, and traditional themes.
- Students will see from the perspective of an audience member and a director how conventions of pantomime come together in performance.

Task:
- Print off the blank bingo cards, and have students write in 12 things they would expect to see in a pantomime.
- We have included a list they may want to choose from. However, the are encouraged to come up with their own! Maybe there is a specific costume or acting technique they are expecting to see.
- You can then either encourage young people to bring their cards with them to see the show, or you can choose some online clips to watch as a class.
- The first to spot all 12 is the winner! We suggest you make sure they have a good variety of techniques on their sheet so they really have to keep an eye out.

Things you would expect to see in a pantomime:
1. Audience interaction
2. Audience participation
3. Ghost gag
4. Slosh scene
5. Swapped gender casting
6. A good character enters from stage right
7. A bad character enters from stage left
8. Slapstick comedy
9. Aside
10. Exaggerated acting
11. Group dance routine
12. A wedding
13. A happy ending
14. A rewritten song
15. The Dame changes costume
16. A joke about where we are (Chelmsford)
17. A joke about something that is happening in the news
18. Thigh slap
19. The villain is booed
20. The comic gets the audience to say something when he comes onstage
21. A person dressed up as an animal
22. Audience is encouraged to sing or dance along
23. A character transforms into something else

Resources:
- Blank bingo cards

Thank You

We hope this pack can support your student's knowledge of the wonderful world of pantomime! We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to Chelmsford Theatre for many years to come.

We would love to hear your feedback on this education pack and to see examples of the work your class has created. Get in touch with our Discover department by emailing outreach.theatre@chelmsford.gov.uk. We also have an online feedback form you could complete that will only two minutes of your time, and can be found here: https://forms.office.com/e/KQPQcN0AnA

Have a great holiday season!

Best Wishes,

Megan Crisp
Creative Engagement Officer
Discover Department
Chelmsford Theatre