



STUDY GUIDE

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

By Maurice Sendak

Originally adapted for the stage by Carol Healas of TAG Theatre, Glasgow

Directed by Kim Selody



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WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

Based on the book by Maurice Sendak

Adapted for the stage by Carol Healas of
TAG Theatre, Scotland

Creative Team

Director Kim Selody
Set, Costume and Properties Designer Linda Leon
Lighting Designer Bill Williams
Composer Cathy Nosaty
Stage Manager Sarah Miller

Performers

Narrator Linda Carson
Max Raes Calvert

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This study guide was prepared by Bev Haskins.

About this Study Guide

What do you do when you are a small child and you have exhausted your mother's patience both with your words and deeds to the point where you are sent to your room without your supper? Well, if you are Max, in Maurice Sendak's wonderful picture book Where The Wild Things Are, you use your imagination to both explain your deeds and occupy the time without being bored.

The following Study Guide will help you, the teacher, take your students into the world of their imagination. Along with Max, they will brave the wilds and overcome any fears they may have of imaginary "wild things" lurking in the shadows. The activities presented here involve visual art skills, imagination, personal reflections, role playing, movement exercises and creative expression.

Drama and Dance

The students will...

- interpret the meaning of stories, drawn from a variety of sources and cultures, using some basic drama and dance techniques (e.g. role playing, movement sequences)
- solve problems through role playing and movement in drama and dance
- describe some basic ways in which the body can be used in space and time
- communicate their responses to a variety of dramatic stimuli
- demonstrate control of their bodies when moving like different objects and animals
- describe ways in which the experiences of characters in simple performances relate to their own experiences
- identify themes and subjects used in works of drama
- defend a point of view through speaking in role
- distinguish between real and imaginary situations in drama and dance
- perform a "soundscape" or sound collage based on a theme or topic
- **communicate understanding of works of drama through discussion, writing, movement and visual art work**

Visual Art

- produce two and three-dimensional works of art that communicate ideas for specific purposes
- identify a variety of art tools, materials and techniques and demonstrate understanding of their proper and safe use

BEFORE THE PLAY

Note from Kim Selody, Director

During our play some of your students will be using Masks as the Wild Things. Although we can supply the masks used by the children, you can choose to have your students make their own.

- *We suggest that you make them out of paper plates, cut in half and held on with an elastic band stapled to the plate.*
- *It is a good idea that the child's mouth be exposed, so they can gnash their teeth and roar.*
- *It is important that the child have both hands free while wearing the mask. That way the child's hands will be free to make claws.*

Samples of the masks used in the play are attached, which you are free to photocopy and use.

****SEE ATTACHED GRAPHIC OF PAPER PLATE MASK OR SAMPLES OF OUR MASK AT THE END OF THIS STUDY GUIDE.***

They can decorate the mask any way they wish. We suggest that the teacher collect all the masks and keep them until the Narrator asks for them. That way they are less likely to get damaged before they are needed. Then you can continue with the suggestion to retell the story with their masks in the AFTER THE PLAY Section.

Thanks, Kim

Proper Etiquette

It is always a good idea before watching any performance to discuss with your students how to be a good audience member. This is a participation play and so there will be times when the students are asked to make noises and perform actions. Discuss with them the difference between those times and the other times when they need to be quiet and listen to the actors.

Also discuss proper clapping procedures. Young children do not clap automatically after a performance and need some “rehearsals” to do it right. Practice beforehand. Talk about remaining in their seats (unless there is an emergency) and making sure they visit the bathroom before entering the theatre space.

Where the Wild Things Live (visual art)

In the play a magical forest of “fantastic colours and shapes” grows up in Max’s bedroom. Before actually seeing the forest they create on stage, create one of your own in the classroom. This can be done in one of several ways. Choose from paint, cut and paste, crayon, pastels as your medium.

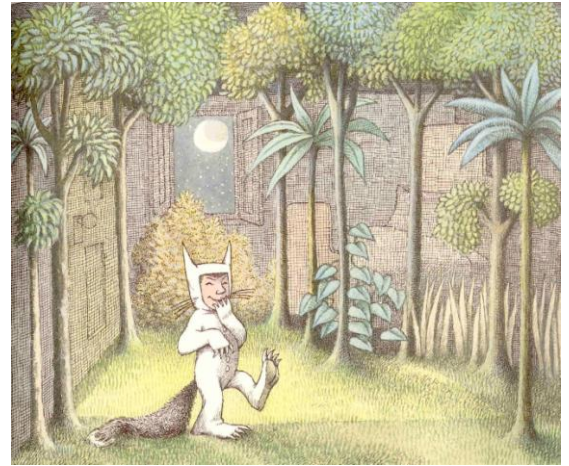
☒ each child individually creates a drawing of their imaginary forest

☒ children work in small groups and create larger murals of an imaginary forest

☒ the whole class work together and create an imaginary forest environment in the classroom

The Sounds of the Forest (creating a soundscape)

Now that your forest(s) are created brainstorm a list of possible sounds that might be heard in this magical place. Individually and in small groups, assign students to each type of sound listed and suggest that they find instruments in the classroom to create that particular sound. Encourage the use of “found” instruments from home and around the school (ie. things that you would not normally think of as musical instruments like a comb or a kitchen utensil or even parts of your body). When the individual sounds are perfected, sit in a circle and “orchestrate” the soundscape, calling in various sounds at different times and fading others out, etc. You might even create a story around the sounds and have the students use their sounds as they are mentioned in your story.



AFTER THE PLAY

So, What Did You Think? (Discussion)

It is important as soon as possible after viewing a performance to hold an open-ended discussion with your class about the play. You can direct the questioning in the following ways, but make sure that the students feel comfortable expressing their own opinions without judgement from anyone else.

Encourage them to justify why they feel and think as they do.

Possible topics of discussion:

- ⌘ What was the theme of this play?
- ⌘ What was your favourite part? Your least favourite part? Why?
- ⌘ Describe how the forest was created on stage. Did you think it was well done?
- ⌘ Did you like taking part in the play? Why or why not?
- ⌘ If you were the director what would you have done differently?

Max In Trouble (creative expressions, imagination, discussion, reflection)

1. Max has an explanation for everything bad that happened. He blames the dog for messing up the laundry and explains he needed the spoons for his drumming. Ask your students to think of some messes they have made at home or at school (or ones that could possibly happen, accidents of course) and brainstorm creative reasons why they happened. You could create a class “book” or a wall of pictures showing the “messes” and containing the creative explanations. Don’t forget to discuss that creative ideas aside, sometimes you just need to admit your mistake and say you’re sorry.
2. Max’s mother was so upset with him that she sent him to his room without supper as a “punishment” for what he had done and said. Have an open-ended honest discussion with your class about punishment techniques, which ones work and which don’t, and why parents (and teachers) feel the need from time to time to exact punishment. Children will have very different answers here; make sure you don’t pass judgment on what they say their parents do but let the child talk freely about the effectiveness of the technique. If you do hear something that concerns you discuss it immediately with your administration.

The Wild Things Come To School (creative movement)

Use the gym or the playground to allow the class to explore being “wild things” through movement and sound.

1. Have the students create “wild things” according to your instructions - the scariest, the largest, the smallest, the funniest, the most timid etc. Move accordingly.
2. Ask the students to move according to your instructions as above, and then also add movement variations such as fast, slow, lazy, frightened, sad, happy, worried, etc.
3. Ask the students to describe in words the way their “wild things” move.
4. Have students work in pairs and have one be the sculptor and the other the clay. The sculptor creates the clay into a “wild thing” which then comes “alive” and moves on a signal from the teacher. When all statues are created have the sculptors walk around and view each other’s work. Trade places.

The Face is the Thing (visual art, mask making)

Masks are used in the play and your class will have fun creating their own “wild thing” masks. You can do this in several different ways:



1. Paper bags - facial features can be cut out and additional features added with paint or crayon or cut and paste. These masks can be worn.
2. Paper plates - decorate the paper plate using cut and paste to create the face of a “wild thing”. Mount the paper plate mask on a stick or ruler and hold in front of the face. When the masks are created the children may wish to work in small groups and create puppet plays with their “wild things”. Another possibility is to retell the story of the play using their masks.

A Boat That Can Float (creative expression, problem solving, reflection)

Max needs a boat to get to where the wild things live. Create a project with your class to create sailboats of their own design that will float and move across a water table with a small wind (from a fan). Talk about possible materials to make the boats and sails and then let the children work individually or in pairs to create a boat they think will float and move with a small wind. Try them all out and cheer for those that stay afloat. Problem solve for those that don’t. What would have worked better?

Professor Presents... (drama, Mantle of the Expert - role playing, visual art)

There’s going to be a “wild things” international conference. All expert professors on wild things are invited to attend and present to the conference the “wild thing” they are the expert about. You, Professor ____, are getting ready to attend the conference and are excited that the world will finally know about the “wild thing” you have been studying all these years. But you will need to do some preparation before you are ready to present.

First of all you will need a large portrait in full colour of your “wild thing”. Use paint and large art paper to create this portrait.

Next you will need some vital information about your “wild thing”. Depending on the age of the class, ask the students to create a profile of their “wild thing” with some or all of the following information:

- ⌘ physical description - size, height, weight, hair-eye colour, body covering etc
- ⌘ where they live, food they eat, how they move
- ⌘ what are their fears, likes and dislikes
- ⌘ what is their personality like, etc.

When all is ready, stage the conference and have each expert professor present their “wild thing” to an appreciative audience of other experts who are encouraged to ask questions.

Art extension: create a 3-dimensional model of your “wild thing” from clay, play dough or plasticine. Older children could also make a shoe-box diorama of the “wild thing’s” habitat.

Save the Wild Things (drama, problem solving role play, reflection)

Scenario: Everyone in the town is upset. The wild things in the nearby forest have become very troublesome and everyone is worried and afraid of what might happen next. Rumours and stories are everywhere of all the horrible, scary and nasty things the wild things have been doing (or so people say).

Meeting # 1: Gather together as the people of the town to share stories and rumours about the wild things that live in the nearby forest. The teacher is also in role as one of the gang (townspeople) and joins in the discussion, encouraging everyone to share their story. The teacher may start by giving an example - *“Well, I’m really upset about my garden. I had wonderful vegetables growing ready to eat and I came out the other morning and there wasn’t a tomato or bean to be seen. Something had eaten everything.”*

The teacher eventually leads the discussion around to the fact that they want something done about this. They want the town officials to have all the wild things captured and put in cages at the zoo (note: discourage strongly the idea of killing all the wild things)

Meeting # 2: The professors/experts on the wild things gather to discuss the rumours they have heard that the people of the town want to capture all the wild things. They are very upset about this and want to do something to prevent this from happening. They need to speak to the town officials and persuade them that the wild things are not dangerous and can be prevented from doing damage without being put in cages. How will they guarantee the peoples’ safety?

The Final Confrontation: Divide the class into two sections and then in each section into smaller groups to meet and plan their arguments for their side of this case - the townspeople vs. the experts. The teacher will eventually role play the town official who will listen to all the arguments and then take the information back to the rest of the officials for a decision. While the arguments are being prepared the teacher stays out of role and moves from group to group helping each formulate their ideas and decide how best to present them.

When all is ready hold the meeting. From a position of authority the teacher can ask each group in turn to speak, question them and thank them when they have said enough. S/he can also “remove” any people who are disturbing the peace, as it were. If the arguments are strong enough one way or the other, a decision may be made during the meeting with all in agreement. If it is indecisive, close the meeting without any solution saying you will “get back” to them later and then hold an out-of-role discussion about how everyone thinks the town should decide based on the arguments that were heard.

(Note: for younger children the planning sessions may not be effective. Put the students in role and then as the town official, question individual children on the spot about their ideas and feelings on the matter.)

How to Tame a Wild Thing (creative expression)

Max casts a spell by staring at the wild things. How would you tame a wild thing? Have your students create a magic spell or incantation (poem) to tame a wild thing and perform it.

King/Queen for a Day (creative expression, problem solving)

Max has a chance to become king of the wild things and decide what they will do next. What if you could be king or queen of the country for just one day. What would you change or do during that day?

For younger students - create a pattern book - “If I was king/queen, I would.....” illustrate your sentence.

For older students - divide a piece of 12" by 18" art paper in half and then on one side draw and write about what you would do as king or queen that was personal, and on the other half something that is more global or for the whole world.

Party Time (creative expression)

Find a simple sugar cookie recipe and make a batch in class with your students. Allow each student to create their own “wild thing” cookie decorated with raisins, M&M’s, small sprinkles etc (anything small you can find that is edible). Make some “wild berry” juice to wash them down and have a party while you read the Maurice Sendak book *Where The Wild Things Are* to your class. Another good Sendak book along the same lines is *In Search of the Zipperumpazoo*.

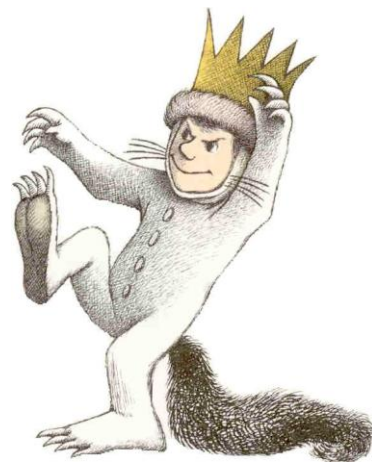
I Need You and You Need Me (reflection, discussion)

Eventually Max says he has to go home, because “my mom and dad need me at home”. Brainstorm with your class how and why their parents “need” them.

Do you think, maybe, Max needed his parents too? Also have students make a list of the ways in which they need their mom and/or dad.

It Was Imagination, I Know (creative expression, imagination, writing, visual art)

When Max ends up in his room without supper he uses his imagination to pass the time and creates this wonderful story about sailing to the land of the wild things. Supposing you were spending time in your bedroom, where could your imagination take you? Draw a picture of this place. Now, tell and/or write a story about an adventure you had in this place. Who or what did you meet there? What exciting things happened? How did you get back safely?



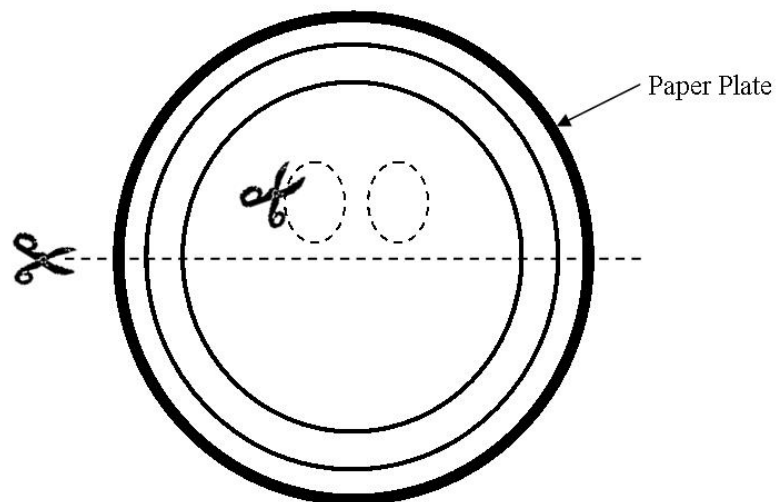
FOR FURTHER READING:

Maurice Sendak, the creator of *Where the Wild Things Are*, wrote and illustrated over one hundred children's books. Visit your local library and check out some of these titles to share with your students:

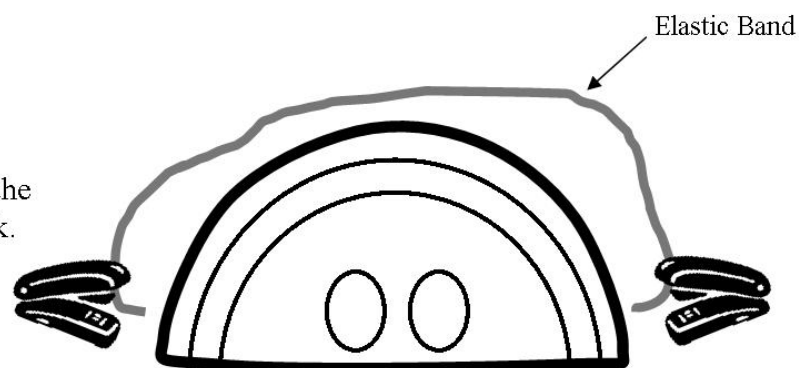
- ⌘ *Alligators All Around*
- ⌘ *Chicken Soup with Rice*
- ⌘ *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*
- ⌘ *In the Night Kitchen*
- ⌘ *Outside Over There*
- ⌘ *Pierre*
- ⌘ *Really Rosie*
- ⌘ *Seven Little Monsters*
- ⌘ *Some Swell Pup*

PAPER PLATE MASK

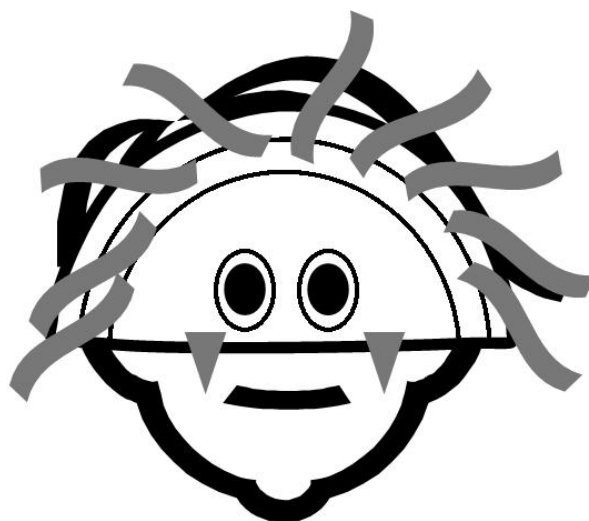
1. Cut paper plate in half and cut two eye holes.



2. Cut an elastic and staple the ends to the sides of the mask.



3. Decorate the mask to create your own wild thing.



SAMPLES OF WILD THINGS MASKS

You may use the samples on the following pages as a guide when creating your own masks or photocopy and make them into masks.

- For best results:
1. Enlarge the sample to fit on an 8 ½" x 11" paper.
 2. Glue to cardstock or cardboard and cut out the mask.
 3. Colour and/or decorate.
 4. Cut an elastic band and staple the ends to the sides of the mask



