The Wind in the Willows

Study Guide

Grades K-2
Kenneth Grahame

• Kenneth Grahame was born on March 8, 1859 in Scotland
• In school, Grahame achieved awards in Latin, Theology, and Rugby
  • Grahame got married to Elspeth Thompson in 1899
    • Grahame and Elspeth had one son, Alastair
  • Grahame began telling Alastair bedtime stories about a mischievous toad
• Over time, Grahame gave the toad friends, including a rat, mole, and badger
• Eventually, Grahame wrote down his stories with Toad, Rat, Mole, and Badger, creating the wonderful book, Wind in the Willows!
  • Grahame struggled to get his book published, but it eventually happened and became a great success
• When Wind in the Willows was first published, one of its biggest fans was U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt
Glossary

Spring Cleaning — “Toad is very bad at focusing on Spring Cleaning.”
Spring cleaning is the practice of thoroughly cleaning a house in the springtime, especially the parts you don’t clean very often.

Estate — “Toad Hall is a lovely Estate”
A piece of land or property, especially one of large extent with an elaborate house on it.

Inherit — “Toad inherited Toad Hall from his parents”
To receive money, property, or a title as an heir at the death of the previous holder.

Magnificent — “Toad hall is magnificent”
Impressively beautiful, elaborate, or extravagant.

Conceited — “Toad is conceited.”
Excessively proud of oneself, vain.

Artificial Respiration — “Rat gives Moley artificial respiration.”
The restoration or substitution of someone’s breathing by manual, mechanical, or mouth-to-mouth methods.

Revel — “Toad reveled in the beauty of the sports car.”
Lively and noisy enjoyment or great pleasure.

Sheriff — “The Sheriff arrested Toad.”
The law enforcement officer of a county or place. Similar to a policeman.

Southern Belle — “Toad disguised himself as a southern Belle”
A popular and attractive woman or girl, typically upper-class from a good family. A girl from the south who has beauty, charm and style.

Precaution — “Rat took the precaution of locking Toad Hall.”
A measure taken in advance to prevent something dangerous, unpleasant, or inconvenient from happening.

Amphibian — “Toad is an amphibian.”
A cold-blooded vertebrate animal of a class that comprises the frogs, toads, newts and salamanders. They are distinguished by having an aquatic gill-breathing larval stage followed (typically) by a terrestrial lung-breathing adult stage.

**Posse** — "Assemble a posse to catch Toad!"

A body of men, typically armed, summoned by a sheriff to enforce the law.

**Bribe** — "Toad tried to bribe the Sheriff."

A sum of money or other inducement offered to persuade someone to act in one’s favor, typically illegally or dishonestly.

**Melodramatically** — "Toad groans melodramatically."

Acting with exaggerated emotional or sentimental qualities.

**Aspirations** — "Sarie tells Toad to have aspirations."

A hope or ambition of achieving something.

**Disguise** — "Toad disguises himself to escape."

A means of altering one’s appearance or concealing one’s identity.
Match the Animals to their Names!

- Rat
- Toad
- Mole
- Weasel
- Bader
Draw you and your Best Friends!
TRACE THE NAMES

TRACE THE NAMES OF THE CHARACTERS FROM WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Toad Toad Toad

Badger Badger

Mole Mole Mole

Rat Rat Rat Rat
Circle if Toad was being Good or Bad:

Toad stole the car.  

Toad captures the weasels.  

Toad escaped jail.  

Toad keeps his promises to Sarie  

Toad holds a big party.  

GOOD     BAD
Wind in the Willows Safety

Circle the best answers.

What should Toad use while driving the red sports car?

- Seatbelt
- Cell phone

What should Mole and Rat wear while in the boat?

- Rain Coat
- Life Vest

What should the Weasels use to clean themselves?

- Soap
- Strawberry Soda
The Wind in the Willows Song

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

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

The Weasels all go sneak sneak sneak, sneak sneak sneak sneak, sneak sneak sneak sneak. The weasels all go sneak sneak sneak sneak, all through the wood.

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

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 wood.

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 wood.

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 wood.

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 wood.
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>
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<tr>
<td>Downstage Right</td>
<td>Downstage Left</td>
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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 these pieces for us, to find a way to make them fit onto 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. Its 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
astounding, and it is very interesting learning about it and also participating in it. Also, it is very fun seeing the actors and director’s process during the entire production, and seeing how the whole show comes together.

**Michael VanHouten**- Posse Member, *Info. and Computer Technology, junior*
I began preparation by working on what type of accent and walk my character would have. I then worked on what his actions and reactions in the show would look like. After I completed my character choices, I felt confident when rehearsal began.
I would have to say that my favorite part of the show is the chase that occurs between Toad, the Sheriff, Jimmy Ray, and the Posse. It ends up being a pretty long chase as we get to run into the audience and stumble into each other. It’s fun to watch the bumbling group of policemen try to catch Toad, in a dress.

**Andrew Fiorini**- Posse Member, *Theatre Education, Junior*
To prepare, I watched western movies to learn how to walk and how to stand like a member of the posse. I also learned how to speak with a country accent. The Posse is a group that has to work together to catch Toad. So we need to really all be on the same page.
My favorite part of the show is getting to chase Toad on and off the stage!

**Leslie Shaw**- Assistant Stage Manager, *Stage Management Freshman*
To prepare, I printed a script and bought a pencil! I was so ready to jump on this new project. I then asked the stage manager what was expected and had him delegate new jobs for me.
My favorite part of the show is when Toad dresses up as Saire and puts on a dress.

**Alex Munn**- Head of the Posse/ Prop Master, *Design and Production, Junior*
I prepared by looking at research for both the props and for my character, such as dialects for the posse. I also worked on walking and responding in character.
My favorite part of the show is the pretend car chase and the posse all follows Toad in imaginary cars.

**Tyler Whitley**- Greasel Weasel, *Theatre Education/ Theatre for Youth, Senior*
I began preparing first by working on my accent! It was a completely new accent to me and I spent a long time working on it. After that I began to work on my movement, which was so much fun! This role was a blast even if I was greasy!
My favorite part definitely when the posse gets the weasels. Between toad parading around in a dress to the surprise when the sheriff decides to arrest the weasels instead
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.