



Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Roald Dahl's The Twits

Adapted from the book by Roald Dahl



Primary Teacher Resources

*A comprehensive set of classroom activities
relating to Spare Parts Puppet Theatre's production of
Roald Dahl's The Twits*



About Roald Dahl's *The Twits*

Roald Dahl's *The Twits* is a comedy of rebellion and justice in which Muggle-Wump the monkey races to outwit Mr and Mrs Twit, two of most terrible and disgusting people ever to have lived. Playfulness and tricks are more successful than following the rules in this classic Roald Dahl story, making it fantastically well suited to the grotesque world of puppet theatre.

The perfect show for encouraging students to reflect on their treatment of others. Roald Dahl's *The Twits* will be touring to regional and remote schools as part of our Go for 2&5 Regional Schools Tour in term 2, 3 & 4, 2017.



www.roalddahl.com

The Creative Team

Performers

Geordie Crawley
Jessica Harlond-Kenny

Director

Michael Barlow

Co-creators

Humphrey Bower & Michael Barlow

Assistant Director

Sam Longley

Designer/Puppet Maker

Leon Hendroff

Lighting Designer

Rhiannon Peterson

Sound Consultant

Lee Buddle

Production Manager

George Ashforth



About Spare Parts Puppet Theatre

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre is Australia's flagship puppetry company dedicated to the development and creation of the art form. Through puppetry they share stories that celebrate what it is to be human; connecting audiences across generations. Over the course of its 37-year history Spare Parts Puppet Theatre have entertained and enriched the lives of hundreds of thousands of audience members both in Australia and abroad.

www.sppt.asn.au

Information on theatre etiquette

For some students, seeing Roald Dahl *The Twits* may be a first experience of live theatre. The following can be used as a worksheet to promote discussion on what constitutes appropriate audience behaviour at a live performance. Live theatre differs greatly from other medium such as film or television. For audiences, the experience of seeing a live performance differs to that of watching a pre-recorded one. For performers as well, working to a live audience is vastly different to performing in a studio to a camera.

Certain behaviour is expected of audiences at live theatre events. Please ensure that you observe the following;

- Arrive on time. Missing the start of a performance will diminish your enjoyment and/or understanding of the piece. It will also disrupt the show for others.
- Turn off any mobile phone, iPod or other electronic device. These are disruptive to the performance and distracting to audience members and performers.
- If necessary, visit the bathroom prior to the commencement of the performance. Going to the bathroom during the performance disrupts the show for yourself as well as others.
- A member of the front of house staff will usher you to your seats. Follow their directions.
- When the lights dim, it is a signal to quiet down.
- During the performance observe the following; no photography, no talking
- Applauding or cheering is the most appropriate way to acclaim the performance and performing artists. Ordinarily this occurs at the conclusion of the performance. All of the above are to ensure that you and other audience members get the most out of the production and your visit to the theatre.



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Activities

1. Write your own chapter of Roald Dahl's The Twits

[Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking]

- Read through chapter 5 & 6 of The Twits by Roald Dahl (or the whole book).
- Have a class discussion identifying language devices used by Roald Dahl (alliteration, made up words, similes, unique adjectives).
- Describe the impact these language devices have on the text (making it humorous, helping us visualise the characters, etc).

'The Twits – Adjectives' (appendix I)

- Revise what an adjective is and how Roald Dahl uses very creative adjectives in his writing to make his work more humorous and interesting for young readers.
- Encourage students *not* to use the first descriptive word that comes to their mind when completing the activity.
- Optional: Provide students with access to a thesaurus or synonyms program.
- Give students independent completion time (or you may chose to run this lesson in groups).
- Voluntary sharing of the passage with peers.

Swag Bag

- Provide students with a copy of The Swag Bag (appendix II) and a copy of the two chapters (appendix III).
- Students should work independently to make notes in their Swag Bag of unique language devices and features from Roald Dahl's writing that will help to inspire their own writing in the next lesson.
- Encourage students to write examples (Made up words such as "skillywiggler", similes such as "it's got teeth like screwdrivers").

Writing tips from Roald Dahl himself

- Listen to writing tips from Roald Dahl, from an interview recorded in 1988. Scroll to listen to all 11 answers. <http://www.roalddahl.com/create-and-learn/write/roald-dahl-on-writing>
- While listening, students add notes to their Swag Bag in a different colour, that they will reflect on when constructing their own chapter.

Students construct their own chapter of The Twits

- Students work independently to construct their own one-page chapter of The Twits, that should include one trick played by Mr or Mrs Twit, and continue with the characters and settings already constructed earlier in the text
- Students should reflect on their Swag Bag, integrating alliteration, similes, unique adjectives and made up words. Provide two lessons for completion.



- Allow a lesson for students to share their chapters with group members.

Middle primary: students may work in groups to brainstorm a trick and jointly construct a chapter with a dedicated scribe.

Junior primary: the class as a whole may brainstorm a trick while the teacher models writing the chapter.

2. Design The Twits Garden

[Literacy, Science, The Arts, Design and Technologies, Critical and Creative Thinking]

- Read chapter 14 of The Twits
- Discuss what sort of house and garden Mr and Mrs Twit have, using details from the text to support

Visit a garden

- Visit an overgrown garden (or a garden at your school)
- Discuss what plants need to grow (water, sun light), why different plants grow in abundance in different environments (some plants are more suited to dry and sunny environments, while others are not)
- Generate multi_sensory words and figurative language to describe the experience of visiting the garden
- Students work in threes to focus on one plant from the garden to study. They should describe:
 - What it looks like
 - What it feels like
 - What it smells like
 - What it reminds them of

Why Mr and Mrs Twit keep the house and the garden the way they are

- Revisit chapter 14 of The Twits
- As a class, discuss why you think Mr and Mrs Twit choose to keep their house and garden in this particular state.
- Identify/highlight the use of adjectives, alliteration and simile throughout the chapter that help students visualise the house and garden.

Draw a design

- Independently draw a design of The Twits' garden, including annotations that describe:
 - The features of the garden
 - An adjective or simile for the feature
 - The reason it is there
- You may choose to set up a walk-through for students to observe each other's work.



3. How does it feel?

[Ethical understanding, social and personal capabilities]

- As a class, discuss how Mr and Mrs Twit treat one another. They are cruel, mean, nasty and play evil tricks on each other throughout the text.
- Explain that the tricks they play on each other are humorous and make for excellent content for a story but do not represent how we should treat one another in the real world.

How would Mr or Mrs Twit feel?

Students put themselves in the shoes of either Mr or Mrs Twit to write a diary entry about their thoughts and feelings.

- In groups, students brainstorm what they might be feeling or thinking when their husband/wife plays a nasty trick on them. Think of ways to express the emotions that might be felt by the characters (annoyed, frustrated, hurt, sad). Use an emotions wheel to help (appendix iv)
- Explain the features of a diary entry to students. Diary entries are written in first person and are not addressed to a specific audience, but used as an outlet for expressing thoughts and feelings about ones experiences.
- Students write a diary entry from the perspective of Mr or Mrs Twit, reflecting on how they might feel when a trick has been played on them.
- Voluntary share with peers

Opening dialogue for improving relationships

- Brainstorm how Mr or Mrs Twit could improve their relationship, based on the feelings identified during the diary entry activity.
- Consider ways that people can share their feelings with one another, to improve situations. Perhaps Mr Twit does not realise that the tricks he is playing on his wife hurt her feelings. If she told him that, perhaps he would try to be kinder to her in the future.
- Break into small groups, with students' role-playing the process of Mr and Mrs Twit repairing their relationship.
- Perform in front of peers.



4. What is Beauty?

[Art, Ethical Understanding]

Mr and Mrs Twit are described as being extremely unattractive people, with nasty personalities.

Ask students to draw two images:

1. A very unattractive couple (or, Mr and Mrs Twit)
2. A stunningly beautiful couple

Follow this activity with a conversation about what beauty is. Use Roald Dahl's quote as a stimulus for discussion:

If you have good thoughts. . .
they will shine out of your face
like sunbeams and you
will always look lovely.



There are no right and wrong answers, as everyone in the class may interpret this quote differently.

Students should reflect on their thought processes while developing their artworks, and consider the idea of inner beauty.

Option 1: You could run this lesson as an independent writing activity, providing the stimulus and asking students to respond.

Option 2: Students work in pairs to develop a presentation about "what beauty is", responding to the quote and then presenting their work to their peers.

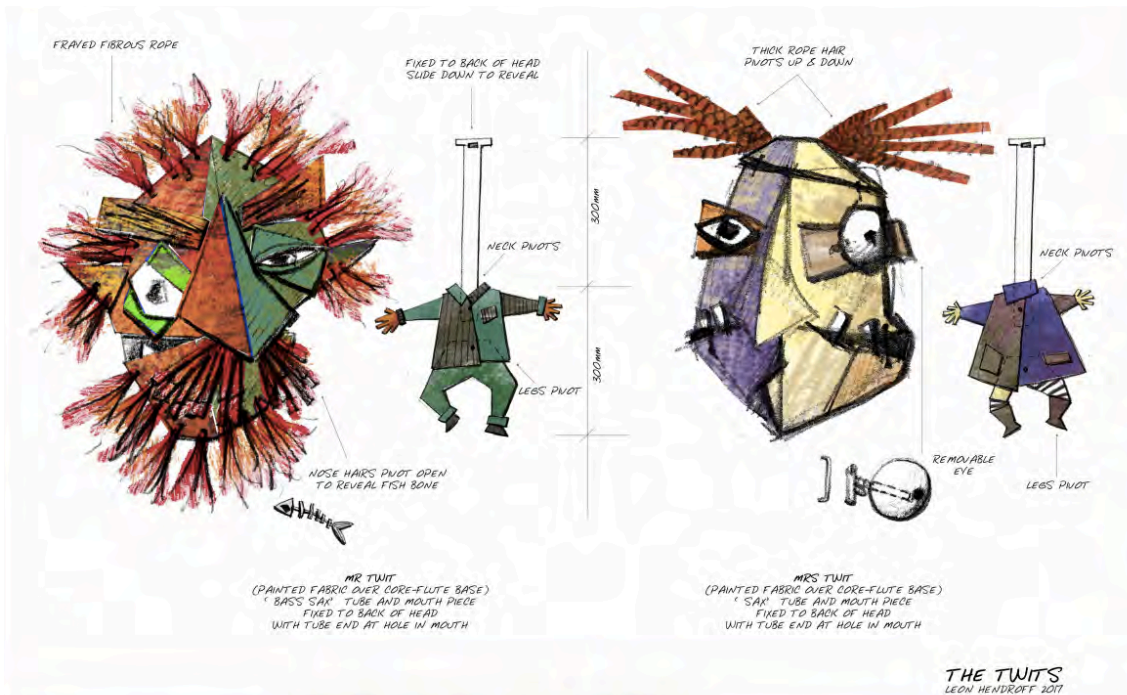


5. Draw a Picasso Style Portrait

The Twits' designs are inspired by anti-establishment art movements of the early twentieth century - Surrealism, Dada and Constructivism.

You will see similarities between the design styles of the puppets, and Picasso's painting styles. See below:

Leon Hendroff's designs for The Twits:





Picasso's Portraits:



- Discuss life and work of Pablo Picasso (View video at <http://www.biography.com/people/pablo-picasso-9440021>)
- Show student's Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror* (below). Students should either draw a reflected portrait of themselves or another person from three different views. Using markers, colour these in complimentary colours.



- Simplify and alter the images. Tear them up, rearrange the parts, and glue the parts to a new background. If time permits, you might use these as preliminary plans for a final painting.
- Sketch the image onto the canvas or paper board. Remind students that while working in abstraction-images can be simplified and details omitted. Colours should be orchestrated throughout. Interest in work can be enhanced with a variety of values (shades and tints)



6. Write a review

Students learn what to include in a review and decide if they are reviewing the performance or the book.

What to include in a review

Discuss with your class what they should consider including in their review to ensure it is comprehensive. You might like to provide a copy of the following so they can reflect on it throughout the construction phase.

Start with a couple of sentences describing what the story is about

But without giving any spoilers or revealing plot twists. As a general rule, try to avoid writing in detail about anything that happens from about the middle of the story onwards.

Discuss what you particularly liked about the story

Focus on your thoughts and feelings about the story and the way it was told. You could try answering a couple of the following questions:

- Who was your favourite character, and why?
- Did the characters feel real to you?
- Did the story keep you guessing?
- What was your favourite part of the story, and why?
- Were certain types of scene written particularly well - for example sad scenes, tense scenes, mysterious ones...?
- Did the story make you laugh or cry?
- Did the story grip you and keep you turning the pages?

Mention anything you disliked about the story

Talk about why you think it didn't work for you. For example:

- Did you wish the ending hadn't been a cliff hanger because you found it frustrating?
- Did you find it difficult to care about a main character, and could you work out why?
- Was the story too scary for your liking, or focused on a theme you didn't find interesting?

Round up your review

Summarise some of your thoughts on the story by suggesting the type of reader you'd recommend the story to. For example: younger readers, older readers, fans of relationship drama/mystery stories/comedy. Are there any books or performances you would compare it to?

Give the story a rating, for example a mark out of five or ten.

Students write a review

- Students work independently to construct a review of the book or the performance
- Performance reviews are always welcomed by the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre Artistic Team, so feel free to email them to admin@spt.asn.au or post to PO Box 897, Fremantle WA 695



7. Word search

Find the words from The Twits in the grid below.

Word search grid containing letters for finding words from 'The Twits'.

- List of words to be found: MR TWIT, MRS TWIT, MUGGLE WUMP, ROLY POLY BIRD, SHRINKS, GLASS EYE, BEARD, STICK WEEDS, GARDEN, GLUE, FROG, CIRCUS, UPSIDE DOWN, CAGE, BIRD PIE, WORMS, SPAGHETTI





About Go for 2&5

The Go for 2&5 campaign improves health by promoting good nutrition in Western Australia. There is growing evidence that eating the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables not only contributes to good health, but also protects against a number of diseases. Increasing the average person's fruit and vegetable intake is a State health priority and may be the single most important dietary change needed to reduce the risk of major diseases.

How you can help

Talk to your students about what it means to Go for 2&5. It is important to eat a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. Include raw and cooked, and many different colours.

Recommended daily intake of fruit and vegetables for children and adolescents

Age of Child (years)	Fruit (serves)	Vegetables (serves)
4-7	1-2	2-4
8-11	1-2	3-5
12-18	3-4	4-9

Activities to promote the Go for 2&5 message

- Choose a country and create a list of foods that are a tradition in that country.
- Have a look in your fridge at home. List five foods that are in your fridge. Talk about these foods with other members of your class. Do your friends have the same foods in their fridge?
- Choose an eating behaviour that you would like to change (for example eat less junk food, eat more fruit and vegetables, eat breakfast every day). Decide on a short term goal.
- Discuss your goal with a parent or other adult and ask for their help to achieve it.
- Create a simple recipe using lots of seasonal fruits and vegetables. If possible make the recipe and let the family try it out.
- Create a poster promoting a healthy diet and eating fruit and vegetables.
- Check out all the different foods you and your family eat in one night at your place.
- How many different coloured and shaped foods do you eat? Remember, enjoying a variety of foods will make you grow and feel good.

Food (Example: Apple)	Colour (Example: Red)	Shape (Example: Round)	Flavour (Example: Sweet)	Food Group (Example: Fruit)



Appendix I

The Twits – Adjectives

Objective

To think of an interesting adjective (describing word) to go in each space

Mr and Mrs Twit were a _____ old couple. Mr Twit had a _____ face and a _____ beard. Mrs Twit had a _____ glass eye and a _____ walking stick. They were always playing _____ tricks on each other because they were such _____ people. They lived in a _____ house with a _____ garden. In the garden, next to Mr Twit's _____ work shed, there was a _____ cage. In this cage there lived a _____ family of monkeys. The monkeys hated the Twits because they were _____. The _____ monkeys had to spend all day upside down because _____. Mr Twit wanted to be the owner of the **Great Upside – Down Circus**. Also, every Tuesday night, they would catch lots of _____ birds on the _____, _____ tree to put in a _____ bird pie the next day. One day a _____ visitor came to see the monkeys. His name was the Roly-Poly Bird and he had a _____ plan to help the monkeys to escape from their cage and get revenge on the _____ Twits.



Appendix II

Steal as many exciting words from The Twits as possible and throw them into your swag bag!





Appendix III

The Glass Eye

You can play a lot of tricks with a glass eye because you can take it out and pop it back in again any time you like. You can bet your life Mrs Twit knew all the tricks.

One morning she took out her glass eye and dropped it into Mr Twit's mug of beer when he wasn't looking.

Mr Twit sat there drinking the beer slowly. The froth made a white ring on the hairs around his mouth. He wiped the white froth on to his sleeve and wiped his sleeve on his trousers.

'You're plotting something,' Mrs Twit said, keeping her back turned so he wouldn't see that she had taken out her glass eye. 'Whenever you go all quiet like that I know very well you're plotting something.'

Mrs Twit was right. Mr Twit was plotting away like mad. He was trying to think up a really nasty trick he could play on his wife that day.

'You'd better be careful,' Mrs Twit said, 'because when I see you starting to plot, I watch you like a wombat.'

'Oh, do shut up, you old hag,' Mr Twit said. He went on drinking his beer, and his evil mind kept working away on the latest horrid trick he was going to play on the old woman.

Suddenly, as Mr Twit tipped the last drop of beer down his throat, he caught sight of Mrs Twit's awful glass eye staring up at him from the bottom of the mug. It made him jump.

'I told you I was watching you,' cackled Mrs Twit. 'I've got eyes everywhere so you'd better be careful.'

The Frog

To pay her back for the glass eye in his beer, Mr Twit decided he would put a frog in Mrs Twit's bed.

He caught a big one down by the pond and carried it back secretly in a box.



That night, when Mrs Twit was in the bathroom getting ready for bed, Mr Twit slipped the frog between her sheets. Then he got into his own bed and waited for the fun to begin.

Mrs Twit came back and climbed into her bed and put out the light. She lay there in the dark scratching her tummy. Her tummy was itching. Dirty old hags like her always have itchy tummies. Then all at once she felt something cold and slimy crawling over her feet. She screamed.

‘What’s the matter with you?’ Mr Twit said. ‘Help!’ screamed Mrs Twit, bouncing about. ‘ There’s something in my bed!’

‘I’ll bet it’s that Giant Skillywiggler I saw on the floor just now,’ Mr Twit said.

‘That what?’ screamed Mrs Twit.

‘I tried to kill it but it got away,’ Mr Twit said. ‘It’s got teeth like screwdrivers!’

‘Help!’ screamed Mrs Twit. ‘Save me! It’s all over my feet!’

‘It’ll bite off your toes,’ said Mr Twit.

Mrs Twit fainted.

Mr Twit got out of bed and fetched a jug of cold water. He poured the water over Mrs Twit’s head to revive her. The frog crawled up from under the sheets to get near the water. It started jumping about on the pillow. Frogs love water. This one was having a good time.

When Mrs Twit came to, the frog had just jumped on to her face. This is not a nice thing to happen to anyone in bed at night. She screamed again.

‘By golly it is a Giant Skillywiggler!’ Mr Twit said. ‘It’ll bite off your nose.’

Mrs Twit leapt out of bed and flew downstairs and spent the night on the sofa. The frog went to sleep on her pillow.



Appendix IV

