

# The Wind In The Willows

## Study Guide



Based on the classic book by  
**Kenneth Grahame**



Kenneth Grahame was born on March 8, 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland. For three years during his childhood, Grahame lived with his grandmother. She lived near the river Thames and Windsor Forest. He considered the time he lived beside the lovely river and forest the best years of his life. So, later, after he had grown-up and had a son of his own, those happy memories of such a beautiful place inspired him to write The Wind In The Willows.

The book is a series of stories written as a gift for his partially blind and sickly son, Alistair. Alistair loved storytelling at bedtime so much, and was very upset when he found out that he was going to spend some time at the seaside because of his health. His father had to stay in town to work. Alistair didn't want to go to the beach without his imaginative bedtime stories. Kenneth Grahame promised his son that he would send him a chapter a day of the story he was telling him about an adventurous toad and his friends. He kept his promise, and Alistair looked forward to those chapters in the mail. Alistair's nurse was charmed by the stories and kept them all safe, sending them back to Grahame- who put them all together in a book called The Wind In the Willows. He published the book, and it became a huge success with adults and children. The book's popularity made him a fortune, allowing him to retire from the job he hated as a banker and move to his beloved river Thames.

His most popular character in the book is Mr. Toad. Children love him, because he is so funny and exciting. His wild and loveable spirit inspired A.A. Milne (author of Winnie The Pooh) to write a play, Toad of Toad Hall. In 1949, Walt Disney made a cartoon version called, The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad.

### About A.C.T. For Youth

Since, 1999 the Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth has been enlightening audiences across the United States with its entertaining and educational live theatre productions and interactive workshop programs.

The Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth is a professional touring theatre company, based in Orlando, FL.

**Check out our website to discover more!**

**[www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com](http://www.atlantic-coast-theatre.com)**

# ANIMALS FROM THE BOOK- WIND IN THE WILLOWS

*Although the book's main characters are animals, they are really representations of different types of people. They do not behave like real animals do.*

*They live in the human world, wear human clothes, and talk and act like people.*

- Mr. Toad- This adventurous toad is very rich and lives in the finest house in the area, Toad Hall. Mr. Toad loves life, and is always starting a new hobby that he becomes obsessed with. In the book, he becomes fascinated with motor cars. Toad makes lots of mistakes, he is always bragging, and he can be very proud. Still, no matter what, he cares for his friends Ratty, Mole, and Badger very much.
- Ratty- As a water-rat, Ratty loves living on the water beside the river, spending his days boating, eating, and thinking about life. Although he is poor, he loves his life as a poet and a student of nature. He gets very upset with Toad's antics, but always remains his friend.
- Mole- Mole is very much like a child. He loves to learn new things and see new places. He came to the Riverbank one day on accident from his home under the ground. Everything in this new world is special to him. He is also very shy.
- Badger- The elderly character from the book- Badger is a burrowing mammal who likes his dark home. He is often cranky, but is very wise.
- Weasels- Sneaky animals who live by the in the Wild Wood with a long slender body, a long tail, short legs, and brownish fur. In the story, they take over Toad Hall and like to make rude jokes about Mr. Toad.
- Stoats- Also called minks- they gang up with the weasels to take over Toad Hall.
- Ferrets- Another weasel-like and very rowdy mammal that patrol the backyard of the captured Toad Hall.



# VOCABULARY WORDS

HERE ARE A FEW WORDS FROM THE PLAY THAT YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW

- Embellishment- Adding extra details to a story to make it more interesting.
- Aimless- Without direction or purpose.
- Squander- To lose something.
- Trivialities- Things that are of little importance.
- Reckless- Careless.
- Withered- Dry and shriveled up.
- Languish- To exist in miserable and unhappy conditions.
- Sentries- Guards who keep people from entering or leaving places.
- Hapless- Having no luck.
- Skirmishing- To engage in a minor battle or fight.
- Vulgar- Lacking in good taste.
- Venture- To boldly go somewhere.
- Chivvying- Scurrying or running about.



**\*\*\*Try writing a sentence using 3 of these new words!\*\*\***

## Some Interesting Toad and Water Rat Facts

- Toads typically have dry, warty skin. Frogs typically have smooth, wet skin.
- Frogs have longer legs than toads. So frogs 'jump' while toads 'hop'.
- You cannot get warts from holding a toad.
- The correct term for an English water rat, like Ratty, is a WATER VOLE. Their population in England is declining in numbers. Many people worry that the water vole will become extinct.
- Water voles hunt in the water for food and make their homes by rivers, streams, and lakes.
- Water voles are very different looking than rats. Their eyes are smaller, they are very furry with round faces, they can close their nostrils to keep water out when they swim, and their ears are small and furry.



# Pre-Show Activities

- You will be seeing a live theatre production. What are the differences between a play and movies or TV? What kinds of theatre manners should be used when watching a play?
- The book, Wind In The Willows, is a treasured piece of literature. Because Kenneth Grahame mailed each chapter to his son, the chapters read like individual stories. Some chapters are funny, some are exciting, and others are very calm and heartwarming. Although the characters are animals and children love the stories, the style of the book, published in 1908, is sometimes difficult for young readers. Still, the book is wonderful and worth reading. For younger students, have a teacher or parent read them chapters aloud from the book. For older elementary and middle school students, have them read chapters on their own. How is the book written differently from books you have read before? Which characters from the book did you like? Which of the characters do you think “you” are most like?

# Post-Show Activities

- Mr. Toad and Ratty are good friends even though they are very different from one another. How are you different from your friends? How do your differences make your relationship interesting? How do you work through your differences when they cause a problem?
- The instrumental music in A.C.T. for Youth’s production, Wind In The Willows is made with the items in the dining room. Find items in your classroom that make interesting noises. Sing a song you all know, and add an accompaniment with the “instruments” you find.
- Ratty loves to write poems, especially about nature and his beloved river. What do you really care about in life? Write a poem about something that means a great deal to you.
- Mr. Toad is obsessed with driving a car, and he gets into lots of trouble because of it. Cars are a wonderful invention, but driving them carelessly is very dangerous. What are some other things in life that are good– but if they are treated recklessly turn out very bad?
- The trial scene in the show allowed audience members to be part of the play. Reenact that scene in the play with your fellow classmates. Let different people play the parts of Ratty, Toad, Judge, Prosecutor, Defense Lawyer, and Jury. Switch parts. How could the story have turned out differently in the courtroom scene? Try playing the scene in different ways.

# **“WRITE YOUR OWN PLAY” ADAPTATION ACTIVITY**

## **PLAYWRITING TIPS**

-Every good play has to start somewhere.

-Sometimes the idea for a play comes completely from the playwright’s imagination.

-Sometimes the idea is created from a book, a story, or even a song.

## **AN ADAPTATION IS...**

### **~A New Play Based On A Book Or A Story~**

-The writer uses the original book or story as an inspiration.

-1-

Pick a story with characters that will make your play interesting. You can also create new characters. Remember it is your adaptation!

-2-

Make a ‘Road Map’– outline the plan of how you want your play to be written. Don’t be afraid to change your mind. Sometimes creativity needs to take a detour!

-3-

Write your dialogue (what the characters say). Try to write dialogue that is realistic and not too formal.

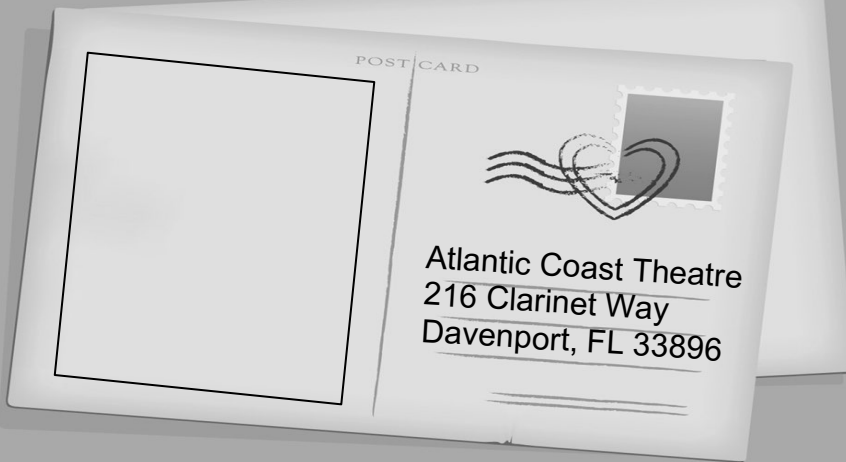
## **Be a SCENIC ARTIST Activity**

A SCENIC ARTIST, sometimes known as a SET DESIGNER, creates visual art for theatre performances.

### **Multiple Places In One Set**

Often, a scenic artist has the challenge of designing the scenery for a play that happens in many different places. Sometimes the scenery can be moved, but sometimes a “UNIT SET”, or scenery that stays in place for the entire show is used. Pick a story that you like that happens in multiple locations. Design a non-moving “UNIT SET” for the stage version of the story you chose.

# ACT For Youth loves to receive letters from our audience!



You will write letters all of your life!  
You will write letters in school, to  
correspond with friends and family,  
and for your job one day!  
It is very important to know  
how to write a good letter.

Your teachers may want you to  
write your letter in a proper  
letter-writing style or format.  
Here is an example of one style!

## YOU CAN SEND US

~A DRAWING~

~WHAT YOU LEARNED~

~YOUR FAVORITE PART~

**Your Opinions Count!  
They Help Us When  
We Write  
New Shows!**

Dear Audience:

The Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth would like to thank all of you for showing us such fantastic audience manners during the show! Everyone was so respectful during the performance. You laughed when things were funny, but you were also able to quiet back down so that everyone could hear. I don't think that we heard anyone talking while the actors were on stage. That was great! You made our job so much fun.

Thanks so much! You were wonderful!

Sincerely,

*Don Gruel & Noel Holland*

Get your letters to your teacher or the school office so they can mail them to ACT For Youth (or the sponsor of the show).



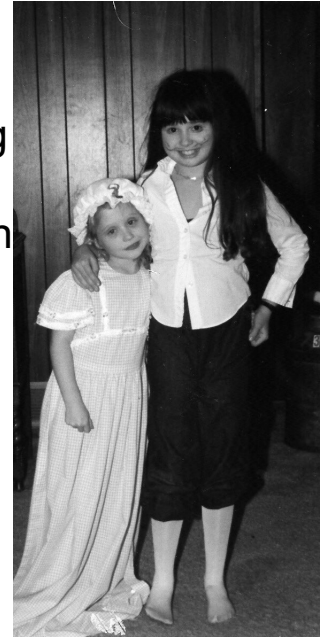
# All About The Actors

*Noel Holland & Don Gruel*

You will be seeing professional actors!  
That means they act for their jobs!  
An interesting fact about the actors:  
They started acting when they were YOUR age!



**NOEL HOLLAND**– I cannot remember a time when I was not singing. As a child, I would sing to anyone who would listen– if nobody was there to hear, I would sing to myself! I started acting and dancing because I loved performing on stage. My sister and I would put on plays for our parents in the living room! When I was in middle school and high school, I decided that I wanted to be a performer. After I graduated college with a degree in music, I became a professional actor- working for theatres all over the country. Now, I have my dream job– owning a theatre. I am so proud to be a part of the Atlantic Coast Theatre For Youth. It gives me all kinds of opportunities to sing, act, write songs, and use my imagination. I so enjoy creating shows that children love because I loved theatre and music so much when I was a child!



Noel & her little sister, Meredith, putting on a play for family.



Don as the Easter Bunny in his 3rd Grade School Play

**DON GRUEL**– I grew up in Beaufort, South Carolina. When I was little, I would make up plays using my “Star Wars” Action Figures as the actors. I started doing school plays when I was in Kindergarten, but my first play outside of school I was in the musical OKLAHOMA when I was 10 years old. I really liked the feeling of being able to pretend to become other people in other places. I kept doing plays throughout Middle School & High School and decided to study Theatre in college. I graduated from the University Of South Carolina in 1993 and have worked in professional theatre ever since. I have always loved using my imagination. As an actor, I get to be creative every single day.

You can try acting too!

Get involved in a play at school or in your community!

## **FL STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:**

### **ELA.K12.EE.4.1, ELA.K12.EE.3.1**

**ELA.K12.EE.4.1: Use appropriate collaborative techniques and active listening skills when engaging in discussions in a variety of situations.**

**ELA.K12.EE.3.1: Make inferences to support comprehension.**

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

-Watching the performance and engaging in follow-up discussion

### **ELA.K.V.1.2, ELA.1.V.1.2, ELA.2.V.1.2, ELA.3.V.1.3, ELA.4.V.1.3, ELA.5.V.1.3**

**ELA.K.V.1.2: Ask and answer questions about unfamiliar words in grade-level content.**

**ELA.1.V.1.2: Identify and use frequently occurring base words and their common inflections in grade-level content.**

**ELA.2.V.1.2: Identify and use base words and affixes to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in grade-level content.**

**ELA.3.V.1.3: Use context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the meaning of multiple-meaning and unknown words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.**

**ELA.4.V.1.3: Use context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the meaning of multiple-meaning and unknown words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.**

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

-Vocabulary

### **ELA.K.V.1.1, ELA.1.V.1.1, ELA.2.V.1.1, ELA.3.V.1.1, ELA.4.V.1.1, ELA.5.V.1.1**

**ELA.K.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

**ELA.1.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

**ELA.2.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

**ELA.3.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

**ELA.4.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

**ELA.5.V.1.1: Use grade-level academic vocabulary appropriately in speaking and writing.**

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

-Using vocabulary words in writing

**ELA.K.R.1.3, ELA.1.R.2.4, ELA.2.R.2.4, ELA.3.R.2.3, ELA.4.R.2.3, ELA.5.R.2.3**

**ELA.K.R.1.3: Explain the roles of author and illustrator of a story.**

**ELA.1.R.2.4: Identify an authors opinion(s) about the topic.**

**ELA.2.R.2.4: Explain an authors opinion(s) and supporting evidence.**

**ELA.3.R.2.3: Explain the development of an author's purpose in an informational text.**

**ELA.4.R.2.3: Explain an authors perspective toward a topic in an informational text.**

**ELA.5.R.2.3: Analyze an authors purpose and/or perspective in an informational text.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

-About The Author

**ELA.K.R.3.3, ELA.1.R.3.3, ELA.2.R.3.3, ELA.3.R.3.3, ELA.4.R.3.3, ELA.5.R.3.3**

**ELA.K.R.3.3: Compare and contrast characters experiences in stories.**

**ELA.1.R.3.3: Compare and contrast two texts on the same topic.**

**ELA.2.R.3.3: Compare and contrast important details presented by two texts on the same topic or theme.**

**ELA.3.R.3.3: Compare and contrast how two authors present information on the same topic or theme.**

**ELA.4.R.3.3: Compare and contrast accounts of the same event using primary and/or secondary sources.**

**ELA.5.R.3.3: Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources related to the same topic.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

-Animals From The Book

**ELA.K.R.1.1, ELA.K.R.1.3, ELA.1.R.1.1, ELA.1.R.1.2, ELA.2.R.1.1, ELA.2.R.1.2, ELA.3.R.1.1, ELA.3.R.1.2, ELA.4.R.1.1, ELA.4.R.1.2, ELA.5.R.1.1, ELA.5.R.1.2**

**ELA.K.R.1.1: Describe the main character(s), setting, and important events in a story.**

**ELA.K.R.1.3: Explain the roles of author and illustrator of a story.**

**ELA.1.R.1.1: Identify and describe the main story elements in a story.**

**ELA.1.R.1.2: Identify and explain the moral of a story.**

**ELA.2.R.1.1: Identify plot structure and describe main story elements in a literary text.**

**ELA.2.R.1.2: Identify and explain a theme of a literary text.**

**ELA.3.R.1.1: Explain how one or more characters develop throughout the plot in a literary text.**

**ELA.3.R.1.2: Explain a theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.**

**ELA.4.R.1.1: Explain how setting, events, conflict, and character development contribute to the plot in a literary text.**

**ELA.4.R.1.2: Explain a stated or implied theme and how it develops, using details, in a literary text.**

**ELA.5.R.1.1: Analyze how setting, events, conflict, and characterization contribute to the plot in a literary text.**

**ELA.5.R.1.2: Explain the development of stated or implied theme(s) throughout a literary text.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

-Before The Show Activities, Read some of the original book, THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

**ELA.K.C.1.3, ELA.1.C.1.3, ELA.2.C.1.3, ELA.3.C.1.3, ELA.4.C.1.3, ELA.5.C.1.3**

**ELA.K.C.1.3: Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and/or writing, express opinions about a topic or text with at least one supporting reason.**

**ELA.1.C.1.3: Write opinions about a topic or text with at least one supporting reason from a source and a sense of closure.**

**ELA.2.C.1.3: Write opinions about a topic or text with reasons supported by details from a source, use transitions, and provide a conclusion.**

**ELA.3.C.1.3: Write opinions about a topic or text, include reasons supported by details from one or more sources, use transitions, and provide a conclusion.**

**ELA.4.C.1.3: Write to make a claim supporting a perspective with logical reasons, using evidence from multiple sources, elaboration, and an organizational structure with transitions.**

**ELA.5.C.1.3: Write to make a claim supporting a perspective with logical reasons, relevant evidence from sources, elaboration, and an organizational structure with varied transitions.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

-Write A Letter To The Actors

**ELA.K.C.1.2, ELA.1.C.1.2, ELA.2.C.1.2, ELA.3.C.1.2, ELA.4.C.1.2, ELA.5.C.1.2**

**ELA.K.C.1.2: Using a combination of drawing, dictating, and/or writing, create narratives with the events in chronological order.**

**ELA.1.C.1.2: Write narratives that retell two or more appropriately sequenced events, including relevant details and a sense of closure.**

**ELA.2.C.1.2: Write personal or fictional narratives using a logical sequence of events, transitions, and an ending.**

**ELA.3.C.1.2: Write personal or fictional narratives using a logical sequence of events, appropriate descriptions, dialogue, a variety of transitional words or phrases, and an ending.**

**ELA.4.C.1.2: Write personal or fictional narratives using a logical sequence of events and demonstrating an effective use of techniques such as descriptions and transitional words and phrases.**

**ELA.5.C.1.2: Write personal or fictional narratives using a logical sequence of events and demonstrating an effective use of techniques such as dialogue, description, and transitional words and phrases.**

**ACTIVITIES:**

-Write Your Own Play

-After The Show Activities, Write a Poem like Ratty

**TH.K.C.2.1. / TH.K.C.3.1 / TH.1.C.2.2 / TH.1.C.3.1 / TH.2.C.1.1 / TH.2.C.1.2 / TH.2.C.3.1 / TH.3.C.1.2 / TH.3.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.1 / TH.4.C.3.3 / TH.5.C.2.3 / TH.5.C.3.1 / TH.68.C.1.3 TH.68.C.2.4)**

- TH.K.C.2.1.** Respond to a performance and share personal preferences about parts of the performance
- TH.K.C.3.1** Recognize that individuals may like different things about a selected story or play
- TH.1.C.2.2** Identify elements of an effective performance
- TH.1.C.3.1** Share opinions about selected plays
- TH.2.C.1.1** Describe a character in a story and tell why the character is important to the story
- TH.2.C.1.2** Respond to a play by drawing and/or writing about a favorite aspect of it
- TH.2.C.3.1** Identify important characteristics to discuss when sharing opinions about theatre
- TH.3.C.1.2** Watch a play and describe how the elements of light, costumes, props, and sound influence the mood of the production
- TH.3.C.3.1** Discuss the techniques that help create an effective theatre work
- TH.4.C.3.1** Identify the characteristics of an effective acting performance
- TH.4.C.3.3** Define the elements of a selected scene that create an effective presentation of an event or person
- TH.5.C.2.3** Defend an artistic choice for a theatrical work
- TH.5.C.3.1** Discuss alternate performance possibilities of the same character in the same play
- TH.68.C.1.3** Determine the purpose(s), elements, meaning, and value of a theatrical work based on personal, cultural, or historical standards
- TH.68.C.2.4** Defend personal responses to a theatre production

**ACTIVITIES:**

- After The Show Activities, Re-enact The Trial Scene.

**TH.K.S.1.1 / TH.1.O.3.1 / TH.1.S.1.1 / TH.2.C.2.2 / TH.2.S.1.1 / TH.3.O.3.1 / TH.3.S.1.1 / TH.4.S.1.1 / TH.5.H.3.2 / TH.5.S.1.1**

- TH.K.S.1.1** Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior at a live performance.
- TH.1.O.3.1** Compare a play to an animated movie that tells the same story.
- TH.1.S.1.1** Exhibit appropriate audience etiquette and response.
- TH.2.C.2.2** Describe how an actor in a play, musical, or film creates a character.
- TH.2.S.1.1** Exhibit the behavior necessary to establish audience etiquette, response, and constructive criticism.
- TH.3.O.3.1** Compare the characteristics of theatre to television and movies.
- TH.3.S.1.1** Demonstrate effective audience etiquette and constructive criticism for a live performance.
- TH.4.S.1.1** Exhibit proper audience etiquette, give constructive criticism, and defend personal responses.
- TH.5.H.3.2** Compare theatre to other modes of communication.
- TH.5.S.1.1** Describe the difference in responsibilities between being an audience member at live or recorded performances.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- Before The Show Activity, Theatre Manners

**TH.K.S.2.1, TH.1.S.3.1, TH.2.S.3.1, TH.3.S.3.1, , TH.4.S.3.1, TH.5.S.3.1**

- TH.K.S.2.1** Pretend to be a character from a given story.
- TH.1.S.3.1** Use simple acting techniques to portray a person, place, action, or thing.
- TH.2.S.3.1** Create imagined characters, relationships, and environments using basic acting skills.
- TH.3.S.3.1** Create and sustain imagined characters and relationships, using basic acting skills, to tell a simple story.
- TH.4.S.3.1** Create and sustain imagined characters and relationships, using basic acting skills, to re-tell a well-known fairy tale, fable, or story.
- TH.5.S.3.1** Create and sustain imagined characters and relationships, using basic acting skills, to tell an original story based on historical, literary, or everyday situations.

**ACTIVITIES:**

- After The Show Activities, Re-enact The Trial Scene

**VA.K.S.1.2, VA.1.S.1.3, VA.2.S.3.1, VA.3.S.3.1, VA.4.S.3.1, VA.5.S.3.1**

-**VA.K.S.1.2** Produce artwork influenced by personal decisions and ideas.

-**VA.1.S.1.3** Create works of art to tell a personal story.

-**VA.2.S.3.1** Manipulate art materials and refine techniques to create two- and/or three-dimensional personal works.

-**VA.3.S.3.1** Use materials, tools, and processes to achieve an intended result in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.

-**VA.4.S.3.1** Experiment with various materials, tools, techniques, and processes to achieve a variety of results in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.

-**VA.5.S.3.1** Use materials, tools, techniques, and processes to achieve expected results in two- and/or three-dimensional artworks.

**ACTIVITIES:**

-After The Show Activities, Be A Set Designer

-Be A Scenic Artist Activity Sheet