



Study Guide, December 2015  
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# INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, audiences have been captivated by the story of J. M. Barrie's "Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up," Peter Pan. In that time, Peter has been portrayed multiple times onscreen via animation and live action as the incorrigible, Puckish free spirit who represents the childlike innocence within all of us that we cannot let die, no matter how old we get. But *Peter and the Starcatcher* presents his story in the way it was originally intended - live on-stage.

Before the movies and musicals and novels, before Mary Martin and Disney, before Robin Williams, author J. M. Barrie created Peter's tale as a fable for the stage. Rick Elice's magical play returns Peter to the world of the theatre and explores the character's mysterious origins in a story that may be unfamiliar to many audience members, but whose heart is instantly recognizable.

*Peter and the Starcatcher* is a play unlike any you've probably seen before. It captures all of the imagination and wonder of a child's games of "make-believe," creating magical worlds out of ordinary objects and turning the real world into a land of adventure. It is an experience you can only get in the theatre: live, unpredictable, impossible... human.

This Study Guide is designed for educators to utilize this unique theatrical experience to explore *Peter and the Starcatcher* with their students as a catalyst for encouraging critical thinking and multidisciplinary connections between literature, music, history, science and technology, to name just a few. Please use this guide as a tool for beginning stimulating, lively conversations with students, whether they are first-time audience members or regular patrons of the arts.

Thank you for being a part of this cooperative production between the Arkansas Repertory Theatre and TheatreSquared! We hope you and your students enjoy *Peter and the Starcatcher* and will see it as a unique opportunity to recapture a spirit of play that lies behind every learning experience, every curious question, every spark of genius.





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# SYNOPSIS

## ACT I

An ensemble of actors enters a bare stage and welcome the audience to the world of the play and tell us what's in store: flying, dreaming, adventure and growing up. The ensemble invites us to use our imaginations to create the British Empire.

With the snap of an actor's fingers, we are transported to a bustling port. There, we meet Lord Leonard Aster, his daughter Molly and her nanny, Mrs. Bumbrake. Two identical trunks are delivered to the port. One of them contains a precious cargo belonging to the Queen, who has appointed Lord Aster as its custodian. He'll voyage with the trunk aboard *The Wasp*, the fastest ship afloat, bound for the remote kingdom of Rundoon, while Molly and Bumbrake will take *The Neverland* under the care of its captain, Bill Slank. The other trunk is full of sand. Slank swaps the trunks. Gremplin, the schoolmaster of St. Norbert's Orphanage for Lost Boys, sells three orphan boys to Slank. One of the boys proclaims that he hates grownups.

Molly and Lord Aster bid farewell, and he places an amulet around his neck and a matching one around Molly's. The two ships depart separately.

Molly follows Alf to the bowels of the ship and discovers the three orphans. Prentiss asserts his leadership, but a nameless Boy challenges him and captivates Molly. The Boy flashes back to St. Norbert's Orphanage for Lost Boys, where Gremplin is lashing him. The Boy imagines having a family. Molly saves him from the nightmare.

Aboard *The Wasp*, Greggor reveals that his real name is Smee and the seamen are pirates. He demands the key to the trunk, but Lord Aster refuses. The Pirate Captain Black Stache enters and threatens to find and kill Molly and then steals the trunk key from Lord Aster's pocket. The amulet around Lord Aster's neck begins to glow.

Molly's matching amulet starts to glow and the boys notice. Molly divulges that her father is on a secret mission for the Queen. They encounter a flying cat in Slank's cabin. Molly knows that the only thing that could make a cat fly is starstuff; she realizes that the Queen's treasure is on the wrong ship. She tries to distract the boys from the starstuff by telling them a bedtime story.

Back on *The Wasp*, Stache opens the trunk only to find sand. Stache commands that the ship is turned around, and they pursue *The Neverland*.

Lord Aster contacts Molly through the amulet and warns her that pirates have commandeered *The Wasp*. The Boy awakens and catches the end of Molly's communication; he insists that she tell him what is going on. Molly tells the Boy about Starcatchers, a handful of people appointed by the Queen to protect starstuff. Molly explains that a Starcatcher's primary duty is to collect starstuff as it falls to earth and dispose of it in the world's hottest active volcano, which is on Rundoon.

Slank enters and throws The Boy overboard. The Boy, who cannot swim, starts to drown. Molly



dives into the ocean and saves him.

As a hurricane stirs up in the ocean, Molly drags the Boy on board The Neverland and revives him. The Boy takes the wheel and changes course. Stache and Smee are delighted that The Neverland is heading straight toward them. Molly dashes off to get the trunk from Slank's cabin; the Boy realizes that there are more important things than saving his own neck and runs to help Molly as The Neverland splits in two.

The Boy sits on the sand trunk to "protect the treasure." Stache offers the boy a name: Peter, then knocks Peter off the trunk, opens it, and realizes he's been had. Stache knocks him overboard. Molly dives into the ocean and swims after Peter; Peter rides the trunk toward the island with fish swimming in its golden wake. Stache commands Smee to follow the trunk, and Molly tells Peter to drag it to high ground and save the world!

## ACT II

A group of Mermaids recount being transformed from regular fish after swimming in the wake of the starstuff.

Atop a mountain on the island, Peter absorbs the freedom of open skies and clean air for the first time in his life. The other two orphans arrive safely, and the trio of boys decide to hide the trunk and go in search of food.

The island's natives, the Mollusks, capture the boys. The chief, Fighting Prawn, sentences them to death. They are to be sacrificed and fed to Mr. Grin, the island's hungriest crocodile. They try to distract the tribe with a bedtime story, but Molly ruins this ruse. The Mollusks declare the English invaders must die.

Trapped inside Mr. Grin's cage, Molly formulates a plan. Peter gets Mr. Grin to open his mouth, and Molly tosses her amulet in. As Mr. Grin grows, bursts out of the cage, and floats away, Molly and the boys flee. The Mollusks are furious and pursue them.

Smee and Stache search for the trunk, but are soon driven into hiding by the monstrous crocodile.

Out in the sea, Lord Aster contacts Molly using Norse Code. Lord Aster instructs Molly to bring the trunk to the beach. The boys and Molly race to the top of the mountain to retrieve the trunk, with the Mollusks in hot pursuit.

Peter falls into a shimmering lake of golden water, far far underground. Peter floats, neither drowning nor afraid, and gazes up at a mermaid. She explains her transformation from fish to mermaid, and describes the power of starstuff to fulfill dreams. She gives Peter a second name—Pan. Peter climbs out of the grotto and bolts back up to the mountain-top.

Molly, Prentiss and Ted arrive atop the mountain and fear Peter's demise. A storm begins as



# SYNOPSIS...CONTINUED

night falls, and Peter appears and surprises Molly. Peter tries to get in the trunk, but Molly tells him that exposure to so much starstuff is very dangerous.

Smee and Stache try to lure Molly, Prentiss and Ted, then reveal their two prisoners—Mrs. Bumbrake and Alf. Just then, the Mollusks enter with prisoners of their own— Lord Aster and Captain Scott.

Stache pulls his knife on Fighting Prawn and tries to get the trunk from Molly. Peter distracts Stache with echoes and challenges him with his umbrella-sword. Stache captures Molly in a headlock. Peter realizes the only way to save Molly is by giving Stache the trunk. Although this means he will never leave the island, he acts selflessly.

Stache lifts the lid to find an empty trunk and slams the lid down on his right hand in frustration, cutting it off. Stache tries to lure Peter to join his pirate crew. When Peter declines, Stache vows to be his nemesis and exits, pursued by Mr. Grin.

Lord Aster makes Molly a full-fledged Starcatcher. With the starstuff gone, their mission has been fulfilled.

Lord Aster says Peter cannot leave the island and Molly is heartbroken. They realize that Peter is now home—the island and its inhabitants are his family. Lord Aster captures a yellow bird, adds some starstuff from his amulet, and creates for Peter a pixie protector. The fairy flies off, and Ted and Prentiss chase it down the beach. Peter, now the boy who would not grow up, reluctantly bids farewell to Molly. Peter begins to forget what's happened and settles into the eternal present of youth.

As the boys race down the beach toward the grotto, Peter Pan flies.





# FROM THE CREATORS

## Notes on Peter and the Starcatcher by Rick Elice

(Source: *Disney Educator's Guide*, 2012)



I see the characters emerging out of our island, our Neverland. Wendy has not yet appeared. Instead, we have Molly, our hero, in a time before girls were encouraged to be heroes; a generation before Wendy, name or girl, is born. We have no Captain Hook neither, or rather, we have no Hook yet. Instead, we have the pirate who shall become Hook, but not until we're through with him. He, whom the pitiful pirate kingdom calls Black Stache. We have our orphans, perpetually lost, though not quite yet Lost Boys. We have natives and mermaids and a perilously hungry crocodile. Even Tinker Bell reaches our island before we leave it, because she could not stay away.

And we have a feral creature, bent low from incessant beating, afraid of his own shadow – the nameless boy at the center of our story. How ironic that he learns what it is to be a man over the course of our play, when he's destined to stay a boy forever. The principle difference between our play and Barrie's is that we bring this boy and Molly to the brink of understanding what love might be, so that the thrill of an eternity of "awfully big adventures" is tinged with the ineffable sadness of what a boy will never never know. Only when Molly leaves him behind, bound for adulthood, does our boy truly become Peter Pan.

When I was a boy, I wished I could fly, and the notion of being a boy forever was pure delight. No homework, no chores, no responsibility, no sorrow. Now that I'm in the middle of my life, I understand what I'd have missed had I never grown up, or fallen in love, or stood my ground, or lost a battle – or written a play.

In Barrie's original, Mrs. Darling, leaving the nursery, says, "I thought I saw a face at the window." And of course, that's Peter, the outsider, nose pressed against the glass. A boy-Moses, looking over the Promised Land but never allowed in. What could be more bittersweet? I wanted to write a play about that, with adult language and adult challenges. James Barrie found his character by embracing the notion of never growing up. I found mine by realizing I had.

— Rick Elice, 2012

A Memorial of Director Roger Rees by Co-Director Alex Timbers



# THE BOY WHO NEVER GREW UP: A HISTORY OF PETER PAN

Scottish novelist and playwright J. M. Barrie created the character of Peter Pan, an eternally youthful child who runs away to live with fairies, in his 1902 novel *The Little White Bird*. The popularity of the character inspired Barrie to expand the story into 1906's *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*. In both of these renditions, Peter is portrayed as a 7-day-old infant.

During Christmas 1904, Barrie's theatrical version of the story, *Peter Pan, or the Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up*, opened in London to great applause. The play, which starred Nina Boucicault in the title role, was the first production to feature a female actor to play the part, a tradition that carries on to this day. This tradition is a carry-over from the British pantomime tradition, which also translates into some flamboyant, campy stage portrayals of Captain Hook (such as that made popular in 1954 by Cyril Ritchard).



In 1908, Barrie crafted a short sequel play called *When Wendy Grew Up - An Afterthought*, which was not published until 1957.

In 1911, Barrie adapted these two plays into the novel *Peter and Wendy*.

In 1924, an authorized silent film adaptation of the story was released by Paramount Pictures.

In 1953, Walt Disney created an animated film of *Peter Pan* which featured one of the first portrayals of the title character played by a male actor. The animated character of Tinker Bell soon became an icon for the Walt Disney Company, appearing in the opening credits of films

and television programs. Tinker Bell has also starred in a series of spin-off films, and Captain Hook and Smee appear as characters in the current Disney Junior television program *Jake and the Never Land Pirates*.

Perhaps the most famous adaptation of *Peter Pan*, after the Disney film, is the 1954 Broadway musical that originally starred Mary Martin in the title role. Featuring the songs "I Won't Grow Up" and "I'm Flying," the musical won several Tony Awards and was televised three separate times with the original cast. Later revivals featured Sandy Duncan and Olympic gymnast Cathy Rigby in the role of Peter. In the holiday season of late 2014, the musical was televised live on NBC, featuring Christian Borle (Broadway's original "Black Stache") as Mr. Darling/Smee and Christopher Walken as Captain Hook.

Beginning in the 1980s, the character of Peter became reclaimed as a rough-and-tumble, masculine scoundrel. In 1991's *"Hook,"* directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Robin Williams as Peter, Dustin Hoffman as Hook, and Julia Roberts as Tinker Bell, portrayed Peter as a jaded middle-aged human who has forgotten his magical past. When his children are kidnapped by Hook and taken to Neverland, he must embrace his memories and his childish spirit in order to rescue them.



## J.M. BARRIE

James M. Barrie (1860-1937) was a Scottish author and dramatist whose best known works tell the story of Peter Pan in the fantasy world of Neverland. As a child of a large family in eastern Scotland, he was introverted and drawn to reading. When his brother David died as a teenager, his mother was inconsolable, which had a lasting effect on Barrie; this tragedy echoes throughout his literary works. He attended university in Edinburgh and later moved to London to pursue a career as a playwright and novelist. During this time, he became friends with Arthur and Susan Llewelyn Davies and their four sons. His close relationship with the boys prompted him to create stories for them that later formed the basis for Peter Pan; he named the characters of Peter, as well as John and Michael Darling, after them. When their parents died, Barrie became their guardian until they reached adulthood. In addition to Peter Pan, several of his works for the stage were successes and are still performed today (Quality Street, The Admirable Crichton, and Dear Brutus). Barrie married actress Mary Ansell in 1897, but their relationship was very formal and they had no children. After discovering that she was having an affair with a business associate, Barrie quietly divorced Ansell in 1909, to avoid public scandal. Near the end of his life, he was forced to grieve the early deaths of two of the Davies boys, one who died in World War I and one who drowned; some years after Barrie's death, Peter Llewelyn Davies committed suicide by throwing himself in front of a train after writing a biography of his family that detailed their close relationship with the author. Barrie died of pneumonia in 1937 and was buried in a family plot in Scotland.

## PETER PAN

The original story of Peter Pan, as told by Barrie in both play and novel form, centers upon the relationship between the title character and Wendy Darling, a young girl from London. Peter flies into the Darling nursery window one night in search of his shadow, which has become separated from him. Wendy helps him by sewing the shadow onto his body. Peter then takes Wendy and her brothers, Michael and John, to Neverland. During the course of the story, Peter adopts Wendy as the surrogate mother for the Lost Boys; he cannot allow himself to have any romantic feelings for her, because that would signal that he is growing up. After several adventures in which they encounter mermaids, Indians and the pirate crew of the villainous Captain Hook, the fairy Tinker Bell prevents Peter from drinking poisoned medicine by drinking it herself. Peter then asks the audience to clap to save Tink's life. Peter then squares off against Captain Hook in a daring sword fight, which ends with Hook being devoured by his other nemesis, a crocodile who has swallowed a clock and whose approach is always signaled by an ominous ticking. Peter, the Darlings, and the Lost Boys fly the ship back to London. Despite his pleas, Wendy refuses to return to Neverland with Peter. The Darlings adopt the Lost Boys and Peter flies back home. In an epilogue, Peter returns to the nursery years later and discovers that Wendy has grown up and has children of her own now. He befriends her daughter Jane and, with Wendy's permission, the two fly to Neverland for a new adventure.





# HISTORY OF PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

*"We are made of star stuff." - Carl Sagan*

In 2004, humorist Dave Barry and suspense novelist Ridley Pearson teamed up to write the first Disney-approved prequel to the Peter Pan legend, entitled *Peter and the Starcatchers*. This novel, which provides the origin stories for Peter Pan and Captain Hook, among others, soon became a national bestseller and its success attracted interest from The Walt Disney Company to adapt it into other media. In 2005, the company began the first of several plans to create a film version of the story.

The book was followed in 2006 by the first of four sequels, *Peter and the Shadow Thieves*. In this novel, Peter must rescue Molly from a plot to recapture the trunk of starstuff and in the process comes into contact with J. M. Barrie, the historical creator of the Peter Pan legend.

In 2007's *Peter and the Secret of Rundoon*, readers discover Peter's true parentage and his mysterious connection to the secret society of Starcatchers. Peter is captured by evil forces and must be rescued by Molly, her father and Tinker Bell. In 2009, *Peter and the Sword of Mercy* portrays Peter's final adventure with Molly, who is revealed to be the mother of Wendy Darling, the female protagonist from J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. The final book in the series, *The Bridge to Neverland*, was released in 2011, and is more of a companion volume to the previous four, rather than a direct sequel, introducing new characters who must join in the age-old battle to protect starstuff from those who would subvert it for their selfish purposes.

In 2009, the play adaptation of the first novel, subtly retitled as *"Peter and the Starcatcher,"* premiered in San Diego at the La Jolla Playhouse. The script was written by playwright Rick Elice and co-directed by stage and screen star Roger Rees (*"Cheers," "The West Wing," "The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby"*) and award-winning director Alex Timbers (*Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson, Here Lies Love, Rocky the Musical*).

In 2011, the play opened Off-Broadway at the New York Theatre Workshop and its sold-out run was extended several times. A year later, the play transferred to Broadway and played at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre, where it played for almost a year and won several Tony Awards, as well as numerous prestigious Lucille Lortel Awards, Obie Awards and Drama Desk Awards.

The play's inventive performance style, utilizing elements of child's play and Jerzy Grotowski's *"Poor Theatre,"* was lauded by many critics, who praised its imagination and hyper-theatricality to achieve effects that would normally be more believably realized onscreen.

Two national tours followed, and the play is currently the second most-produced play by theatre companies in the United States during the 2015-16 production season.



Other attempts at adapting the story include the 2011 Syfy television miniseries "Neverland," which deconstructs Peter's origin story and a subplot on the ABC series "Once Upon a Time." In 1975, composer Jim Steinman tried to create a rock musical based on the story, but it was abandoned in development, although several of its songs appeared on Meat Loaf's iconic debut album, "Bat Out of Hell."

In 2004, Johnny Depp starred as J. M. Barrie in the film "Finding Neverland," which traces the biographical origins of Peter Pan in the tragic story of Peter Llewellyn Davies and his family. The make-believe games of the Llewellyn Davies brothers inspire the characters of Peter Pan and the pirates, and when their parents die, Barrie became their legal guardian. In 2012, the film was adapted as a stage musical, which went on to open on Broadway in 2014.



"The Lost Boys," a teenage vampire thriller starring Kiefer Sutherland, Jason Patric, Corey Haim and Corey Feldman, was released in 1987. In this movie, the Peter Pan story is loosely adapted into a scenario in which adolescents in Southern California are kidnapped and transformed into ageless blood-sucking fiends, a horror analogue to "never growing up."

In 2006, the sequel to Peter and Wendy, a novel titled "Peter Pan in Scarlet" by Geraldine McCaughrean, was released. This was the first work to be officially sanctioned by The Great Ormond Street Hospital, to whom Barrie bequeathed all rights to the Peter Pan character in 1929. The novel envisions a period during World War I in which bombs from the fighting have ripped holes between the real world and Neverland, and the Darling children and the Lost Boys must venture to Neverland to assist Peter to repair this damage.

In 2013, American playwright and screenwriter John Logan ("Red," "Hugo," "Rango," "Skyfall") wrote the play *Peter and Alice*, in which he envisions a meeting between Peter Llewellyn Davies, the historical boy who inspired Barrie to write the Peter Pan stories, and the elderly Alice Liddell Hargreaves, the girl who inspired Lewis Carroll's Wonderland books. In the drama, which alternates between reality and fantasy, the historical Peter and Alice collide onstage with the fictional Peter Pan and Alice characters. This production starred Judi Dench and Ben Whishaw.





# CHARACTERS

## The Orphans

- Peter: A nameless, homeless boy. Feral, brave, competitive, a survivor. More than anything in the world, he wants a home and a family.
- Prentiss: A bit older than Peter. Ambitious, hyper-articulate, logical, yearns to be a leader.
- Ted: Obsessed with food. The most talented of the boys, a natural actor, an easy wit, maybe even a poet.

## The British Subjects

- Lord Leonard Aster: A Starcatcher dedicated to protecting the earth from the awesome power of starstuff. A Victorian English gentleman, loyal subject to the Queen, devoted father to Molly.
- Molly Aster: A natural leader at a time when girls are mostly followers. Curious, intelligent, fearless, passionate, devoted to her father, her country and her Queen.
- Mrs. Bumbrake: Molly's Nanny
- Captain Robert Falcon Scott: Commander of the fastest ship in Victoria's fleet, The Wasp.
- Gremplin: The schoolmaster of St. Norbert's Orphanage for Lost Boys.

## The Seafarers

### Aboard The Neverland:

- Bill Slank: A vicious Captain without the skill or quality to lead anyone but himself, and always into disaster.
- Alf: An old seadog who's prouder of achieving the rank of "Mister" than he should be, given the state of the competition.
- Mack: A very bad sailor who wants to be anywhere else but under the thumb of Bill Slank.

### Aboard The Wasp:

- The Black Stache: Ruthless, peerless, heartless and hirsute, suspiciously well-read, partial to the poetical and theatrical, and married to his piratical career with a ferocity from which no good shall ever spring.
- Smee: First mate to The Black Stache. Simple-minded but single-mindedly dedicated to his Captain's every whim.
- Sanchez: A hard-working Spanish pirate with an identity crisis.

## The Natives

- Fighting Prawn: King of the Mollusk natives. Kidnapped by British sailors and brought in chains to England. Since returning to his island kingdom, he has vengefully murdered any English with the temerity to land on his Mollusk Isle domain.
- Hawking Clam: Son of Fighting Prawn. Hawking understands his father's hatred for the British, but he will gladly bend such strictures when, one day, he becomes head of the Royal Clam Clan.
- Teacher: An ancient, knowledgeable mermaid.





# TRIVIA & FUN FACTS

- In the 2014, NBC television production of "Peter Pan Live!," Christian Borle plays Mr. Darling and Smee. Borle originated the role of Black Stache in *Peter and the Starcatcher* on Broadway in 2012.
- As Smee, Borle featured a tattoo on his left arm that is the Mandalorian crest from the Star Wars universe, which is the same symbol featured on bounty hunter Boba Fett's armor in the "Star Wars" films.
- One of the reasons that adult women played the role of Peter Pan in the first half of the 20th century was to avoid British child labor laws that prevented child actors from working on stage after 9:00 pm.
- Aerial effects company Flying by Foy earned its international reputation based on the flying effects it created for stage versions of Peter Pan, beginning in 1950.
- During the filming of the 2003 screen version of Peter Pan, actor Jeremy Sumpter grew eight inches, which led to many of the technical effects having to be recreated in different scale ratios, to preserve the integrity of the constant illusion of his size. In particular, the nursery window had to be rebuilt several times for flying sequences.
- In the 1953 animated Disney feature, Bobby Driscoll was the first male actor to play Peter on film.
- It is a myth that Disney's Tinker Bell was modeled after Marilyn Monroe.
- In 2009, a live musical production of the story was staged in a large tent in Kensington Gardens and featured 3-D computer-generated special effects. The production would later tour the globe.
- In stage versions of *Peter Pan*, Tinker Bell is often created only by a spotlight and the sound of bells.
- In the 1978 dark comedy "Identity Crisis" by Christopher Durang, the character of Jane delivers a monologue about attending an absurd, accident-prone production of Peter Pan in which the actress playing Peter Pan accuses the children in the audience of not clapping hard enough and, therefore, killing Tinker Bell.
- In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, 12 actors play over 100 roles onstage.
- Jungian psychologists refer to the "Peter Pan Syndrome," in which an adult male's mental maturity seems to be stalled in adolescence as Puer aeternus, which is Latin for "eternal boy."



# “COME, FRIENDS WHO PLOUGH THE SEA!”

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF PIRATES

In recent years, with the popularity of Disney’s “Pirates of the Caribbean” film franchise, blood-thirsty buccaneers who prowl the oceans in search of stolen wealth have taken up residence in



the general public’s minds and hearts, inspiring a boom of books, plays, television programs, and films about the subject.

The pirates of Barrie’s *Peter Pan* (and consequently, *Peter and the Starcatcher*) are based upon the traditional model of the Caribbean marauders made famous by such historical figures as Blackbeard (Edward Teach), Captain Kidd and Jean Lafitte.

Additionally, literary pirates like *Treasure Island*’s Long John Silver hold an indelible place in our perceptions of this breed of criminal. The most commonly associated characteristics of the stereotypical pirate are largely a 20th Century creation, but have their origins in historical documents and literature by writers like Robert Louis Stevenson and Daniel Defoe. William Shakespeare, in his dramatic romance *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, even provides comic relief as a female protagonist is captured by a ruthless (and hapless) band of pirates who attempt to sell her into prostitution.

While history records instances of piracy as far back as the 14th century BC, the Age of Exploration during the Renaissance opened up new, profitable era for pirates that continued through the 18th century AD. The New World of the Americas, with its constant influx of new colonists, as well as increased trade between the colonies and the Caribbean Islands, provided a constant source of treasures for the fearless vagabonds of the high seas. The numerous uncharted islands of the Caribbean served as secret refuges for both the pirates and their treasures.

Lest anyone mistake these nautical bandits as a boy’s club, historical female raiders like Gráinne/Grace O’Malley and Anne Bonney proved that piracy was not solely a man’s domain. In Bertolt Brecht’s *The Threepenny Opera*, the song “Pirate Jenny” depicts a maid’s bloody revenge fantasy when it is revealed that she is the unsung captain of a band of pirates who decimate the town, but leave the hotel where she toils untouched. The nursery maid Ruth, in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Pirates of Penzance*, becomes a lusty female pirate after her ward Frederic abandons his piratical ways for the love of the beautiful Mabel Stanley. In Alain Boubil and Claude-Michel Schoenberg’s 2007 Broadway musical *The Pirate Queen*, Grace O’Malley meets in private with Queen Elizabeth I, who pardons her of her crimes.

In the 21st Century, pirates still roam open waters, particularly off the eastern coast of Africa. Such modern pirates are depicted in the 2013 film “*Captain Phillips*,” starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi.





### The Jolly Roger

The traditional symbol for pirates, a black flag with a white skull and crossbones known as the “Jolly Roger,” has a long and varied history. Although it is instantly recognizable today due to its use in movies and television, it was not a universal symbol used by the historical pirates of the 17th and 18th centuries. “Black Sam” Bellamy (known as the “Prince of Pirates”) and Edward England both employed the skull and crossbones during their brief careers, and the vogue for stories about their swashbuckling exploits further popularized its association in the popular consciousness.

Several other designs predate this most familiar version of the flag, which include red skeletons, red hearts pierced with daggers, and hourglasses. It is believed that the black background was predominantly used by the Muslim corsairs of North Africa in the 1600s and later adopted by English pirates after the colonization of the Americas. The skull and crossbones originally may have been used as a parody of the British Union Jack.

Regardless of the design, sea vessels and port towns alike knew that if the infamous black flag was flown from the mast of an approaching ship, that meant destruction was approaching. If a ship flew a red flag, however, that terror was intensified because it meant that the pirates would show no mercy to people who resisted their pillaging.



# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND WRITING

1. Come up with three reasons from your own life why you might never want to grow up. What would be the impact on your friends and family if that happened? Are there any other positive and negative consequences that you can anticipate if you were to remain frozen at the age you are now?
2. Research Jerzy Grotowski's concept of "Poor Theatre." Choose a scene from Barrie's *Peter Pan* and imagine how you might stage it using Grotowski's ideas rejecting the idea of spectacle and employing the full physicality and emotional being of the actor to create moments of theatricality onstage.
3. Choose a famous character from popular culture who has no traditional backstory or origin story. Imagine who the person was before s/he became the character we recognize today. What choices made him/her take the path that led to the transformation into who we know now? Is the character serving penance for sins of the past? Is the character honoring a promise made to a loved one?
4. Since J. M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan* originally opened in 1904, women have famously played the "Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up." Divide into groups and choose whether you think it matters whether a male or female actor plays Peter. Write down at least three reasons to support the group's position. Write down at least one reason that you feel supports the opposing viewpoints. Have opposing groups debate each other. Be respectful of each other's opinions. Are there any alternate points of view that you feel could persuade you to change your mind?
5. What do you think happens to Peter, Molly, Black Stache, Smee, and the other characters after *Peter and the Starcatcher* ends? How do you imagine their stories connect to the characters we meet in Barrie's *Peter Pan*? Use your imagination and don't censor yourself.





# ACTIVITIES

1. Several times in the play Black Stache speaks in limericks, even though he is often unable to finish them successfully. Choose a character from the play and write a limerick in which that character introduces himself or herself. Use specific examples from the play to fill in the details during the five lines of rhyming verse.

2. Research one of these famous pirates below and write a short biography for him/her. Then write a short play or dramatic scene featuring that pirate as the main character. Cast other students as the characters and have them act out the scene for your class.

- Edward Teach (Blackbeard)
- William Kidd
- Bartholomew "Black Bart" Roberts
- Calico Jack Rackham
- Jean Lafitte
- Thomas Tew
- Samuel Bellamy
- Henry Every
- Grace O'Malley
- Anne Bonney



3. Research the basic components of a typical pirate ship. Under supervision of your teacher, build a pirate ship out of the objects in your classroom. Use your imagination to come up with unconventional uses for flags, erasers, desks, chairs, backpacks, plants, etc. Name your ship and pose for a picture as a pirate crew with your creation.

- Design your own "Jolly Roger" flag to fly on the ship's mast.
- What is the ship's figurehead made from?



# ARKANSAS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK TAUGHT IN STUDY GUIDE, ATTENDING THE SHOW AND SHOW DISCUSSION

## Fine Arts

R.7.TH.I.1-5, R.7.TH.II.1-5, R.7.TH.III.1-5 Students will perceive and analyze artistic work.  
R.8.TH.I.1-2, R.8.TH.II.1-2, R.8.TH.III.1-2 Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
R.9.TH.I.1-2, R.9.TH.II.1-2, R.9.TH.III.1-2 Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.  
R.7.TA.2-4, R.8.TA.1-2, R.9.TA.2 Students will perceive and analyze artistic work.  
CN.11.TA.2-9 Students will relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.  
R.7.SCI.1-2, R.7.SCI.I.1-2, R.7.SCI.II.1-2 Students will perceive and analyze artistic work.  
R.8.SCI.1, R.8.SCI.I.1, R.8.SCI.II.1 Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
R.9.SCI.1-2, R.9.SCI.I.1-2, R.9.SCI.II.1-2 Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.  
CN.11.SCI.1-9, CN.11.SCI.I.1-9, CN.11.SCI.II.1-9 Students will relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.  
R.7.2.1, R.7.3.1, R.7.4.1 Students will perceive and analyze artistic work.  
R.8.2.1-3, R.8.3.1-3, R.8.4.1-3 Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
R.9.2.1, R.9.1.1, R.9.2.1-3, R.9.3.1-3, R.9.4.1-3 Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.  
R.7.5.1, R.7.6.1, R.7.7.1, R.7.8.1 Students will perceive and analyze artistic work.  
R.8.5.1-3, R.8.6.1-3, R.8.7.1-3, R.8.8.1-3 Students will interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.  
R.9.5.1-3, R.9.6.1-3, R.9.7.1-3, R.9.8.1-3 Students will apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.  
CN.10.5.1, CN.10.6.1, CN.10.7.1, CN.10.8.1 Students will synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.  
CN.11.5.2-3, CN.11.6.2-3, CN.11.7.2-3, CN.11.7.2-3, CN.10.8.2-3 Students will relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

## Dramatic Literature

DE.1.DL.1-11 Students will demonstrate understanding of the elements of drama through the study of a variety of dramatic texts.