



2008~2009
HOT SEASON FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE PRESENTS



TEACHER GUIDEBOOK

THE GRUFFALO

Tall Stories



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THE GRUFFALO

Dear Teachers,

Follow along in the Deep, Dark Wood – where imagination and bravery accompany a clever little mouse on a journey full of surprises. We are certain you and your students will enjoy getting to know Mouse, through the delightful book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, and the theatrical adaption *The Gruffalo*, by Tall Stories.

The book has been the best-selling children’s book in the United Kingdom for more than 5 years. In 2001, Tall Stories premiered their adaptation, and soon went on to perform at the Scottish International Children’s Festival, the Royal National Theatre, London’s West End (3 years), north America (including Broadway in spring 2004), Poland, Chile, Dubai, Singapore, China and Taiwan. It is still touring nationally and internationally. One reviewer described the play:

Like a fairytale, this story, based on the children’s book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, involves a quest, a journey into perilous woods, and the overcoming of seemingly insurmountable odds. But it’s not about a handsome prince or a lovely maiden – it’s about a mouse.

In this devised piece for children aged three and over, directed by Olivia Jacobs for Tall Stories, Mouse ventures into the forest in search of nuts. Along the way, the little rodent is accosted by ravenous predators. So Mouse invents an imaginary friend – a huge, monstrous beast called the Gruffalo. And each time the foe is scared off, until the mouse is suddenly confronted by a creature that looks horribly like its own invention.

The cast of three uses an expressive physicality and minimal props to bring the story to wonderful life. Alice Parsloe is a sweetly scampering mouse, screwing up her pretty face in fear or confusion. Felix Hayes is an agile storyteller and, later, transformed by the production’s only full costume, a dull-witted, likeable and rather lonely Gruffalo, covered in fur, horns and claws and with a poisonous pimple on his nose.

Naughty-faced Tom Warwick, meanwhile, clearly relishes all his roles as Mouse’s adversaries, the most entertaining of which is a mustachioed Mexican rattlesnake, with maracas. ‘They call me Joaquim,’ he declares with a sinuous wiggle of his hips. ‘I come into a room and they say, ‘There’s that snake – whack ‘eem!’ --The Times

Tall Stories have used *The Gruffalo* as a starting point for the play, which uses the rhymes in the book, plus imaginative storytelling, physical representation of the animals, original new songs and a lot of giggles. Enjoy!

TPAC Education

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THE GRUFFALO

A mouse strolls through a wood, meeting a fox, an owl and a snake. They all try to eat him, but he scares them away with stories of the terrifying Gruffalo. Then the mouse bumps into a real-life Gruffalo...The quick-thinking mouse explains that he is the scariest creature around and takes the Gruffalo back through the wood to prove it. When the other animals see the Gruffalo they run away. The Gruffalo gulps in fear and escapes.



Photo Copyright Tall Stories

Get to Know The Gruffalo

The Gruffalo is a tremendously popular character in the UK, inspiring costume days, birthday parties and library appearances throughout the country. Discover all things Gruffalo with these recommended on-line resources:

ABOUT THE PLAY



To hear music from the play and for information about the actors and Tall Stories, visit: www.tallstories.org.uk

To view an excerpt from the play: <http://www.gruffalolive.com>

To buy a DVD of the live performance, visit: www.amazon.co.uk.

ABOUT THE BOOK

<http://www.gruffalo.com>

Visit the Official Gruffalo Website for information about the book, the author and the illustrator. You will also find on-line game features and activity sheets, such as finger puppet cut-outs and coloring pages.

“A gruffalo! Why, didn’t you know?”

**“He has terrible tusks and terrible claws
And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws.”**

...

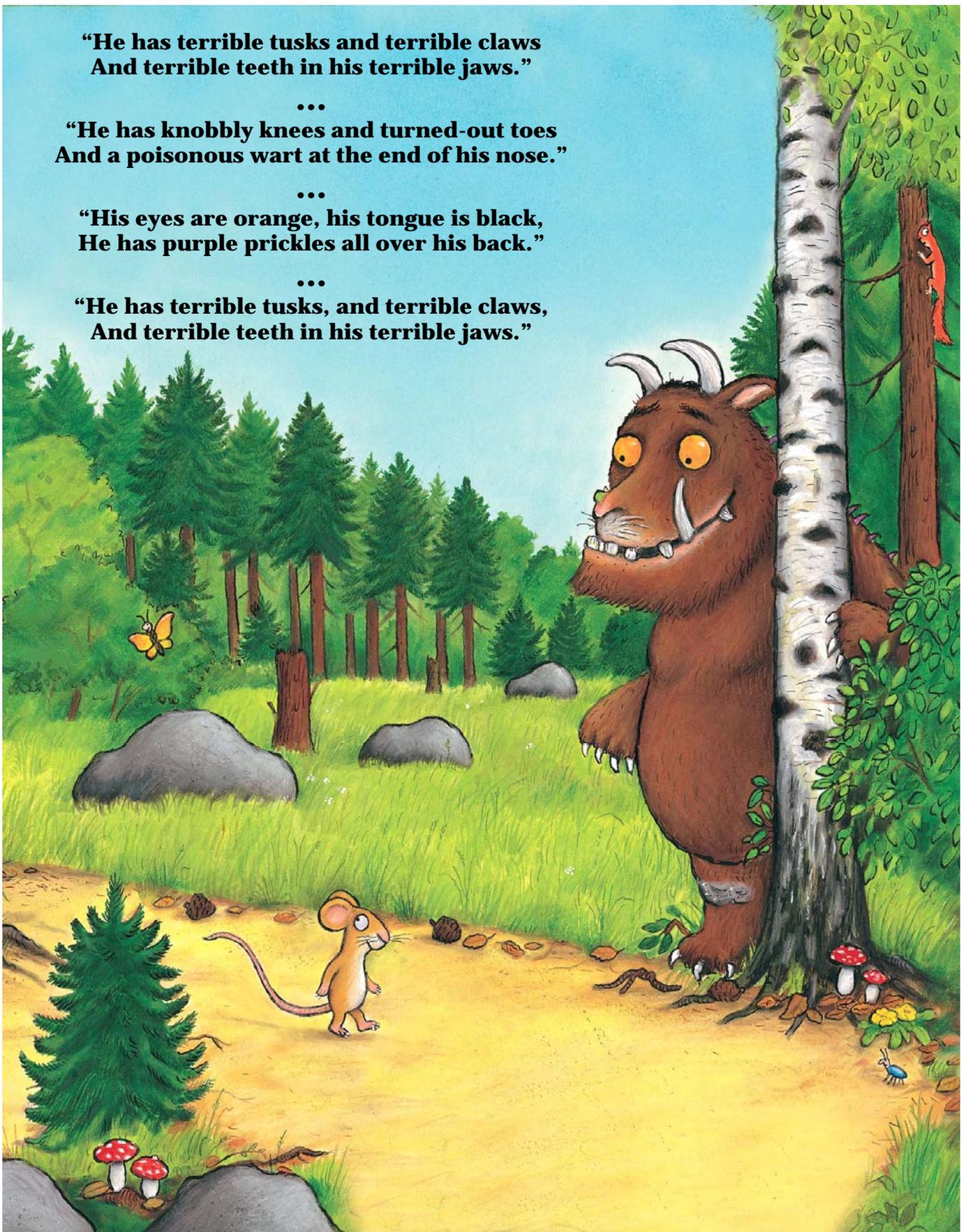
**“He has knobbly knees and turned-out toes
And a poisonous wart at the end of his nose.”**

...

**“His eyes are orange, his tongue is black,
He has purple prickles all over his back.”**

...

**“He has terrible tusks, and terrible claws,
And terrible teeth in his terrible jaws.”**





INVENT AN ANIMAL! *In this activity, students will use their imagination to describe and illustrate an original animal. The lesson can be extended to give the new creature additional characteristics, abilities, and names.*

"A Gruffalo? What's a Gruffalo?"

WARM UP

Ask students to describe an animal to you in as much detail as possible. It might be easier to begin with an animal for which you have a visual aid (a toy version or a picture of the animal) and ask them to tell you something they can see. Examples of guiding questions might be: What kind of nose does it have? What color is it? Does it have fur/feathers/skin? How does it move?

ACTIVITY

Explain to students that they will be inventing a new animal today. First, ask them to think about what size the new animal might be. Is it small or large? What covers its body (fur, feathers, skin, etc.)? Make a note of all suggestions. Brainstorm with students how some traits of other animals could be combined. What if it was as big as a cow, but had feathers and an elephant nose?

Distribute paper and drawing supplies. Allow students to invent and illustrate a new animal. Once drawings are completed, invite students to describe their creation to the class or to describe another's creation to the class. OR – use page of "animal parts" provided (pages 8-9). Cut out parts for children to glue onto paper or make into puppets.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What do our new creatures have in common? How are they different?

What colors and shapes did we use?

How do our new creations move? Do they walk upright? Crawl? Slither? Fly? Can students demonstrate the way their new animal might move?

Where might these new animals live? Would they prefer the water or a cave?

What kind of "person" would this new animal be if he or she could talk? Would they be friendly? Grumpy? Shy?

MORE

- Encourage students to name their new creature. What is it? List the names of these new creatures and display them along with the artwork where students can easily see them.
- Read the description of the Gruffalo and invite students to recreate an animal with those qualities. (see page 3 for description from the book)
- Holding up one picture at a time, invite students to create a sound for that particular creature (either solicit volunteers, take turns or as a group). Can students come up with unique sounds for each new picture?
- For older students, generate a large list of descriptors (as varied as possible) and separate them into eyes/nose/mouth/body/etc. piles. Be sure to have a few of your own added as well. Colors, numbers, size descriptions (huge, tiny, average) and textural words (hairy, slimy, bumpy) make fun choices. Pull one descriptor from each pile and ask students to illustrate an animal that has all those traits. For example, students might be asked to illustrate an animal with purple eyes, a slimy nose, hairy teeth and feathers.

TIME TO RHYME!

In this activity, students will invent new uses for a common object and describe their objects in rhymes.

WARM UP

Ask students for a rhyming match to easily-rhymed words such as cat, hay, pop. Allow students to really experiment with their rhyming skills, perhaps even inventing words and experimenting with compound words.

ACTIVITY

Place a common object such as a chair (or ball or box) in the center or front of the room and ask students to name the object. Can they think of some words that rhyme with it?

Next, invite them to create a rhyming sentence about the object, demonstrating first (“Even a bear would like this *chair*.”) Once students are comfortable with this part of the lesson, ask them to use their imagination and think of a way to use the chair in a new way. Perhaps the chair is really a rocket ship or a horse or a kitten. Demonstrate interacting with the chair in this new way.

Encourage students to take turns transforming the chair. If responses become too similar, try demonstrating using the object in a new way (on its side, for example) or replace the object with a new, very different one.

Once everyone has had an opportunity to experiment with transforming the object(s), invite them to create new rhyming sentences for their imagined object and then share them with the rest of the class. Demonstrate as appropriate.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What words were easiest to rhyme? Which were harder?

What was it like to transform the chair (ball, box) into something new?

Which rhymes stand out in our minds/memory?

Which transformations were similar? How many different modes of transportation did we create, for example?

Were we surprised by anyone’s choices? Which ones?

Can we imagine writing a whole book in rhymes?

MORE

- To help generate rhymes, say the first part of a sentence ending with the to-be-rhymed word and let children finish it.
- Play a variety of instrumental musical pieces (from classical to more modern) and invite students to speak their rhyming sentences to the rhythm of the music. Clapping out the rhythm first may be useful for younger students, demonstrating your own rhyming sentence to the beat.
- Older students can work in pairs and create a brief rhyming skit utilizing the transformed object and 3 or 4 (or more!) rhyming sentences. Give them time to practice and then invite students to perform for the rest of the class.

“Then all was quiet in the deep dark wood.
The mouse found a nut and the nut was good.”



WHAT IS IN A FOREST?

In this activity, students will love exploring nature and habitats as they create a forest in the classroom - using their own bodies!

WARM UP

Tell students that the play "The Gruffalo" is set in a "deep, dark wood". Discuss: what is a "deep, dark wood". Have students ever been in the forest, gone camping or slept outside? What was it like? What words could we use to describe such a place? Guide students in generating a list of things you might find in the "deep, dark wood" (trees, stream, specific animals).

ACTIVITY

Go through the list and invite students to demonstrate with their bodies each of the things on the list. Are there sounds associated with trees? A special way of moving or being still? How can we demonstrate a stream or the wind? Allow them to add to the list of things found in the forest as other ideas occur to them.

Once students have experimented and explored recreating parts of a forest, invite them to turn the classroom into a forest with the students themselves playing the elements. How many trees do we need? Where would the stream be located? Invite another classroom or adult to take a stroll through the "deep, dark wood" and describe what they see/hear/experience.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Does a "deep, dark wood" have to be scary? Why or why not?
How did we use our bodies/sounds to demonstrate the stream?
How did we decide where we would put the various things in the forest?
What kinds of sounds did we create and imagine?
Where would some of the forest animals like to live or hide?
What are some other types of settings we could create? (beach, circus, concert)
What other stories are set in the woods or forest?

MORE

- Using a digital or tape recorder, allow students to record the different sounds of the "deep, dark wood" and play it back.
- Give students art materials and invite them to draw pictures of the forest, incorporating as many items from the generated list as possible, as well as adding to it.
- Allow students to take turns moving through the created woods as a mouse and/or a big Gruffalo. How do the ways they maneuver differ?

"A mouse took a stroll through the deep, dark wood..."



BRAVE AS A MOUSE In this activity, students will learn about expressing emotions using their face and body. The lesson can be extended to deal with overcoming fears, and what it really means to be brave.

“I’m the scariest creature in this deep dark wood!”

WARM UP

Talk to students about how they show feelings – through their face and body movements. Ask students to show you with their face that they feel certain emotions – happy, sad, scared, angry, tired. Then have them stand up by their seats, and ask them to make a pose expressing each feeling using their face AND body.

ACTIVITY

In the story of the Gruffalo, all the animals were afraid of something. Talk to students about the characters in the story – what animals does Mouse meet along the way? After listing the animals, ask students to show how each character would be scared, just like they did with the other feelings earlier. Using their face AND body how would a snake look when he is scared....an owl....a fox. What about a mouse?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Talk to students about fear, and guide them with the following questions:
What makes them feel afraid? (the dark, bugs, etc.)
What makes them feel brave? (parents, friends)

* An important lesson to teach your students – Being brave does not mean you are not afraid; It means you don’t give in because you are afraid.*

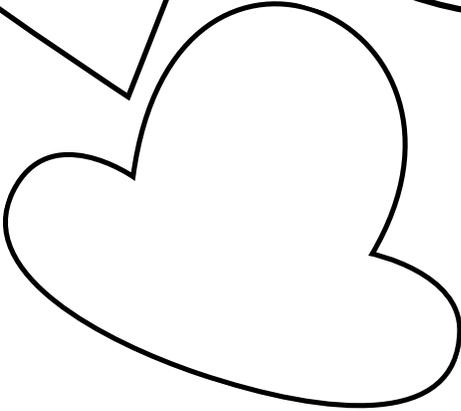
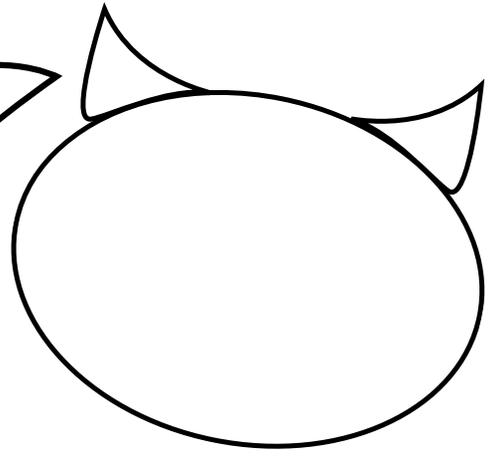
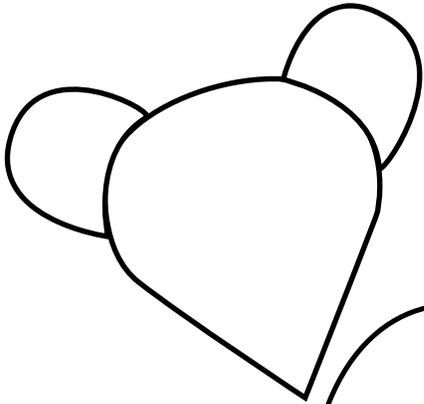
MORE

- Read the story *Is a Worry Worrying You?* by Ferida Wolff and talk about ways to overcome fears.
- Older students could add voice into the mix! How would your voice sound if you were scared, angry, etc. Can they put all three together, and show facial expression, body movement and use their voice to express a feeling?

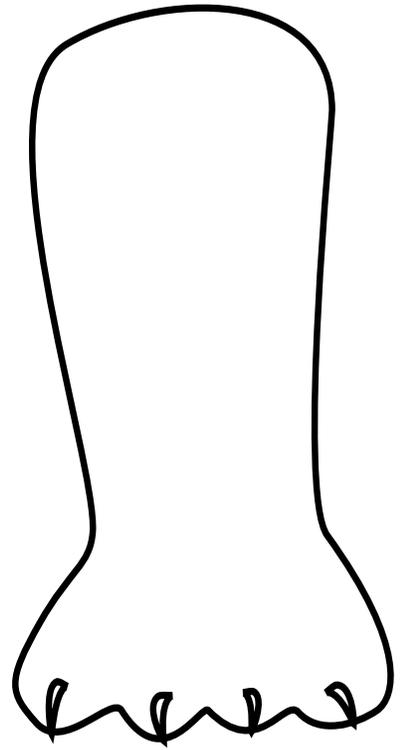
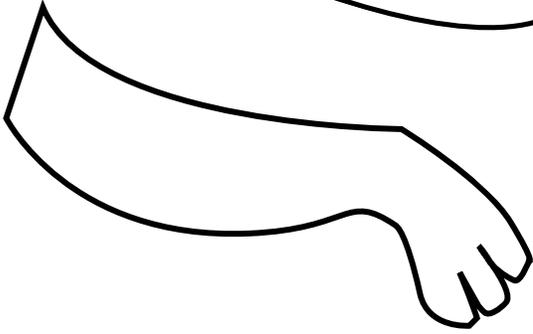
Related Literature – Check out these stories about friendly monsters!

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
Goodnight, Goon: A Petrifying Parody by Michael Rex
My Monster Mama Loves Me by Laura Leuck
My Creature Teacher by Laura Leuck
Jeepers Creepers: A Monstrous ABC by Laura Leuck
Huggly series by Tedd Arnold
Little Critter Series by Mercer Mayer
Any book with Elmo or Grover

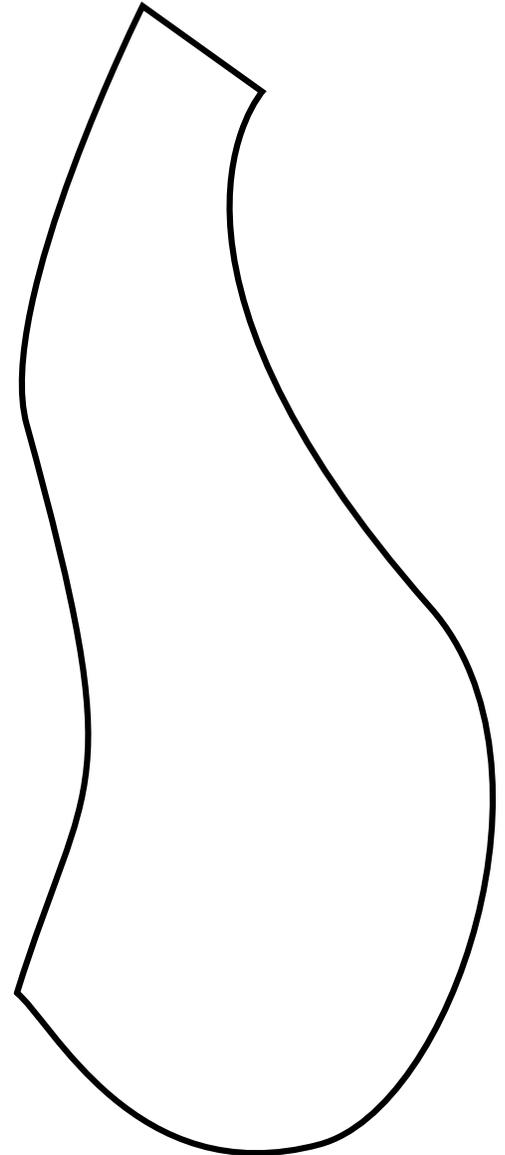
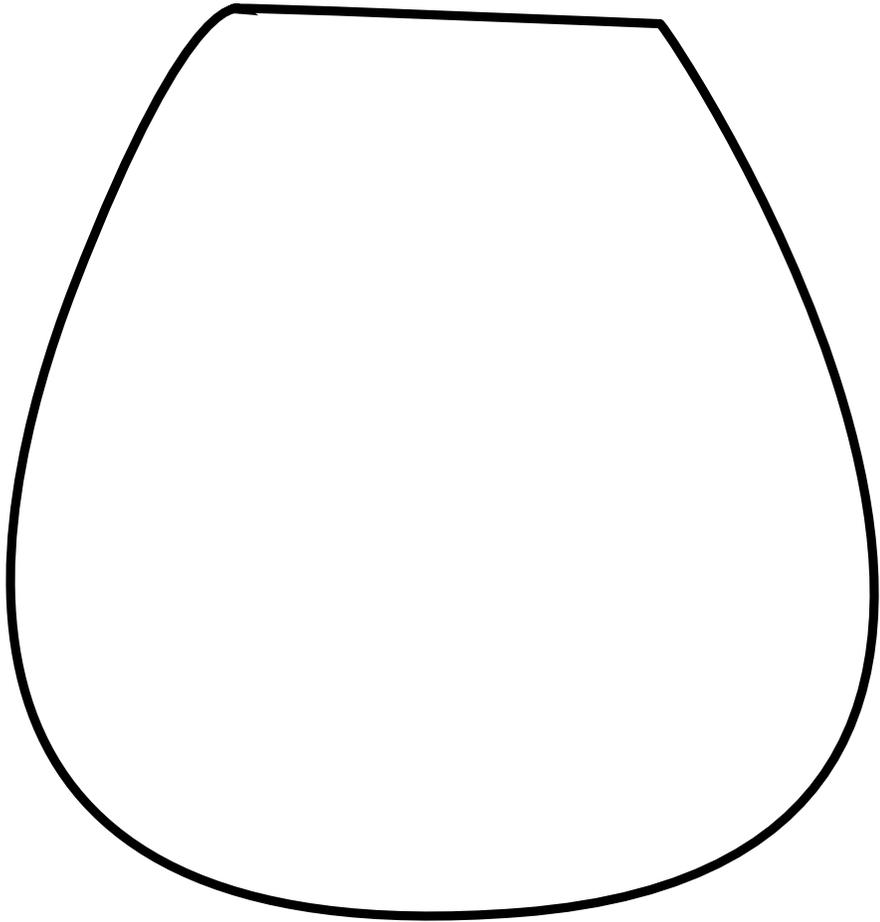
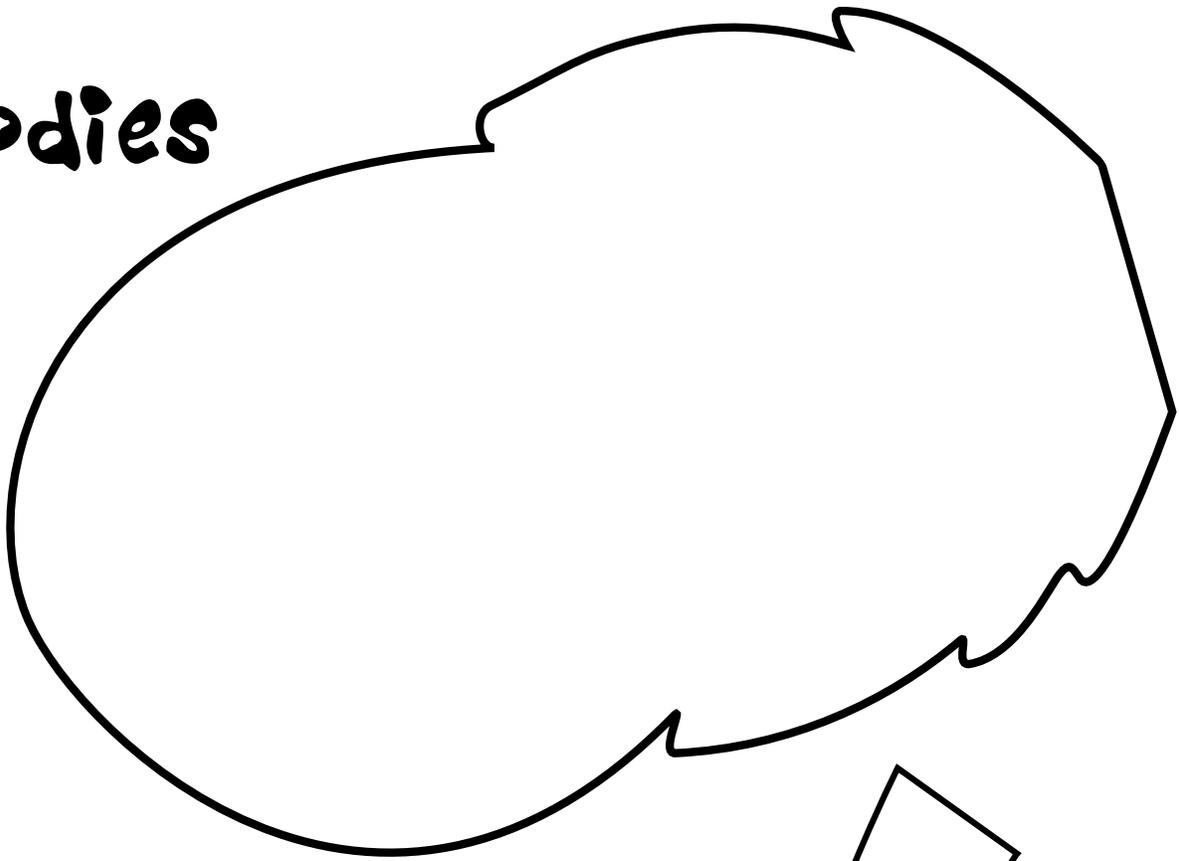
heads



Legs,
arms,
and
stuff



bodies



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