

stuff and
nonsense
theatre company

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK



SYNOPSIS

Living on an allotment in a tiny house the size of a shed, Mr and Mrs Chickweed show off their prizewinning vegetables for the final time before they retire. However, they can't resist planting one last seed, and as the turnip grows and grows, it threatens their house with disaster! Can anyone help them pull up the

Enormous Turnip?

A family show packed full of energy, live music, eccentric puppetry and some vegetable magic!

The show is 60 minutes long with no interval. It is suitable for everyone over the age of three. There are opportunities to interact with the actors during and after the show (and even to be invited on stage to help pull the Enormous Turnip), but you do not have to take part. There are no baddies or scary parts, and there is a happy ending. The audience is encouraged to actively enjoy the show as enthusiastically as they wish; there is no need to sit silently.



CHARACTERS

The cast features two actors, Gareth Price-Baghurst and Maria Gray, who play our main characters, Mr and Mrs Chickweed. They also operate our supporting puppet cast, including Scruffy Dog, Tig the Cat, Tiny Mouse and The Caterpillar.

Audience members are usually shocked to discover that only two actors at a time deliver a Stuff and Nonsense play. The actors are incredibly versatile and active; they sing, dance, appear in different parts of the set, and often operate multiple puppets simultaneously.

The audience is also a key character in our show. The Chickweeds will invite a few trusted members of the audience to look after their animals and help pull out the turnip towards the end of the show. They will rely on verbal encouragement, stamping and clapping from the rest of the audience, to get that **gigantic** vegetable out of the ground!



DOTTIE CHICKWEED

Played by Maria Gray



RAYMOND CHICKWEED

Played by Gareth Price-Baghurst

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES



Before you join us for our heartwarming tale of vast veggies, we've put together a fun selection of activities you can enjoy together to get the children excited and ready for the experience.

ACTIVITY ONE - RESEARCH TASK

Step 1 – class survey

Start by conducting a class survey.

- Ask everyone: Which vegetables do you eat at home?
- Create a tally chart or simple bar chart to record the answers
- Which vegetable is the most popular in your class?
- Are there any vegetables that only one or two people eat?

Talk about your results together! Which vegetable was crowned the class favourite?

Step 2 – around the world research

Now, research popular vegetables from different countries and cultures.

- Can you find vegetables you've never heard of before?
- Where do they grow?
- How are they cooked or eaten?

Encourage children to share what surprised them most - did they discover a vegetable they'd never seen before?

Step 3 – record breakers

Time to think BIG... just like *The Enormous Turnip!*

- Research world records for the biggest vegetables ever grown
- What's the longest carrot? The heaviest pumpkin? The leafiest cabbage?
- Why do you think they grew so big?

Extension activities

If you'd like to go further:

Draw your favourite vegetable (or one you've just discovered!). Write a concrete poem (where the words are arranged to create a shape) about one of the vegetables you have researched.

ACTIVITY TWO – VEGETABLE COLOURS



Turn vegetable scraps into natural dyes and learn about colour theory.

Step 1 – make your natural dyes

You can use: beetroot for red/pink, white onion skins for orange, orange peel for yellow, spinach for green, red cabbage for blue, blueberries for purple

- Chop or tear your vegetable scraps into small pieces
- Place them in a saucepan (separate pans for separate colours)
- Add just enough water to cover everything well.
- Simmer gently for 20-30 minutes (adult supervision required)
- Allow the mixture to cool completely
- Strain the liquid into bowls or squeezey bottles – this is your natural dye

TIP: For a stronger colour, use less water or simmer for longer.

Step 2 – prepare your fabric

For best results, use white cotton fabric (old t-shirts, pillowcases, tea towels, or fabric squares).

- Before dyeing, soak the fabric in a simple fixing solution (called a mordant): Mix one part salt with eight parts of warm water, stir until dissolved
- Soak fabric in mordant for at least 30–60 minutes
- Wring out gently before placing into the dye (fabric should be damp, not dripping- this helps the colour bond to the fabric)

Step 3 – dye your fabric

- Submerge the damp fabric fully into the cooled dye
- Leave to soak for at least 1 hour
- Stir occasionally to avoid pale patches

For tie-dye effects:

- Twist or fold the fabric
- Secure with elastic bands or string
- Use squeezey bottles to squirt different sections with the dye

Step 4 - drying and setting

- Remove fabric from the dye and gently squeeze out excess liquid (do not rinse yet)
- Leave to dry completely (drying can take 4–24 hours, depending on the thickness of the fabric and the room temperature)

- Once fully dry, rinse gently in cool water until the water runs mostly clear. Then hang to dry again

Colour experiments

Encourage children to investigate and reflect:

- What happens if you leave the fabric in longer?
- What if you add more water – does the colour fade?
- What happens when you mix two natural dyes together?
- Do some vegetables create stronger colours than others?
- Which vegetable made the brightest colour?

Now, children can apply what they've learned to explore colour theory further:

- Primary and secondary colours
- Light and dark shades

ACTIVITY THREE – VEGETABLE MATHS LAB



Measuring

Choose a variety of vegetables (different shapes and sizes work best). You could even use the same veg you want to make dyes out of in activity two!

Ask: How many ways can we measure a vegetable?

Children can measure length, width, height, weight (using scales), and circumference (using a string and a ruler)

Which is the longest? Heaviest? Widest? Is the longest always the heaviest?

Compare and order

Order from shortest to longest. Order vegetables from lightest to heaviest. Make estimates first and then measure to check. Were there any that surprised you?

Compare two at a time using mathematical language: *greater than*, *less than*, *equal to*, etc.

Change the shape/form

Explore fractions and what happens when vegetables change form:

Cut into equal halves or quarters – does the total weight change?

Juice or mash the veg, then measure the volume. Does changing the shape change the amount? How do we know?

Present your findings

Children can present their data using a variety of charts and diagrams.

Which chart shows the information most clearly?



POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

The adventure doesn't stop there! Now you've seen *The Enormous Turnip*, we've compiled a range of activities designed to support reflection and deeper discussion inspired by the performance.

ACTIVITY FOUR – ENORMOUS GROWTH

Can you grow your very own enormous plant, just like in *The Enormous Turnip*?

Step 1 – plant your seeds

You will need small pots or containers, compost or soil, seeds (beans, sunflowers, or lettuce grow well), and water.

- Fill your pot with soil, leaving a small space at the top
- Make a small hole in the soil (about 1-2 cm deep)
- Place your seed in the hole and cover it gently with soil
- Water lightly so the soil is damp but not flooded
- Place your pot somewhere warm and bright

Step 2 – care for your plant

Water regularly to keep the soil slightly damp. Make sure your plant gets plenty of sunlight. Observe your plant as it begins to grow. How does it change each day? What would happen if plants were kept in different areas of the classroom? Would they grow better outside?

Step 3 – measure and record growth

Once your plant starts growing

- Measure its height using a ruler
- Record the measurement every few days
- Compare with others in your class

Whose plant grew the tallest?

Did any become the most enormous?

You could create a simple chart to track growth over time.

Step 4 - learn the parts of a plant

Draw your plant and label its different parts. Discuss what each part does and how it helps the plant grow.



ACTIVITY FIVE – JOURNALISTS

Become a journalist and write a blog or article inspired by *The Enormous Turnip*! Think about: What big news happened? Who was involved? How was the problem solved?

Step 1 – choose your story angle

You might write about:

- Mr and Mrs Chickweed and their enormous turnip
- The story told from Scruffy the dog's perspective
- A shocking discovery: an enormous vegetable found!
- **BREAKING NEWS:** [*Your School Name*] saves the day by helping pull up the turnip
- An interview with one of the characters
- A world record vegetable growing in your local area

Or create your own news story inspired by the show!

Step 2 – include newspaper features

Try to include:

- A headline to grab attention
- A picture(s) with a caption(s)
- Information about who, what, where, when and why
- Quotes from characters or witnesses
- Facts and details to help tell the story

You can make it funny, dramatic, or serious! How would your writing change depending on the tone of the article?

Step 3 – present your article

Have a look at existing blog and newspaper examples (online or physical) for inspiration on the layout.

- Write your article by hand or type it on a computer
- Draw illustrations or add diagrams
- Design it like a real newspaper front page
- Share your report with the class

Reflections

Compare two articles written by different 'journalists' in the class. If they are describing the same events, are there any differences or similarities? What was the most important moment in each article? How did reading them make you feel? How could you make the headline more exciting?



ACTIVITY SIX – TRIATHLON RACE

Work together in teams to complete three fun races inspired by *The Enormous Turnip!* These races are all about teamwork, just like in the story.

Divide into 4-6 teams. Each team will compete in three different races.

Race 1 – the turnip needs watering!

You will need one full bucket of water per team (at one end), one empty bucket per team (at the other end) and one cup or watering can per team

- Teams stand in a line behind their empty bucket
- One player at a time carries the cup or watering can to the full bucket
- They fill it with water, then carefully return and pour it into their team's empty bucket
- The next teammate repeats the process

The first team to fill their bucket enough to 'water the turnip' wins!

You can make it more fun by hopping, walking backwards, or tiptoeing.

Race 2 - deliver the welly to the gardener

You will need one welly boot per team.

- Each team stands in a line
- The first person passes the welly over their head to the next person, who then passes it through their legs
- Continue alternating until the welly reaches the last person
- The last person runs to the front of the line and starts again
- Continue until everyone is back in their original position
- Then repeat, but this time pass: First to the left, then to the right, alternating each time

When your team finishes, everyone must sit down. First team sitting wins!

Race 3 - pull up the turnip!

Now your team becomes the rope!

You will need one large plastic hoop per team

- Each team stands in a line holding hands
- Place the hoop over the first person's arm
- Without letting go of hands, work together to move the hoop along the line from one end to the other
- Children must step through the hoop and move their bodies to pass it all the way along

The first team to move the hoop all the way along the 'rope' pulls up the 'turnip' and wins!

ABOUT US

Stuff & Nonsense, led by Niki McCretton, works alongside children, families, artists and theatres to make memorable and outstanding theatre. We place children's creativity at the heart of what we do and enable adults to become seriously playful. We lead the field in the adaptability of artistic product and quality delivery. We work vigorously to raise the quality of work for children and young people, building partnerships with leading theatres and encouraging high production values.

Founded in 2001, we have created twelve artist-led, contemporary adaptations of well-known tales that fill a gap in the market. Demand for our work is proven, with over 4,000 performances delivered to audiences of over 500,000 to date. Stuff and Nonsense is based at the Lyric Theatre, Bridport.



CREDITS

The Enormous Turnip was created with support from The Point and The Berry Theatre, originally commissioned by Lighthouse, Poole, in association with Salisbury Playhouse and support from The Merlin Theatre.

Director:	Niki McCretton
Executive Producer:	Jane McGibbon
Designer:	Edwina Bridgeman
Music:	Matthew Huxley
Original sound design:	Gwendolyn Scott
Lighting design:	Phil Mead
Performers:	Gareth Price-Baghurst Maria Gray
Pack created by:	Spoon McGibbon



KEEP IN TOUCH

We'd love to hear your feedback! Please get in touch by email or social media.

Website: www.aloadofstuffandnonsense.co.uk

Email: marketing@aloadofstuffandnonsense.com

Instagram: [@stuffandnonsensetheatre](https://www.instagram.com/stuffandnonsensetheatre)

Facebook: [@aloadofstuffandnonsense](https://www.facebook.com/aloadofstuffandnonsense)

YouTube: [@stuffandnonsenseuk](https://www.youtube.com/stuffandnonsenseuk)

