STUDY GUIDE
THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS

ECU STORYBOOK THEATRE
DECEMBER 2017
The Wind in the Willows

Study Guide

Grades 3-5
Synopsis of *The Wind in the Willows*

Toad is impetuous and reckless, but very likeable and lives in Toad Hall, a fine estate on the river. After seeing a red sports car, Toad becomes infatuated with cars, buys several, and wrecks all of them. Despite the help of his friends, Water Rat, Mole, and Badger, Toad's reckless driving continues. He steals a woman's car and crashes it into the mayor's gas station. The Sheriff and her deputy, Jimmy Ray, arrest Toad and take him to jail. While Toad is in jail, Chief Weasel and his band of weasels take over Toad Hall. With the help of Sarie, Toad escapes from jail and is chased by the sheriff and her posse. Toad meets his friends, and they make a plan to take Toad Hall back from the weasels. Toad singlehandedly captures the weasels and is forgiven by the sheriff.
Meet the Author

Kenneth Grahame was born in 1859 in Edenborough, Scotland. For most of his childhood, he and his three siblings lived with their grandmother in Berkshire. While their home was somewhat old and worn down, it was surrounded by beautiful woods and a peaceful river where his uncle taught him to go boating. In fact, this outdoor home is what inspired the setting for Wind in the Willows. After finishing school, he began working at the Bank of England even though he didn't really like the work. So, in his free time, Grahame began to write short stories and publish them in different London Newspapers. Eventually he left his bank job, married his friend Elspeth Thomson and had a son, Alistair, who he called Mouse. Grahame loved Alistair's wayward, headstrong nature so much, it inspired him to create a character, Mr. Toad, who became one of the four main characters in Wind in the Willows, a new story he was writing for his son. Grahame later published this book, receiving immediate praise and fame, but decided not to write a sequel, letting the book carry his literary legacy.
Glossary Grades 3-5 The Wind in the Willows

Words used throughout the production:

Toad: a tailless creature with a short stout body and short legs, typically having dry warty skin.

Amphibian: a cold-blooded animal that comprises of frogs, toads, newts, and salamanders

Wesel: a small, slender, mammal

Badger: a heavily built mammal that is a part of the weasel family

Rat: a rodent that resembles a large mouse typically having a pointed snout and a long, sparsely haired tail.

River Rat: a rat that lives on or along a river

Mole: a small burrowing mammal with dark fur, a long muzzle, and very small eyes

Willow Tree: a tree shrub that typically has narrow leaves, bear catkins and grows near water

Adventure: an unusual and exciting experience or activity

Canary: a small finch bird of the Canary Islands that is usually greenish to yellow

Washer woman: a woman whose job is washing clothes

Fit as a fiddle: in good health

Hoosegow: a prison

Bribe: persuade, to act in one’s favor, legally or dishonestly

Inhabits: (of a person, animal, or group) live in or occupy a place or environment

Aspirations: a hope or ambition of achieving something

Fashionable: dressing or behaving according to the current trend

Posse: a body of men/women, typically armed, summoned by a sheriff to enforce the law

Magnificent: Impressively beautiful, elaborate, or extravagant; striking
**Southern Belle**: a stock character representing a young woman of the American Deep South upper class
Wind in the Willows Character Descriptions

Toad:
Toad is the extremely rich owner of the famous estate on the river, Toad Hall. He inherited both the hall and his money from his late father. Although he is not a bad toad, he can be very selfish, arrogant and prone to obsession.

Badger:
Badger is a wise, old, solitary soul. He was friends with Toad’s late father and since his passing has been watching over Toad. He sees Toad’s good qualities and wants to help get his recklessness under control. He is uncompromising, but a supportive friend.

Rat:
Rat, also known as Ratty, is a relaxed, kind fellow. He enjoys paddling about the river and writing poetry. He is best friends with Mole and loves to teach her about the surface world. Although he is very open minded, he gets nervous about going out of his comfort zone: the river.

Mole:
Mole has lived her whole life in her underground house and network of tunnels. She relies on Ratty for help when she decides to explore the surface. She is extremely clever and adapts quickly. A loyal, polite and humble animal, Mole is always a good friend to have around.

The Weasels:

The Weasels are a rough and tumble gang from the Wild Wood. They spend their days taking whatever they can find and doing whatever they please, especially when it involves hot dogs and parties. When traveling through the woods, one must watch out for these fierce villains.

Saire:

Saire is the young daughter of the Sheriff. She is a kind, but sheltered girl and spends most of her time doing laundry for the prisoners of her mother’s jail. She is a very helpful person. During Toad’s stay at the jail, Sarie is the person that helps him escape!
Animal Facts

Toad- Toads are born as tadpoles in water, but don’t need to live near water to live later in life
-A group of toads is called a knot

Rat- Rats can laugh
-Rats can swim over a mile
-Their tales keep them cool

Mole- Moles can dig up to 18 feet in an hour
-Moles have much more blood and require less oxygen
**Badger** - badgers are nocturnal mammals, which means they sleep during the day and stay up at night.

- They weigh around 20 pounds.

**Otter** - Otters have the thickest fur of all mammals.

- Otters can make and use tools.

- They are closely related to weasels.

**Weasel** - They weigh only around half a pound.

- They can be aggressive towards humans.
PERSONIFICATION

· giving human qualities or abilities to an object or an animal.

Personification is a great literary tool that authors use to liven a story and/or help their audience understand their message. Here are some written examples of personification....

Ex 1. Lightning danced across the sky
   Dancing is a human quality that was given to lightning (an inhuman object). Therefore, Lightning is the subject being personified. The author wants you to imagine how swift and quick the light moved, as if it were dancing.

Ex 2. Rita heard the last piece of pie calling her name
   Pies cannot talk, so that would mean that pie is the subject being personified. The author is explaining how much Rita wants the last slice and she can't help to be drawn towards it.

NOW YOU TRY!
Read the sentence and identify the object or idea that is being personified, then explain which human trait or action is applied to the object or idea.

3. Alan finally found his true love, and he felt that joy would never leave his home again.

What is being personified?
____________________________________________________________________
Which human trait or quality is given?
____________________________________________________________________

4. The engine hacked and coughed as Kevin turned the key, but the old car wouldn't start.
What is being personified?
____________________________________________________________________
Which human trait or quality is given?
____________________________________________________________________
Here is the visual examples of Personification....

Here is a picture from Wind in the Willows. This is personification, because animals are wearing clothes, eating with a fork, rowing a boat, and fishing with a rod.

NOW YOU TRY!
Draw or write your own version of personification below. Be creative
Match the Animals to their Names!

- Rat
- Toad
- Mole
- Weasel
- Bader
Draw you and your Best Friends!
The Wind in the Willows Song

*To the tune of “Wheels on the Bus”*

The wheels on the sports car go round and round, round and round, round and round, round and round, all through the woods.

The Mole and Rat go row row row, row row row, row row row.
The Mole and Rat go row row row, all through the woods.

The Weasels all go sneak sneak sneak, sneak sneak sneak, sneak sneak sneak. The Weasels all go sneak sneak sneak, all through the woods.

Toad and his friends drink strawberry soda, strawberry soda, strawberry soda. Toad and his friends drink strawberry soda, all through the woods.

The Sheriff and her posse go wee woo wee woo, wee woo wee woo, wee woo wee woo. The sheriff and her posse go wee woo wee woo, all through the woods.

Toad of Toad Hall goes ribbit ribbit ribbit, ribbit ribbit ribbit, ribbit ribbit ribbit. Toad of Toad Hall goes ribbit ribbit ribbit, all through the woods.

Toad’s friend Badger goes tsk tsk tsk, tsk tsk tsk, tsk tsk tsk. Toad’s friend Badger goes tsk tsk tsk, all through the woods.

Sarie tells Toad follow your dreams, follow your dreams, follow your dreams. Sarie tells Toad follow your dreams, all through the woods.

The posse and Toad run round and round, round and round, round and round. The posse and Toad run round and round, all through the woods.
Learning Stage Directions

For the teacher:
For this game, first tell the students the history of the stage. When stages were first outdoors, in order for everyone to see what was going on, they had to build the stage tilted down towards the audience—so everyone could see the play. Explain how stage directions are always from the actors point of view.

For the Game:
1. Label 4 sections of the room as it would be for a stage. (Upstage right, upstage left, downstage right, downstage left)
2. Have the students run to each section of the room as you tell them the stage directions.
3. For the game, play as you would four corners. Have one student close their eyes as the rest have 10 seconds to get to one part of the stage then have the 1 student guess a part of the stage. Whoever is in that, is then out. Play until there is only one student left and they are then 'it.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upstage Right</th>
<th>Upstage Left</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downstage Right</td>
<td>Downstage Left</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Scenic Designer Interview

The scenic designer for ECU Storybook Theatre's production of Wind in the Willows is Nick Lease. Nick did a lot of research, looking at different productions of Wind and the Willows, reading the original children's book, reading, and re-reading the adaptation we have produced for Storybook Theatre. The director gave him several different versions of the original book with beautiful illustrations where he drew inspiration. He designed the flat that represents Toad Hall and the various vehicle cut-outs used in the production. He researched the setting and time period and spoke with the Director about her vision for the show to try to create a design that incorporates all of the Director's wishes, and is also functional for the play itself.

For the setting that represents the Wild Wood, he drew inspiration from his surroundings and researched images online that represented various forest and riverscapes. His favorite thing to research and design was the willow trees. The director and he wanted the trees to look like they were "moving in the wind."

A challenge to designing the Storybook Theatre sets is that all of the set pieces have to be able to fit onto the truck that we use to travel to the various locations where we tour. In addition, he had to think about each theatre space, and create a concept that would work well in these different spaces on stage.
For this production in particular, the challenge was creating the vehicles: the red sports car, police wagon, and boat that the actors can sit in and physically move across the stage. He worked with Michael Crane, who built theses pieces for us, to find a way to make them fit onto the the truck with the rest of the set.
Christian Anderson Assistant Director, Theatre for Youth, Junior
To prepare for the show, I read the script several times and met with the director to discuss it. We came up with some great ideas for the show.
My favorite part for the show is when the weasel’s “steal Toad’s House. It’s one of the funniest moments and it always make me laugh.

Morgan Cobb Mole, Theatre for youth, Senior
To prepare for playing Mole, I read the script and studied my lines. I also practiced the Mississippi dialect and watched lots of videos of moles to learn their movement!
My favorite part of the show is when Rat and Mole use the boat to sail across the river! It’s such a fun and special moment for me and I hope the audience loves it as much as I do!

David McDaniel Weasel, Theatre for youth/Theatre Education, Sophomore
To prepare for my role, I begin looking at videos of weasels to see how sneaky they were. I also watch Mr. Toad to get an understanding of the weasels.
My favorite part of the show is the chase scene between the Posse and Toad.

John Little Badger, Theatre for youth, Sophomore
I read the script and I began to think about my role. As I started to memorize lines, I tried to read them in a way that I thought badger would.
My favorite part of the show is when Toad gives the weasels the clothes that are tied together.

Rachel Kay Isaac Sarie, Theatre for youth, Senior
Because I am already from the South, I was able to use my natural accent for this role, which I have never been able to do with a character before.
My favorite part of the show is being able to teach Toad what the true meaning of life is about. It is not about material things but about friends and family!

Elora Hunter Posse Member, Theatre education, Sophomore
To prepare to be a part of the Sherriff’s posse, I read the script to understand my role. Once I figured out that I would get to run through the audience, I started running more
on my time off so that I would not be tired during the show. I also practiced my southern dialect.  
My favorite part of Wind In the Willows is the chase scene when the whole posse runs off the stage and interacts with the audience. I love being a part of Wind in the Willows and I hope y’all enjoy the show!

Matthew Dylan Donahue- Water Rat, Professional Acting/Musical Theatre, Junior  
To prepare for this role, I read my script, but I also read the original book. It was interesting to see how the language changes and the similarities/differences from the book to the play  
My favorite part of the show is when Mole, Badger and I come running on stage to find that Toad had escaped.

De’Ja McKnabb- Sneezel Weasel, Professional Acting, Junior  
My preparation occurred in little pieces. It started off with the sneeze. I know that seems weird but I really wanted to get the allergies aspect down. Then I started practicing the New York dialect. With the dialect came the attitude. Finally, I added a higher pitch to Sneezel's voice because I thought it worked for her character. After that, little things came through, like her love of candy or how tough she specifically was.  
My favorite part is when the Chief is asking the weasels about the bad and funny things they did that day.

Caroline May- Sargeant Weasel, Professional Acting, Senior  
I worked on the Brooklyn dialect so that when I memorized my lines I also memorized the dialect. Additionally when getting into the character I looked up how weasels moved, and mixed that with a sort of rough and tough Mona Lisa Vito from My Cousin Vinny.  
My favorite part of the show is the relationship between Mole and Rat, the two of them are so precious, and truly shows the innocence of friendship.

Connor Gerney- Toad, Theatre for Youth/Professional Acting, Sophomore  
I began my preparation by researching toad movements and watching videos of people with Mississippi accents. Later I read the book and watched excerpts of the different movies.  
My favorite part of the show is completing a jailbreak disguised as a washerwoman and my favorite parts to watch are the weasel scenes.
Kaitie Weddle- Weasel/Musical assistant, *Musical theatre*, Senior
I came on board a little later, so the majority of my preparation was reading the script and paying attention to what it was. From there, I took on whatever responsibilities Patch assigned me.
My favorite part of the show is the joy that comes with being one of the Weasels. We're sneaky and slippery, and that's really fun to interpret on stage, especially creating our own characters and relationships. The actors in the Weasel group are wonderful, and it's a pleasure to work with them all!

Nick Lease- Chief Weasel, *Theatre for Youth/ Design and Production*, Senior
I researched the Brooklyn dialect and had several voice coaching meetings with our vocal coach to work on a Brooklyn accent. I watched several "mobster type" movies to draw inspiration after I was told that the director wants the weasels to be like a gang from New York. I also watched several different videos about weasels.
My favorite part of the show is the part when I get to watch my "weasel gang" snap off the stage in a group. It's hard for me to not crack everytime that happens.

Josh Tigbayan- Weasel, *Theatre Education*, Freshman
I began preparation by working on my northern dialect. Trying to get a New Jersey/New York accent as well as my physicalization for the character.
My favorite part about being in the show is meeting and working with new people!! I love getting to know and build relationships with other cast members!!

Dylan Bailey- Cecil Weasel, *Theatre Education/Theatre for Youth*, senior
When preparing to play Cecil I worked on solidifying a defined character voice and becoming acquainted with the Brooklyn dialect. I also researched weasels to begin to create a specific character walk. I also read the original book by Kenneth Grahame. An actor should always go back to the original text.
My favorite part of the play is the chase scene. It's a fast paced, high energy, laugh out loud moment that keeps me in stitches each time we rehearse it.

Jeremy Vance Long- Stage Manager, *Stage Management*, Sophomore
I prepared paperwork for the rehearsals and other aspects of the show. I also communicated with directed and set expectations for the show.
My favorite part of the show is the whole cast!! I enjoy the people I work with.
Jordan Early - Weasel, *Theatre Education, Junior*
To prepare for the role, I have been watching videos of weasels and working on my New York accent. It has been fun to see how each person's character is more and more developed each rehearsal.
I love when Toad ties up the weasels. It is such a funny scene to see and fun to act in.

Hayden Patterson - Sports Car Driver, *Theatre Education/Theatre for Youth, Senior*
I remember being so excited about getting cast as the Sports Car Driver because she was so sassy and very unlike other roles I've played; I was ready for the challenge! I researched race car drivers and other characters from plays or movies that I thought resembled her so I could really figure out how to create this person. I think my favorite character inspiration for her has been Scarlet from "Gone With the Wind" because their accents and their attitudes towards getting what they want are very similar. It's been so much fun getting to play this role and I absolutely love getting to bring all of this sass to the stage!
My favorite part of the show is when Toad has just wrecked my car and I'm clutching my steering wheel, crying. Toad comes up to me and tries to offer me money to buy a new car. Instinctively, I hold onto my steering wheel for dear life, since it's the only thing left of my poor car, and move away from Toad because I'm afraid he's going to ruin something else of mine. And then I say very angrily, "I don't want a NEW one. I want my OLD one!" I also love all of the chase scenes throughout this show; they're so fun to do and I also get in some exercise too!

Kelly Toppin - Weasel, *Intended Professional Acting, Freshman*
I began my preparation for the role of a Weasel by defining the character. I wanted to have an energy to bring to the show. I read the script and watched videos of weasels to help develop my knowledge of the role I was taking on.
My favorite part of the show is when Toad finds the weasels in Toad hall. He tricks us into thinking we are getting dressed for the big party but instead he ties us up and captures us to retrieve Toad hall.

Shellie Raleigh - Assistant Stage Manager, *Design and Production/Construction, Senior*
To prepare, I began by getting in touch with the Stage Manager, and asking about what I should expect from the production and what is expected of me. I bought items for my stage manager's box, and put my box together, which was actually really fun to do. I also printed off a script and started to put together my production book.
Learning about what a Stage Manager and ASM does in a production is one of my favorite parts of the show. The amount of things needed to run a production is
of toad. Even though we're all tied up it's so much fun to hear everything else going on around me.

Jessica Blair Rogers - The Sheriff, Musical Theatre, Senior
I actually went to a police station and met the sheriff of my hometown in Nash County! I walked around with the deputies and the sheriff to get a feel of who they are and they way they walk and talk. I also watched lots of videos of deputies and sheriffs. My favorite show to watch to learn about my character is The Andy Griffith Show! My favorite part of the show is the chase scene between Toad and the police crew. It's so action packed, and it requires all of us to be on top of each moment in order to make sure we all end up in the correct place at the correct time. We have so much fun running around and capturing each other!

Michael T Eubanks - Deputy Jimmy Ray, Theatre for Youth, Senior
To prepare, I first read through the script to see when my character comes in, who he interacts with etc. Then I had a vocal meeting with Tracy, our vocal coach. She helped develop the character a lot with me! Finally I had a meeting with Patch Clark, our director, to discuss what her vision of Jimmy Ray is and compare it to my own. These lined up pretty well together. Finally I started memorizing and began the rehearsal process where I was really able to flush out who Jimmy Ray is!
My favorite part is the chase scene with Toad. I love a good chase scene!

Jordan Biggers - Movement Coach, Theatre Education/ Theatre for Youth, Senior
To prepare, I read the script thoroughly and then broke down how each character moved and which areas of the script required fight choreography and movement choreography.

My favorite part is the chase scenes between the Sheriff and her posse and Toad.

Alyssa Davis - Posse Member, Theatre Education/ Musical Theatre, Sophomore
To prepare, I watched a lot of western movies, and observed their swagger and demeanor.

My favorite part of the show is Mole's line "I heard a toot toot".
Taylor Reed - Weasel, *Theatre for Youth, Sophomore*

To prepare for my role I read the script to figure out the different dynamics between each character. I then decided how my character "Beepel" would fit into the mix. I made a backstory for my character and started to develop characteristics of how a weasel would move and then add on mobster swagger to it. To get the right moves I spoke to several movement coaches on how to move swiftly through the space.

My favorite part of the show is when Toad tricks Rat into thinking he is sick.