THE IRON MAN

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

FOR TEACHERS WORKING WITH PUPILS IN YEARS 3 – 6
TALLER THAN A HOUSE, THE IRON MAN STOOD AT THE TOP OF THE CLIFF, ON THE VERY BRINK, IN THE DARKNESS.

The Iron Man has been eating every single piece of metal in sight: tractors, old cars, fences, right down to the last rusty nail, destroying farms everywhere. The angry farmers try and trap him, but in the end it’s down to a young boy to try and tame the monster.

Using paper-cut silhouettes, puppetry and stop-motion animation Matthew Robins, co-creator of *Something Very Far Away*, brings to life the world of *The Iron Man* so vividly that you’ll feel you are there. His distinctive handmade and visual style of storytelling lets you watch this atmospheric tale being created live on stage.
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INTRODUCTION

This pack is for teachers bringing pupils to see *The Iron Man* in spring 2017.

The Unicorn production of *The Iron Man* will be a fresh, imaginative and highly visual new version of this modern classic.

The classroom activities are designed to support and extend pupils’ visit to the theatre and offer teachers ways to pick up on and explore the themes in the play, before and after a visit. They will use drama and storytelling as ways of exploring ideas that are relevant to the play and to support National Curriculum requirements:

> ‘All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.’ National Curriculum

The resources will also provide National Curriculum links at Key Stage Two: to Literacy through the development of spoken word and writing tasks, to IT thorough the creation of animations and to SMCS aspects of learning.

There are free teacher CPD days for *The Iron Man* on Thu 17 Nov 2016 and Tue 24 Jan 2017 where teachers can find out more about the show and gain practical experience of the classroom activities, before leading them with a class.

To find out more about the CPD or to book your place, email schools@unicorntheatre.com.
A SHORT SUMMARY OF
THE IRON MAN

Ted Hughes’ *The Iron Man* is a modern classic, an extraordinary story of a giant Iron Man who arrives from nowhere.

*The Iron Man came to the top of the cliff.*
*How far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where did he come from? Nobody knows. How was he made? Nobody knows.*

The Iron Man begins consuming anything made of metal and in particular all the farming machinery. The people are terrified and outraged and need to stop the Iron Man but they don’t know how. The farmers decide to set a trap and bury him under hundreds of feet of earth. They dig a giant hole and cover it with leaves and twigs and on top place a red lorry as bait. But the Iron Man doesn’t come and eventually they take the lorry away.

One day a small boy sees the Iron Man near where the great pit has been dug and cleverly and gently he lures the Iron Man towards the hole by making the sound of metal; clanking a nail against a knife. With a great crash the Iron Man falls through the leaves and sticks and into the giant hole.

The farmers are delighted and bury the Iron Man in earth; but the boy feels guilty for luring the Iron Man to his fate.

The following spring, the Iron Man emerges from where he was buried and begins devouring the farm machinery again. Once again the boy has an idea; he leads the Iron Man to a scrap yard and there he is given all the scrap metal that he wants. He has found a way for them to co-exist.

Some time later there came strange news. One of the stars in the constellation of Orion was changing, growing bigger and bigger and getting closer to earth. It was a terrible space-bat-angel-dragon and it wanted to devour everything on earth. The space-bat-angel-dragon is so big and so powerful it seems that nothing will be able to overcome it. Until the Iron Man steps up and challenges the space-bat-angel-dragon to a contest and the two of them battle for the future of the earth.

The Unicorn production of *The Iron Man* will combine Ted Hughes’ classic text with puppetry, animation, movement and sound, creating a powerful collage which will bring the story alive.

The classroom activities in this pack will offer a range of ways of exploring both Ted Hughes’ text and the Unicorn production. One sequence will provide materials which echo Matthew Robin’s creative process in adapting the book for the stage and in particular his work as an animator. Using the idea of collage and combining this with stop motion animation, the resource will take you through a step by step process of planning, preparing, filming and editing a short piece of animation based on the pupil’s responses to the play and their own creative ideas.
INTERVIEW WITH
MATTHEW ROBINS
CREATOR OF THE IRON MAN

The process of creating this production of The Iron Man is a long one. From the initial idea and commitment to making the piece, Matthew Robins will have been working on the play for around two years when it is finally shown at the theatre in January 2017. In this time he will spend time exploring Ted Hughes’ book, developing his own personal responses to the story and beginning the process of translating it into something which will work on stage.

He will also spend time with creative collaborators; actors, sound designers and puppeteers, who will help him create the final piece through practical workshops at different points over the two year process.

The conversation below takes place after Matthew has led two workshops developing his ideas for the show. However with nine months to go until the production opens, many questions are still unanswered at this point.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO ADAPT TED HUGHES’ THE IRON MAN FOR THE STAGE?

Purni (artistic director of the Unicorn Theatre) gave me a few choices of the things she thought I might want to do, and with the other options I could picture them so clearly I thought ‘there’s not really that much point doing it’, whereas with The Iron Man I thought ‘oh, that will be really difficult, it will be a challenge.’

I really like a challenge - it’s so stressful, not in a bad way, but every time you make a decision you think about what someone else might think. Yesterday I was trying to write one of the scenes and I thought ‘oh no, I can imagine Purni not liking that and Carol Hughes (Ted Hughes’ wife) not liking that.’ And then I have to work out why I think that and I come to realise it’s often because I don’t like it or it’s maybe a bit of a lazy idea.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF ADAPTING THIS BOOK?

In the book there’s the line ‘where has The Iron Man come from? Nobody knows.’ And I think it’s my job to know where he’s come from in a way, because it then forms his behaviour in the show. He keeps coming out from the sea, so I’ll think about why he is down there - why is he living in the sea?

Maybe it’s the silence that he likes?

The book is told like a fable, quite fairytale like; it doesn’t have the realism of a novel. But I think when it’s on stage it will need a bit more structure to it. There’s the part where the Iron Man is buried in a pit, but the book doesn’t really say how he feels about it. It might be that he loves it; he might love the silence and the dark for a while. I’ve got to find a way to make those things make
sense to an audience.

With the role of the boy, I’m trying to give him more of a character. I’m trying to create the show without using too much talking or too many words, so the boy has to have attributes that he doesn’t have to have in the book. The route I’m going down is that he’s much more interested in the natural world than the book might suggest - he’s kind of based on me when I was younger, he’s out in the fields looking at insects and drawing them or taking photos of them. I think that opens him up a bit more, maybe that’s why he’s less frightened of the Iron Man than everyone else? Because he’s curious and sees him as he would see a weird insect or something.

**CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT HOW THE PRODUCTION MIGHT LOOK AND FEEL?**

The production will combine lots of different elements; object manipulation, puppetry, animation, sections of choreography and even some singing. I want the show to have quite a collaged feel; to feel really layered. The way I’m thinking of it, I’m not trying to paint a masterpiece, instead it’s a collection of paintings. Or it’s like a circus, where something will come on and then something else and then something else - I want to try and find different ways to keep this story going. It is my job to make a visual version of the words, so I hope this slightly collage-like structure will work.

There might be little snippets of documentaries about nature that I can make and include. Or for the end, where the Iron Man has to fight the space-bat-angel-dragon creature, I was thinking about birds and insects that have war like patterns on them to make them seem more scary than they are, and I was thinking the boy could be interested in that.

There will be three performers in the show and I want to work with people who aren’t just actors but who are comfortable with different kinds of performing. So one of them I hope will be a dancer, one a choreographer and another a puppeteer.

The sound designer, Owen Crouch is really into the idea of using organic sounds; for example sound created by banging metal things - you can create so many weird noises out of it. Exploring a building and finding lots of real sounds, he’s going to use that as his instruments.

**HOW ARE YOU WORKING WITH THE TEXT AND ADAPTING IT FOR YOUR PRODUCTION?**

Mainly what I’m doing is going through the book and trying to write a description of what actually happens; so when things happen in the book that will be difficult because they wouldn’t make sense on stage, I have to look at them and say ‘what would my version of that event be’?

For example, in the book, the boy and his dad are driving along and they see the Iron Man and knock him over. It’s quite funny in the book, but I think on stage it wouldn’t work visually, so I’m exploring what that scene is doing that we can show in a different way. Maybe it’s that the Iron Man is sitting on their house but they can’t see him; they’re trying to persuade the farmers that this Iron Man exists, but he’s so big they don’t see he’s there. I’m not saying this is definitely going to happen, but I’m just trying to find ways of matching the emotion of the book and not change it for the sake of changing it. I do things quite visually, or with little language, it’s a different medium.
Every time I’ve told people I’m working on this show they say ‘oh it’s my favourite book.’ I think everyone has an expectation, but I also think many people may not have read it for some time and so what they’ll want to go away with is that feeling they got from the book when they read it. That’s why I feel I need to make the show feel satisfying, to give them that emotion rather than create an exact replica of the narrative.

**HOW ARE YOU THINKING OF CREATING THE SPACE-BAT-ANGEL-DRAGON CREATURE?**

I think it will be quite interesting working with a choreographer on the creature, because that might be where we come up with something new, rather than just another puppet and it might have a more organic movement to it. We’ll also need to think about scale because it’s meant to be huge, (the size of a planet).

In the story things just change scale; at one point the Iron Man is meant to have a head as big as a house, and at the next point he’s sitting in a scrap yard. I think hopefully a lot of this can be shown using darkness, with things appearing in the darkness and showing the shadows of things. I was thinking at one point maybe we only need to see the space-bat-angel-dragon’s eyes, otherwise the Iron Man will have to be tiny for the scale to work. It’s the bit I’m most nervous about because I haven’t thought enough about it yet.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SPACE-BAT-ANGEL-DRAGON REPRESENTS?**

Obviously it’s meant to represent something in the book, like a threat, or some kind of war. In a way, it could be a mental or emotional thing, like depression, but I think it could be anything. I’ve decided I don’t need to be thinking about what it represents. I’m sure a lot of people will read into it, as I think that’s what fables are for. That’s why you have to put yourself into the story, so at least if it works or doesn’t work you’ve done something genuine; your own sort of metaphor.

One way of representing it would be through animation, but for me that feels like a cheat, as it would be so easy to have an animation on screen with the Iron Man puppet reacting to it. I feel because it is so easy now to bring projection into live shows, people use it to solve lots of problems.

I feel that my whole goal with this show is that anything that feels like the easy way to do it is the wrong way. And I don’t know if I’m just giving myself a load of work that I don’t need to - I could have a much more pleasant year just getting on with it and making all the parts, but I sort of think there is more of an opportunity to make something that feels quite immersive.
INTRODUCTION

Pre-show activities have been designed so that children can explore some of the themes within the play before their visit. By establishing the setting of the story, a community of farmers, and introducing the threat the Iron Man poses to those farmers, the children have the opportunity to explore how people behave when something they don’t understand threatens their way of life and how they respond when something inexplicable and disturbing happens within their community. When they see the production, children will have a live connection with what is happening on stage, bringing some prior experience to the theatre event in a way that enhances and deepens their experience.

Before beginning the drama work it will be useful to establish whether children know the story of The Iron Man or not. Explain that they are going to create some drama around moments early on in the story which won’t be seen in much detail in the play. If children do know the story they will need to use their imaginations to create what people did, thought and felt at different moments, even though they might know what happens next, just as actors need to do when rehearsing and performing a play. For children who don’t know the story the action can unfold within the drama – so that you can use the element of surprise with the arrival of the Iron Man into the farming community.

Post-show activities provide a framework for children to create a stop motion animation drawing on their responses to the play.

This post show activity will also give the children the opportunity to reflect on the different elements of the production in which puppets, shadow-puppetry, dance, animation, live camera, sound, music and lighting all combine to create the piece. Matthew Robins, the director of the show, describes the production as a collage, where all the elements come together to tell the story.
SECTION ONE
THE FARMERS

AIMS
• To introduce the setting of the play, asking children to imagine they are a community of farmers who work the land.
• To explore the way in which the farmers rely on their tractors and farm machinery for their way of life.

STRATEGIES
Whole class discussion, listening, sharing ideas, still image, thought tracking, scene-making, improvisation, the listening hand, slow motion movement.

RESOURCES
A selection of images of farmland and farms, strips of paper and felt pens, details of farm machinery (resource 1).

TIME
Approx 1 hour 20 minutes

STAGE ONE - CLASS DISCUSSION
• Introduce the fact that you are going to see a play at the Unicorn Theatre called *The Iron Man* and that you are going to explore the setting and some of the characters before your visit.
• On the IWB look at some images of the kind of place our story takes place; fields as far as the eye can see, with farms dotted around. You could look at the layout of a typical farm, with a farm house, a farmyard, outhouses and surrounding fields.
• Start with a discussion about farmers: *What do they do? How do they spend their days? What happens on a farm at different times of the year? What kinds of things affect what they have to do as farmers? What might they care about? What might they worry about?*
• Write up a list all the kinds of things a farmer might do as part of their job. Talk about the different seasons and how the weather affects their work.

STAGE TWO - A FARMER’S LIFE (STOP/GO)
• Introduce a game of ‘Stop/Go’. Ask the children to walk around the hall and stop and go when you say. Practice the discipline of stopping as still as a statue. Now when you say ‘stop’, add in the still images you want them to create as farmers: *Looking up to the sky to check the weather; shearing a sheep; milking a cow* (either by hand or attaching the mechanical milking device), *checking their seeds before planting; mending their tractor; checking the crops for disease or pests*. Use some of the ideas they came up with in the opening discussion.

STAGE THREE - MAKING THE FARMERS’ MACHINERY
• Talk about *arable farming* and the way in which the farmers grow food which is then sent to shops, markets, supermarkets and factories and how they then have the money to buy other products that they don’t grow themselves. In modern farming, farmers don’t grow everything: one farmer might grow cabbages and potatoes, another carrots and cauliflower, another wheat and corn. Introduce the idea of how important a farmer’s tractor and farm machinery is in modern farming, allowing them to grow produce on a large scale.
• In groups of six allocate the children a piece of farm machinery with detail about what their particular piece of machinery does (Resource 1). Ask the children to create their farm machine physically as a group, imagining how it might look and function.
• See all of the groups’ farm machines in action.
• Now introduce the idea that these machines are a little old. Maybe if they have blades they are getting blunt, perhaps they are a bit rusty, maybe a small part has broken or something has got stuck. Ask the groups to show their machine when part of it is not working.
• See each group’s machine going wrong. When you have seen them all ask the class to imagine they are the farmers who own the machine and ask them questions about what happened to their machine, why it isn’t working and what the implications are for them. For example: Is it possible to fix it? Can you get another part? What will happen if you can’t get it working soon? Could you borrow from one of your farm neighbours? If you can’t what other ways could you get the job done? Do you think it is time to replace? – these things can be very expensive etc.
• Ask the children to discuss in pairs what the farmers love about their lives and what the challenges of their jobs might be. Feedback these thoughts.
• When you get back to the classroom you can show the class photographs or videos of farm machinery working so they can see the scale of these machines and how much they do for farmers.

STAGE FOUR – THE FARMERS MEET AT THE PUB
• In groups of four or five ask the children to improvise the conversation the farmers have later that week when they meet in the pub. Once a week the farmers like to meet for a drink (just one, as they have to get up early seven days a week) and they discuss all the things which are important to them; the weather, their crops, their animals, their farm equipment, their families. Sometimes farmers would agree to lend each other machinery and help each other out if they could.
• When they have improvised for a short while explain that we are going to ‘listen in’ to some of the conversations using the ‘listening hand’. When you stand near a group and open your hand above their scene we can all imagine a microphone that allows us to listen in to their conversations. Groups can choose to go back to the beginning of their improvisation or pick up where they left off.
• Reflect on what you have discovered about the kind of things which concern farmers and what is important to them. Why do you think they might choose this life? What kind of qualities and skills do farmers have?

STAGE FIVE – THE FARMER’S DREAM
• In groups of four, ask the children to create a still picture of something one of the farmers dreamt that night called: ‘the farmer’s wonderful dream’. Now ask them to create another still image: ‘the farmer’s nightmare’. Remind the children about the nature of dreams: dreams can be quite literal and every-day or they might be much more strange and unexpected. They can choose which they want in their dream sequence.
• With their two images ask the groups to find a way to move physically from one to the other, in slow motion. They can decide whether to begin with a wonderful dream which turns into a nightmare, or a nightmare which turns into a wonderful dream.
• Give each group a strip of paper and pen and ask them to give their dream sequence a title. Give the children a choice of music which they could use to underscore their dream.
• Share the groups’ work and ask the children to reflect on what they observed in each other’s dream sequences. What does it tell you about what is important to these farmers? What does it say about what they might worry about?
SECTION TWO
HOGARTH SEES THE IRON MAN

AIMS
- To introduce the arrival of the Iron Man in the farming community.
- To create short scenes showing Hogarth’s family’s response to what he has seen.
- To explore how the farmers react when they hear something that is unbelievable and frightening and which could be a great threat to their way of life.

STRATEGIES
Still image, thought tracking, improvisation, short scene-making, scriptwriting, writing in role.

RESOURCES
Extracts from Ted Hughes’ The Iron Man (Resource 2)

TIME
Approx 1 hour 10 minutes

STAGE ONE – HOGARTH SEES SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY
- Explain that you will be focussing on one farm where a boy named Hogarth lives with his father, mother and sister. One day Hogarth is out in the fields and woods, near where the fields meet a cliff at the edge of the sea. Hogarth loves to be outside and to observe and collect all kinds of wildlife. One day something extraordinary happened.
- Read the extract from Ted Hughes’ The Iron Man (Resource 2). Ask the children to close their eyes while they listen and see if they can picture what Hogarth sees. Ask the children to share with a partner one detail from the story which particularly struck them.
- Ask all the children to find a space on their own and to create a statue of Hogarth seeing the great Iron Man in the half light and then a statue of Hogarth running home. Ask the children to think what might be going through Hogarth’s head as he runs home to tell his family what has happened. Tap some of the children gently on the shoulder and ask to hear some of those thoughts out loud.
- Together list as many words you can think of which would describe how Hogarth might be feeling at this time.

STAGE TWO – HOGARTH TELLS HIS FAMILY
- In groups of four, ask the children to create a still image of what happens when Hogarth tells his family what he’s seen. See two or three of the images (choose ones which show contrasting reactions to the news) and ask the children who are audience members to think about what might be going through the family’s minds at that point. Explore some of the reasons they might not believe him. Thought track some of the family members; invite children to come up and stand behind one of the family members and speak their thoughts in the first person.
- Back in their groups, ask the children to use their still image as a starting point to improvise a scene which shows what happens. Ask them to think about: Whether his family believe Hogarth;
What they do and what they say; What questions they would have for him; What they are worried about.

• For children who are playing Hogarth ask them to think about how they are going to tell their family. What might he say to persuade them it is true? What might he say if they don’t believe him? Is there one thing he might not tell them and why would he choose not to?

• Ask the groups to edit and script their scenes, to start and finish their scene with a still picture and to give each family member no more than two lines each in the scene – they will need to make decisions about which lines of dialogue most clearly show what the family members feel and think.

• See the scenes and discuss how all the family members react. If the family members don’t believe Hogarth, what explanation might they have for why Hogarth is telling them this story? For those scenes where Hogarth’s family believe what he has told them think about what might they do next.

• Explain that in the story, Hogarth’s family eventually does believe him. As a class think about those scenes you have seen where the family doesn’t believe his story and what Hogarth might do or say to change their minds. It is important that they believe Hogarth without seeing evidence with their own eyes. For example, if Hogarth has been sent to his room for telling stories think about how he might persuade them of what he’s seen. What else could he say, and why is it so important to him that they believe him?

• Extension: You might want to ask the children to imagine they are Hogarth in his room writing a note to his family trying to persuade them of what he saw. Sometimes when people are very emotional it is hard to listen to each other and writing something can get your point across more easily. Try to think of what Hogarth told them from the family’s point of view and answer some of the points they have made: for example, if they suggest he saw something in the half-light which looked like an iron giant, but could have been a crane or helicopter, why does he know it wasn’t? Or if they said it was in his imagination, or that he dreamt it, how would he answer that?

STAGE THREE – THE FARMERS’ REACTION TO NEWS OF AN IRON MAN

• Tell the class that Hogarth’s father immediately got into his car and went to warn the other farmers about the giant Iron Man striding over their fields. The farmers don’t believe Hogarth’s story. Some of them laugh at the idea and they say it is nonsense, he’s only a child after all. Discuss the kinds of things that the farmers might say to explain Hogarth’s story (it’s his imagination, he’s just a child, he’s attention seeking, he saw something else in the twilight he mistook for a giant iron man etc).

• In groups ask the children to improvise the conversation the farmers have in the pub later that evening, where they are doubting Hogarth’s story. Use the ‘listening hand’ technique to listen into some of their improvisations.

• When you have heard some conversations, ask the groups to make a still picture of the farmers, in the pub, alone with their thought after Hogarth’s father has left. Do they think any of the farmers have any doubts? What would it mean if the Iron Man really did exist? What questions or thoughts might they have deep down which they didn’t ask? What might have stopped them voicing these thoughts? Thought track the farmers finding out what they thought but didn’t say.
SECTION THREE
WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE IRON MAN

AIMS
• To explore Hogarth and the farmers’ response to the perceived threat of the Iron Man – to try and destroy him.
• To reflect on how Hogarth might feel following the part he played in the Iron Man’s downfall.

STRATEGIES
‘Keeper of the keys’, still image, mime, scene-making, teacher and children in-role, ‘Story Whoosh’.

RESOURCES
A bunch of keys, extract (Resource 3), Story Whoosh (Resource 4), scarf, hat or jacket for in-role work as Hogarth’s father, paper and pencils, string, tape or chalk.

TIME
Approx 1 hour 10 minutes

STAGE ONE – WHAT THE FARMERS DISCOVER
• Start with a game of ‘keeper of the keys’. The children sit in a circle and one person has a bunch of keys behind their back. One person is blindfolded and is brought into the middle of the circle. The whole group try to pass the keys around from one to the other and the blindfolded person has to point to the person they think has the keys. They have three guesses after which they are out and someone else takes their place in the middle of the circle. If they guess correctly the person they pointed to takes their place in the centre of the circle.
• Explain they are going to imagine they are the farmers again and it is the morning after the last discussion in the pub. Move the class into groups of three but explain that at first they are going to work on their own. Explain that early next morning the farmers went out to get on with their jobs when they saw something unexpected. Give each child one of three things their farmer finds that morning;
  1) something that looks like a set of footprints – but each print is as big as a bed;
  2) something made out of metal that looks almost like it could be a huge ear;
  3) a tractor with a huge chunk missing, it looks almost like it has had a bite taken out of it.
• Ask the children to find a space in the hall on their own. Ask them to create two still pictures which shows their farmer finding the piece of evidence. 1) They see something strange, they’re not sure what it could be. 2) Do they take a closer look? Do they stand back?
• Move the class into their threes. Ask them to create a short scene (one line for each farmer) where the farmers show each other the evidence they have seen.
• Now ask them to add a still picture to the end of their scene. It is the moment the farmers see the Iron Man for themselves. We want to see the image of the three farmers, they need to imagine what the Iron Man is doing when they first see it. Remind them that he only eats metal.
• See all the groups’ scenes. At the end of their scene ask them, in-role as the farmers, what they see: Can they describe the Iron Man? What is the Iron Man doing? What would they say to Hogarth
STAGE TWO: THE FARMERS’ MEETING – WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?
• Explain that as the news goes around the farmers call an emergency meeting. Set up the space as it might be in a local town or village hall (using benches or chairs for the farmers to sit on) and explain that you will go into role as Hogarth’s father who will chair the meeting. Start the meeting by first asking what people have witnessed. Acknowledge the seriousness of the situation, but the Iron Man only seems to want metal, he doesn’t seem to want to harm humans. However the Iron Man has already eaten quite a number of tractors and other machines and doesn’t seem to be stopping.
• Discuss what they should do about it. What is the nature of the threat to their community and how can they stop what is happening? List as many ideas as you can.
• People are bound to want to attack, to bring in the army and blow up the Iron Man. This is a natural response to the threat, and an important part of Ted Hughes’ story, so acknowledge why people would want to do this from within the role. When you have as many different ideas as you can think of examine the pros and cons of each from within the role.
• Stepping out of role explain that in the story the farmers decided not to tell the police or the army, but to deal with the threat themselves. So while calling in the army and blowing up the Iron Man might seem the most sensible response, they did not choose to do that. Ask the children to think about why that might be. Why might they want to deal with it themselves? In the book it says: They couldn’t call in the police or the Army, because nobody would believe them about this iron monster. They would do something for themselves.

STAGE THREE – THEY DIG A GREAT PIT
• Explain that the farmers decided to dig a deep pit as a trap for the Iron Man and that when he had fallen into the hole they would bury him in earth.
• Read the description of the hole that they dug (Resource 3).
• Create a representation of the edge of the pit in the centre of the hall using a long length of string, some masking tape or chalk.
• Sit the class in a circle around the hole and run the Story Whoosh (Resource 4).
• A Story Whoosh is a simple way of acting out a story as a whole class. Read the story and ask children to come up in turn around the circle to and act out moments as you narrate it.

STAGE FOUR – HOGARTH’S DREAM
• Ask the children to lie down and imagine they were Hogarth that night in bed looking back on the day when the Iron Man was finally captured and buried because of his quick actions. What was the thing he most remembered from the day? How did he feel when the farmers all cheered him? What does he think about as he drifts off to sleep that night?
• Give the children a piece of paper and ask them to write down what happened in the dream Hogarth has that night, safe at home in his bed, with the Iron Man buried deep beneath the earth.
SECTION FOUR
ANIMATION IS FUN

AIMS
• To provide a way for the children to respond to the production of The Iron Man in an open and creative way, enabling them to explore and extend their responses to the play.
• To learn the processes of stop motion animation and create a short animated film.
• To make a creative response to the Unicorn’s production of The Iron Man, giving expression to their own ideas, feelings and thoughts about the Iron Man within the aesthetic language of the play they saw.

STRATEGIES
Still image, underscoring, collage, stop-motion animation.

RESOURCES
Animation is Fun (film resource available on the Iron Man page of Unicorn website), extracts from Ted Hughes’ text (Resource 5), music choices for underscoring, large card, glue, blue-tac, magazines, scissors, story-boarding template, iPad with the app ‘I can Animate’ (or other stop motion animation app or software), tripod/iPad holder, table lamps, clamps and tape.

TIME
Approx 4 x 1 hour sessions

STAGE ONE – REFLECTING ON THE PLAY
• Begin by explaining that they are going to make their own animation based on The Iron Man. They can choose to retell their favourite moment from the play, or they can make an animation of something that we didn’t see on stage, but they imagine for themselves. For example, the director, Matthew Robins, imagined a dream sequence in his version of the story, when the Iron Man was in the Scrap Yard, which wasn’t in the book. Explain that you will start by finding ideas for their animations by first looking back on the experience of seeing the play.
• Ask the children to share their favourite moments from the production and to write them up so that everyone can see them.
• Move the children into groups of five and ask them to create five still pictures which show some their best moments from the production. When they have found their five, ask them to practise moving from one image to the next in slow motion ready for sharing.
• See the groups’ work and draw out what it was that struck them most about the production.
• Discuss the many different ways in which Matthew told the story: puppetry, shadow puppetry, dance, animation, live camera, sound, music and lighting and which parts they felt were most effective.

STAGE TWO – THINKING ABOUT ANIMATION
• Play the first two sections of the film: Animation is Fun and Paper Collage Animation.
• Remember the places in the production where paper collage animation was used to tell parts of the story and what they noticed about those animations.
• Discuss examples of animations the children enjoy and try to identify how those animations have been made. For example, Wallace and Gromit animations use 3D figures.
STAGE THREE – CREATING YOUR STORY

‘Your story can be funny, sad, scary, dream-like. It can be anything your imagination comes up with. The magic thing about making animation is that your imagination doesn’t have to have any limits at all.’ (Matthew Robins)

- Play part three of the film: Story and Story Board.
- Move the class into groups of three to create an animation together.
- Remind them what Matthew said about their first animation being only ten seconds long and explain you are going to develop their ideas for animations through drama.
- Ask each group of three to choose the starting point for their animation. It could be:
  a) What happened before the story begins, using the opening lines from the book and the play.
  b) What happened when the people see the space-bat-angel-dragon flying towards earth creating their own version of the creature, using Ted Hughes’ description.
  c) What happens when the space-bat-angel-dragon lands on Australia?
  d) What happens at the end of the story, showing how the people on earth responded to the space-bat-angel-dragon’s singing.
  e) they could choose to animate their favourite moment from the Unicorn’s production if one has particularly captured their imagination.

(Resource 5 - Ted Hughes’ text for these moments)

- Ask groups to decide what they would like to happen in their animation and show five still images showing their story. The important thing to decide at this stage is: a) Where does the story take place? b) Who is in their story? (try to have no more than three characters) c) what happens to these characters? d) How will their story begin and how does it end?
- Practise showing their story within ten seconds, finding a way to move from one image to the next.
- See the work. You could find a selection of music and ask the children to choose which one they would like to underscore their piece. Observe the way in which the music or sound affects help tell the story.

STAGE FOUR – STORY-BOARDING

‘A storyboard is a bit like a comic strip, where you draw out the main events in your animation.’

- Give the children a template of six frames (Resource 6) for their story board and ask them to sketch their story into the template. Remind them of what Matthew said about the purpose of the storyboard: ‘The storyboard doesn’t have to be drawn amazingly well at all. It’s just a guide to help you remember what you’re doing. Actually it’s quite a good idea not to put all your energy into drawing the storyboard and making it perfect and save that energy for making the animation itself.’

STAGE FIVE – COLLAGE BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERS

‘One of the quickest ways and one of the most fun ways to make animation is to use old magazines, and old books, anything you’ve got lying around that’s got pictures in. The good thing about that is you don’t even have to be very good at drawing to make animation this way.’

- Working in their groups get the children to create their background setting for their animation.
- Give each group a large piece of card (between A3 and A2), magazines, scissors, glue and blue-tac. They can use the images they find in the magazines to suggest how they make their background and will need to work together accepting and developing each other’s ideas.
• Use blue-tac when there is something that they will need to keep still but might need to move during the animation (for example if you want something to appear from behind a hill, or a tree).

‘One of the great things about paper collage animation is if you want to make a tree it doesn’t have to be made out of a photo of a tree, it could be made out of a piece of broccoli.’

‘Glue your sky down first and anything that might be far away. And then put other things on top when they’re meant to be closer to you’

• Now make the characters in your story. If the characters are quite small make sure the background isn’t too busy so that they stand out in your film.
• There may be props or other things children want to add, like moving eyeballs, hats etc. Keep these ideas simple, remember they only have ten seconds to tell their story.

STAGE FOUR – SETTING UP EQUIPMENT

• Watch section four of the film, Equipment, which describes how to get the equipment ready to animate your films.
• Prepare a space where the children will be able to go to animate their story. You will need a clear table to place the backgrounds on and either a tripod or stand to hold the iPad still, or you can improvise creating your own structure. (There are examples of ways to do this on the internet or you could set this as a challenge for your class.)
• Make sure you have good lighting, you might need table lamps, but make sure you don’t cast shadows across the animations.
• When each group is ready you will need to secure their background so it doesn’t change position at all during the animation.

‘If you don’t want it to move you have to stick it down. If you don’t at some point in your animation you will nudge it, you might think you won’t, you might think you’re very careful, but this has happened to me a lot of times. You’ll reach over for something and it will just move your background a tiny amount, it’ll catch in your sleeve or something and you’ve ruined that take, you’ll have to start again.’

STAGE FIVE: ANIMATING YOUR STORY

‘We make animation by taking a sequence of photographs that are all a tiny bit different. Each photograph is called a frame.’

• Watch part five of the film, Animating your Story.
• Allow the groups to do their animations one at a time, they will need to focus and too many people around while they are animating will be distracting.
• Demonstrate how ‘I Can Animate’ works; how to take a frame, the onion skin effect, how to delete a frame if you’ve made a mistake and the playback facility to check your progress.

‘You can see two images here, a slightly more ghostly version of the other; this is called the onion skin effect. This allows you to see as a ghostly image of the last frame you just took. So this allows you to re-position your piece for the next frame.’

• Give the group a chance to try animating their story once and see how it works with the characters and storyline they’ve prepared.
• Then give them a chance to do it again if they would like to, refining their decisions about how to move pieces in order to achieve the kind of movement they are aiming for.

‘It might not be what you were thinking it would be like, maybe it’s a bit too jerky or you didn’t quite get the timings right. That’s ok, you can just do it again, have another go.'
‘You gradually work out the best way to move your characters, what the distance should be every time you move them to make it have the right movement for the story that you are trying to tell.’

‘I would say don’t try and do this too many times. It’s good to try to capture your enthusiasm and your spontaneity when you’re making an animation. I think if you try to be too perfect it might end up being a bit boring and your audience won’t find it as exciting as you thought they would.’

- Our resource has given you a simple introduction to creating a stop go animation, to add sound you will need more technical help. Adding a simple musical underscore as you did with the still image work will add an extra dimension to the animations. You could also record the children reading select extracts of the text or writing their own text as part of their animations.
RESOURCE 1 - FARMING MACHINERY

POTATO HARVESTER
Digs up the potatoes when they are fully grown. If they are not picked when they are ready they will rot in the earth.
• Digs into the earth to expose the potatoes.
• Picks the potatoes up.
• Shakes the mud and earth off the potatoes.
• Places the potatoes into a container.

CROP SPRAYER
Sprays the crops with fertiliser and pesticides. Without this the crops could get eaten by pests or get a disease which means the crops die.
• Sprays 10 rows of crops at a time.
• Is able to change the height of what it sprays depending on the crop and the stage of growth – sometimes low to the ground, at other times higher up.

HARROWER
Prepares the earth for the seeds to be planted. All the weeds need to be removed or they can grow over the crops and kill them.
• Digs into the earth and turns it over.
• Picks up the weeds, shakes the earth from them and drops them into a container.

BALE MAKER
Turns the cut hay and straw into a bale which is then taken to feed the animals or sold to pet shops or to other farmers who haven’t grown hay and straw themselves. This needs to be done when the weather is fine; if the hay or straw is wet it will become rotten, hence the saying ‘Make hay while the sun shines’.
• Gathers up the hay or straw which has already been cut and lies in rows on the fields.
• Rolls it into a hay bale.
• When it is the right size it can be rolled off the machine and is left in the field.
RESOURCE 2 - EXTRACT FROM THE IRON MAN 1

Suddenly he felt a strange feeling. He felt he was being watched. He felt afraid. He turned and looked up the steep field to the top of the high cliff. Behind that skyline was the sheer rocky cliff and the sea. And on that skyline, just above the edge of it, in the dusk, were two green lights. What were two green lights doing at the top of the cliff?

Then, as Hogarth watched, a huge dark figure climbed up over the cliff-top. The two lights rose into the sky. They were the giant figure’s eyes. A giant black figure, taller than a house, black and towering in the twilight, with green headlamp eyes. The Iron Man! There he stood on the cliff-top, looking inland. Hogarth began to run.

RESOURCE 3 - EXTRACT FROM THE IRON MAN 2

At the bottom of the hill, below where the Iron Man had come over the high cliff, they dug a deep, enormous hole. A hole wider than a house, and as deep as three trees one on top of the other. It was a colossal hole. A stupendous hole! And the sides of it were sheer as walls. They pushed all the earth off to one side.

They covered the hole with branches and the branches they covered with straw and the straw with soil, so when they finished the hole looked like a freshly-ploughed field.
• When the farmers had dug the deep pit they covered it with sticks and hay to hide it. They left a red lorry on the far side of the hole as bait for the Iron Man. They looked at the trap satisfied with their work and then they went home to their farms for the night.

Whoosh

• Next morning, in great excitement, the farmers gathered together to see their trap. They came carefully closer, expecting to see his hands tearing at the edge of the pit. They came carefully closer. The red lorry stood just as they had left it. The soil lay just as they had left it, undisturbed. Everything was just as they had left it. The Iron Man had not come.

Whoosh

• Next morning, all the farmers came again. Still, everything was just as they had left it. The Iron Man had not come.

Whoosh

• And so it went on, the Iron Man did not come. Until gradually the farmers gave up and stopped coming. The farmer who owned it came and drove away his red lorry, and another farmer put up a ‘Keep Away’ sign to warn people of the danger of the pit. Eventually everyone forgot about the Iron Man.

Whoosh

• One day Hogarth was out in a field near where the trap was, he was following a fox, trying to take photographs of it.
• He heard a creaking and groaning sound. He looked up and saw the Iron Man walking through the fields ripping out the barbed wire fencing and eating it. (We are going to have to imagine the difference in scale between the boy and the Iron Man).
• Hogarth had an idea; the Iron Man was a long way from the trap, but if he could lure him over he might have a chance. In his pocket he had a knife which he took out and tapped on the metal post of the sign; clink, clink, clink.
• At the sound of this the Iron Man’s hands became still. After a few seconds, he slowly turned his head and the headlamp eyes shone towards Hogarth.
• Again clink, clink, clink went the knife on the post. Slowly the Iron Man took three strides towards Hogarth, and stopped. Clink, clink, clink, now the Iron Man was coming. Hogarth could feel the ground beneath him as the Iron Man strode towards him. And Crash. The Iron man disappeared into the hole.

Whoosh

• Hogarth looked down into the pit. Far below, two red headlamps of the Iron Man glared up at him from the pitch blackness (create one large Iron Man out of a number of children).
• The farmers gathered around the trap and when they saw the Iron Man they all cheered. The Iron Man glared up at them, his eyes burned from red to purple, to white, to fiery whirling black and red, and the cogs inside him ground and screeched, but he could not climb out of the pit.

Whoosh

• Narrate the final moment of the story:
• The farmers arrived with their bulldozers and earth pushers and pushed all the earth they had dug out of the pit on top of the Iron Man, until eventually he could be heard no more.
a) The Iron Man came to the top of the cliff. How far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where did he come from? Nobody knows. How was he made? Nobody knows.

b) Then, for one awful night, its wings seemed to be filling most of the sky. The moon peered fearfully from low on the skyline and all the people of earth stayed up, gazing in fear at the huge black movement of wings that filled the night.

c) Next morning it landed – on Australia. It was a terrific dragon. Terribly black, terribly scaly, terribly knobbly, terribly horned, terribly hairy, terribly clawed, terribly fanged, with vast indescribably terrible eyes, each one as big as Switzerland. There it sat, covering the whole of Australia... Luckily, the mountains and hills propped its belly up clear of the valleys, and the Australians could still move about in the pitch darkness, under this new sky, this low queer covering, of scales. They crowded towards the light that came in along its sides.

d) And every night he was to fly around the earth, through the heavens, singing. So his fearful shape, slowly swimming through the night sky, didn’t frighten people, because it was dark and he couldn’t be seen. But the whole world could hear him, a strange soft music that seemed to fill the whole of space, a deep weird singing, like millions of voices singing together. And the space-bat-angel’s singing had the most unexpected effect. Suddenly the world became wonderfully peaceful. The singing got inside everybody and made them as peaceful as starry space, and blissfully above all their earlier little squabbles. The strange soft eerie space-music began to alter all the people of the world.
THE IRON MAN

A Unicorn production

By Ted Hughes
Created by Matthew Robins
Resource pack written by Catherine Greenwood

Activities developed with pupils and staff at Christopher Hatton Primary School