

*SHADOWS, STRINGS AND OTHER THINGS: THE  
ENCHANTING THEATRE OF PUPPETS*



# PUNCH & JUDY



**Teachers Resource Guide**



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This teachers resource guide was created on the ancestral and unceded Lands of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy̓əm, sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, and sel̓ílwitlh Nations.

# History



On May 9th, 1662, **Samuel Pepys** was walking in London, England and stopped at the **Covent Garden** to watch **Pietro Gimonde** (Signor Bologna) from Italy perform a Pulcinella puppet show

In the 18th century, the marionette of Punch made a home in Britain with a famous puppeteer named **Martin Powell**

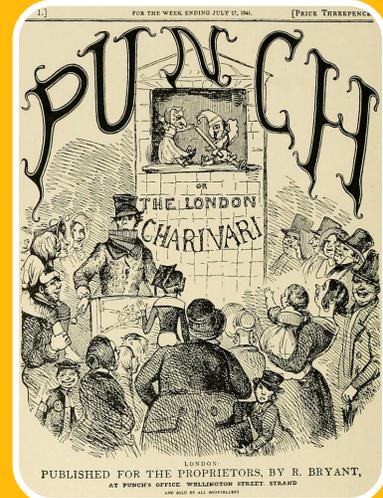
During the 19th century, Punch became a **hand puppet** making it easier to transport, and he began wearing yellow and red like a **jester or clown**

The earliest written script for a Punch and Judy show was published in 1828, based on a show by puppeteer Giovanni Piccini, written by John Payne Collier & George Cruikshank

Popularity of the Punch and Judy show began to fall at the end of the 20th and into the 21st century. Performers have needed to adapt their shows to keep up with modern demands

Originally came from the Italian **Commedia dell'Arte** street theatre of the 16th Century. They used a marionette called Polichinello or **Pulcinella** (later anglicized to 'Punch')

This kind of act was designed to work across language barriers using **slapstick comedy**, a style of humor that uses over-the-top physical actions, violence, and non-verbal humor



The growth of 'seaside towns' in the 19th century increased the need for portable and compact entertainment – Punch and Judy booths would often be seen on the seaside



# Characters



## Mr. Punch

- The main character and is now 357 years old (in 2019)
- A **clown**-like character with a big red nose and dressed like a **jester**
- Embodies a **Trickster** who misbehaves and carries a '**slapstick**'
- Originally was a **marionette**, but now is a **hand puppet**
- His famous catchphrase is "That's the way to do it!"

## Judy

- Originally known as Joan
- She is Mr. Punch's wife
- She is also a **clown**-like character, with a big red nose
- Mr. Punch and Judy fight a lot



## The Baby

- The child of Mr. Punch and Judy
- Mr. Punch is not good at taking care of The Baby which gets him into trouble

## Policeman

- A symbol of **law and order** who brings **justice**
- Comes to arrest Mr. Punch, but fails



## The Crocodile

- Joined the cast of characters around ~1860
- Linked to a Victorian interest in '**exotic**' animals and zoos
- Primarily concerned with stealing a string of sausages from Punch

# Characters



## Toby the Dog

- Was based on a live, performing dog, that did simple tricks
- The live dog was then replaced with a glove puppet
- Usually appears between scenes as a way of keeping the flow of the show

## Joey the Clown

- Mr. Punch's friend who plays tricks and outwits him
- Asks Mr. Punch to look after his string of sausages
- Based after **Joseph Grimaldi** (a famous English clown in the early 1800s)



## Doctor

- A minor character but has been in the cast for a long time
- He enters when Mr. Punch is not doing well after being bitten by Toby the Dog or after being scared by the Ghost



## Ghost

- Comes to give Mr. Punch a fright and teach him a lesson after he was being bad
- Some people say the Ghost is actually Judy



## The Devil

- Originally introduced as an act of **morality** and would punish Punch for his crimes
- The Devil's role has changed over the years and he sometimes is defeated by Punch



# Storyline

## Basic Plot:

1. **Punch** comes onstage and gets the audience's attention. **Judy** arrives. Punch and Judy fight.
2. Punch is asked to take care of **The Baby** and mistreats them. **The Policeman** comes to give justice. Punch and the Policeman fight.
3. Punch encounters **Joey the Clown** who asks Punch to look after his sausages. Joey often teases and outwits Punch.
4. Punch meets a **Crocodile** who steals Punch's sausages. Joey comes back and gets into a fight with Punch for losing his sausages.
5. A **Ghost** comes to give Punch a fright. After spooking Punch, he faints, and **The Doctor** appears to revive Punch. Punch and the Doctor fight.
6. A **Devil** (historically a Hangman) comes to take Punch away and punish him for his crimes. Punch and Devil fight. Sometimes Punch defeats Devil; sometimes the Devil wins.



## Activity

There is no set script for Punch and Judy shows -  
**MAKE UP YOUR OWN STORY!**

- How can you change the story to reflect your life?
- What do you think Punch would do in modern times?
- How might Punch treat people differently or better?
- What is the importance of **stories**?

# Makers



- The Punch and Judy puppets in *Shadows, Strings and Other Things: The Enchanting Theatre of Puppets* at the Museum of Anthropology were made by **Brian and Alison Davey** in 2019
- They own **The Puppetree Company** based in England
- Brian Davey has been a Punch and Judy puppeteer since 1977, a puppet-maker, and member of **The Punch and Judy Fellowship**, and **The Punch and Judy College of Professors**. He has made Punch and Judy theatre sets for museums, including the Victoria and Albert Museum (London), the Horniman Museum (London) and the V&A Museum of Childhood (London)

# Perspectives

## Is Punch and Judy too Violent?

Some say **yes**:

- Mr. Punch's character is violent to everybody and there are instances of domestic **abuse**, child abuse, and **sexism**
- Punch and Judy has a deep history of **racism**, with a discontinued character named **Jim Crow** and other racialized characters
- Could we use Punch and Judy as a way to talk about **bullying/anti-bullying** and **racism/anti-racism**?

Some say **no**:

- Punch and Judy is the longest running puppet show in the world, and it may be a **reflection of the times**
- Punch's character is supposed to be bad; he is supposed to show us what not to do, similar to the character of a **Trickster**. It is a play about **morality**

*"In drama we don't always learn morality from watching moral characters. We sometimes learn it from watching people behaving badly, which is usually more interesting."*  
(Clive Chandler, *Punch and Political Correctness*, in The Slapstick Symposium, 14)

- Through using puppets, can we **release bad or negative emotions** in a way that doesn't take it out on the people around us?
- Punch is a character of **satire** and his character has been adapted to 'beat up' puppets of Hitler, or Margaret Thatcher

What do you think?  
**IT IS UP TO YOU!**



# (Some) Big Ideas

**K**

**Social Studies:** Stories and traditions about ourselves and our families reflect who we are and where we are from.

**English:** Stories and other texts help us learn about ourselves and our families.

**Grade  
1**

**Social Studies:** Our rights, roles, and responsibilities are important for building strong communities.

**English:** Language and story can be a source of creativity and joy.

**Grade  
2**

**Social Studies:** Canada is made up of many diverse regions and communities.

**English:** Stories and other texts connect us to ourselves, our families, and our communities.

**Grade  
3**

**Social Studies:** People from diverse cultures and societies share some common experiences and aspects of life.

**English:** Stories can be understood from different perspectives.

**Grade  
4**

**Social Studies:** Demographic changes in North America created shifts in economic and political power.

**English:** Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged citizens.

# (Some) Big Ideas

## Grade 5

**Social Studies:** Immigration and multiculturalism continue to shape Canadian society and identity.  
**English:** Texts can be understood from different perspectives.

## Grade 6

**Social Studies:** Media sources can both positively and negatively affect our understanding of important events and issues.  
**English:** Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking.

## Grade 7

**Social Studies:** Religious and cultural practices that emerged during this period have endured and continue to influence people.  
**English:** Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.

## Grade 8

**Social Studies:** Changing ideas about the world created tension between people wanting to adopt new ideas and those wanting to preserve established traditions.  
**English:** Texts are socially, culturally, and historically constructed.

## Grade 9

**Social Studies:** Collective identity is constructed and can change over time; Emerging ideas and ideologies profoundly influence societies and events.  
**English:** People understand text differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives.

# Glossary

- **Abuse**: treating a person or animal with cruelty or violence.
- **Anti-Bullying**: actions working against bullying practices.
- **Anti-Racism**: actions that are opposing and intolerant of racism.
- **Bullying**: seeking to harm, intimidate or torment an individual.
- **Clown**: a comic entertainer, especially one in a circus, wearing a traditional costume and exaggerated makeup; behaves in a comical way.
- **Commedia dell'Arte**: improvised kind of popular comedy in Italian theatres during the 16th-18th century which is based on stock characters.
- **Covent Garden**: A district in the West End of London's main theatre and entertainment area.
- **Exotic**: a characteristic of a distant foreign country, which sometimes is made into negative stereotypes.
- **Hand-Puppet**: a puppet operated by using one's hands inside of it.
- **Jester**: a professional joker or "fool" at a medieval court, typically wearing a cap with bells on it and carrying a mock scepter.
- **Jim Crow**: the former practice of segregating Black people in the United States.
- **Joseph Grimaldi**: (1778-1837) an English comedian and dancer who expanded the role of the Clown.
- **Justice**: the quality of being fair and reasonable.
- **Law & Order**: a situation characterized by respect for and obedience to the rules of a society.
- **Marionette**: a puppet worked from above by strings attached to its limbs.
- **Martin Powell**: an Irish puppeteer who became famous for his show of satirical marionette shows that featured Punch.
- **Morality**: principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior.
- **Pietro Gimonde**: A puppeteer from Italy, also known as Signor Bologna.
- **Pulcinella**: is a classical character that originated in commedia dell'arte of the 17th century and became a stock character in Neapolitan puppetry.
- **Puppet**: a movable model of a person or animal that is used in entertainment and is typically moved either by strings controlled from above or by a hand inside it.
- **Puppetree Company**: A company owned by Brian and Alison Davey based out of Devon, England. They make Punch and Judy puppets.
- **Racism**: prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.
- **Samual Pepys**: A famous diarist (1633-1703) who first witnessed the first iteration of Punch and Judy in England.
- **Satire**: the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.
- **Sexism**: prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.
- **Slapstick Comedy**: A style of humor involving exaggerated physical activity.
- **Story**: an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment.
- **Trickster**: a person who cheats or deceives people; many Indigenous Nations have a Trickster figure who teaches morality through doing the wrong thing (ie. Naapi from Niitsitapi, Wesakechak from Nēhiyaw, Nanabush from Anishinabe, Raven and Coyote from many different Nations).
- **Violent**: behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

These terms are **bolded** throughout this document

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