

# JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH

Aimed at Primary school pupils the ideas in this study guide are intended as starting points for a cross-curricular topic based on the film. They are aimed at children in the infant and junior sections. The guide is divided up into a series of photocopiable worksheets with activities. The activities seek to complement and extend the pleasure children will have derived from the visit to the cinema whilst at the same time meeting some of the requirements of the National Curriculum and Scottish Guidelines. The information below can be used for planning and record keeping.

## CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

	<u>NATIONAL CURRICULUM</u>			<u>SCOTTISH GUIDELINES</u>		
Looking At The Author:	ENGLISH	AT1-3	L2-5	ENGLISH	All ATs	A-D
Comparing The Book						
And The Film:	ENGLISH	AT 1-3	L3-5	ENGLISH	All ATs	B-D
Cautionary Tales:	ENGLISH	AT2/3	L2-5	ENGLISH	Writing Imaginative	A-E
Making Your Own Models:	DESIGN + TECH	AT 1/2	L1-5	TECHNOLOGY	All ATs	B-F
About James:	ART	AT1	KS 1/2	ART + DESIGN	Communicating	A-F
Making A Flick Book:	ART	AT I	KS 1/2	ART + DESIGN	Investigating Visually	B-F
Mapping The Plot:	ART	ATI	KS 1/2	ART + DESIGN	Creating/ Designing	A-F
Meet The Characters:	ENGLISH	AT2	L3/ 5	ENGLISH	Reading - For Information	B-D
Studying Minibeasts:	SCIENCE ENGLISH	AT2 AT2	1.1-5 L3-5	SCIENCE ENGLISH	Understanding Living Things Reading - For Information	A-E B-E
Investigating Minibeasts/ Minibeast Snap	SCIENCE IT	AT11/2	L1-5 L2-5	SCIENCE IT.	Understanding Living Things Both ATs	A-F B-E
Famous Buildings Of The World:	GEOGRAPHY	3f	L2-4	UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE AND PLACE	Collecting Evidence	B-D
Peach Recipes:	DESIGN + TECH	AT 1/2	L1-4	TECHNOLOGY	All ATs	A-F

## SYNOPSIS

Ripe with the spirited fun, imagination and magic of Roald Dahl's classic fantasy, Henry Selick's big-screen version of 'James and the Giant Peach' follows the exciting journey of a lonely young boy who escapes a miserable life with his horrible Aunts Sponge and Spiker when he is given a bag of magical 'little green things'. Unusual new friends and unexpected adventures follow when he climbs inside a giant peach and sets sail for New York.

James and the Giant Peach directed by Henry Selick.

Running time: 79 minutes. Certificate: PG.

## LOOKING AT THE AUTHOR

Roald Dahl wrote 'James and the Giant Peach' in 1961 and it remains one of the most popular children's books ever written. Dahl went on to write many more children's books - a list of these is shown below.

- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator
- Fantastic Mr Fox
- The BFG
- The Witches
- Danny the Champion of the World
- Matilda

Many of Dahl's books have been made into films - have you seen any of them? What did you think? Were they as good as the book? Were there differences between the two?

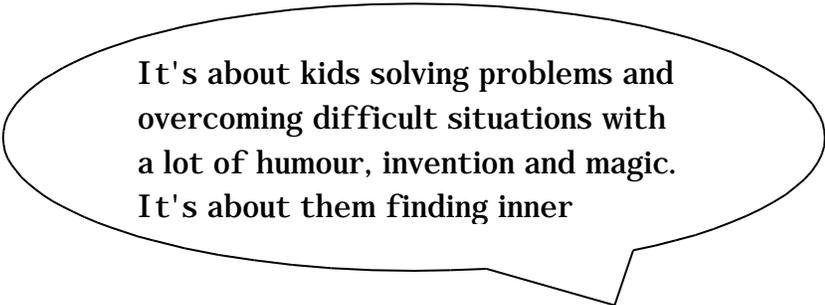
Have you read any other Dahl books? If so, have you noticed any similarities with James and the Giant Peach? What themes do Dahl's books have in common?

Dahl did not write the version of his book that we see on the big screen. In fact Dahl thought that it would be almost impossible to make into a film and he turned down the many offers he received from filmmakers. However, after his death in 1990, his widow Felicity Dahl was approached by the film director Henry Selick. Felicity was so impressed with the magical world that Selick and his team had created for 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' that she agreed to let him make the film.

The version of the book that we see on the big screen was written by screenplay



## CAUTIONARY TALES



It's about kids solving problems and overcoming difficult situations with a lot of humour, invention and magic. It's about them finding inner

*Henry Selick,  
director of James and the Giant Peach*

In Dahl's books, it is the children who normally come out on top by believing in themselves. In *James and the Giant Peach*, James is the one who comes up with the plan of netting the seagulls to help raise the peach from the sea. He also bravely faces his greatest fear - the rhino!

If you have read any of Dahl's books or seen any of the films adapted from the books, write down the names of the children who are the main characters and heroes of the story.

Dahl also tried to show children that grown-ups are not always right. Those who are dreadful to others usually come to a nasty end and in *James and the Giant Peach* the two Aunts get their come-uppance.

Again, looking back to Dahl's stories, write down the names of the wicked characters and the end that awaited them.

These stories act as warnings for all those would-be wicked people out there. You could also try reading 'The Boy Who laughed At Santa Claus' by Ogden Nash or 'Jim' by Hilaire Belloc for more examples of stories with 'just desserts' for those who deserve them.

### TASK

**Have a go at writing your own 'cautionary tale'. You will need to make up an imaginary hero or heroine, the same age as yourself. You will also need a 'bad' character who treats everyone very badly. What nasty end could await them? Discuss this as a group and together write a rough version. Once you have all agreed, write up your versions in neat as part of a book to show another class. You could also present it orally, with members of the class taking the part of each character, or as a wall display.**

## FROM THE BOOK TO THE FILM - HOW IT WAS MADE

When Henry Selick, the director, first read the book many years ago he knew it would make a brilliant film. He got the support of the president of Walt Disney Pictures and started to put his plan into action. First, however, he needed to get permission from Dahl's family. Before this, Roald Dahl had turned down offers from other filmmakers to make his book into a film, but his widow Felicity loved Selick's ideas so much that she agreed to let him make the film.

### Writing The Screenplay

Selick now had to find someone to write a film version of the book. The version that we see on film was written by 3 different people. One writer (who also helped write The Lion King) wrote a rough script of the film and the other writers altered his version slightly and added other scenes - just like the process that you go through when writing a story.

### Creating the Storyboard

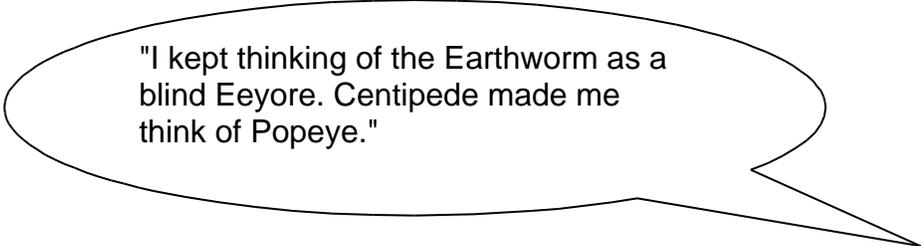
The next stage is the storyboard - drawn by Selick with help from others.

A storyboard is a series of pictures showing the key moments of each scene. Each frame of the storyboard shows what the characters are doing/saying, the setting, where the camera is placed and any sound effects.

This allowed Selick to visualise the script ready for filming.

### Creating The Look

The 'look' of the film was designed by Lane Smith - an illustrator of children's books. Smith produced 50 paintings and designs for the film including sets and characters. Smith wanted to make the creatures appear less insect-like and more dream-like:



"I kept thinking of the Earthworm as a blind Eeyore. Centipede made me think of Popeye."

To help him with his sketches, Smith used a book he had had since he was a child called 'How To Draw Donald Duck'!!

## **Making the Movie**

The model designers worked from Lane Smith's drawings of the characters and also pictures of real bugs to see how the model creatures should move.

130 people worked on the models as 180 puppets were needed in the film - this includes the main characters and all the pirates that we see in the underwater sequence.

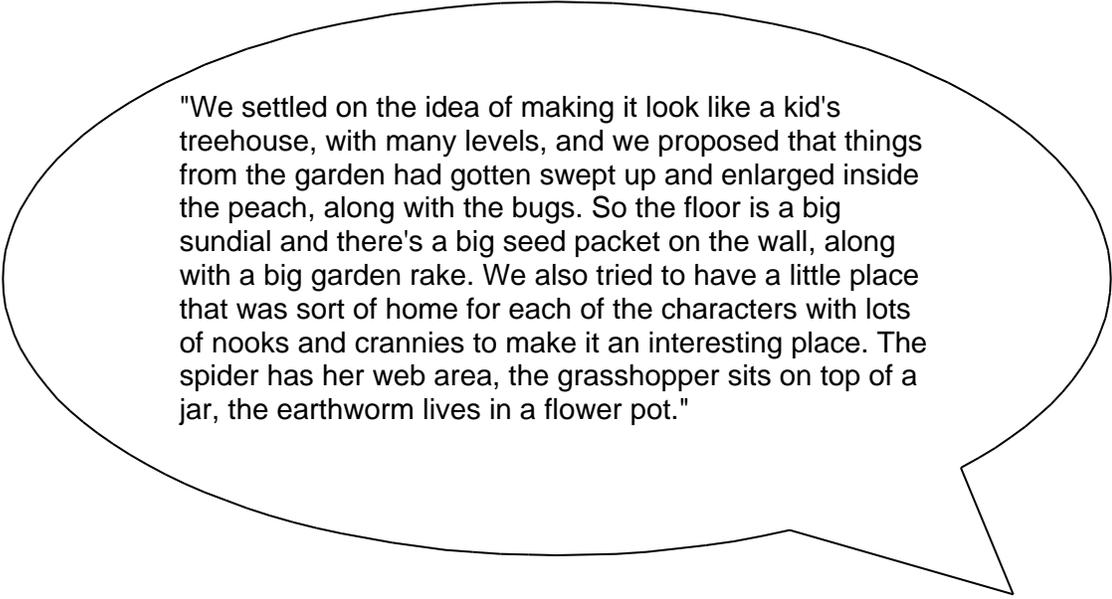
First, metal skeletons were made for each puppet with parts that moved including legs, ears and eyes. Latex rubber forms were baked around the skeletons for their figures before they were painted and given costumes.

15 puppets were made for each of the 7 main characters and each character needed replacement faces or mouths for all their different expressions. For example, 45 different moving heads were made for the character of James because of the different emotions he needed to express.

A creature like the centipede caused problems because in reality the animal has 144 arms! The model in the film was simplified and had just 12 arms to flap around. Even a simple creature like the earthworm model needed 10 joints to help him move.

## **Creating the Sets**

The sets were designed by Harley Jessup using the designs of Lane Smith. Jessup worked hard on the inside and outside of the peach



"We settled on the idea of making it look like a kid's treehouse, with many levels, and we proposed that things from the garden had gotten swept up and enlarged inside the peach, along with the bugs. So the floor is a big sundial and there's a big seed packet on the wall, along with a big garden rake. We also tried to have a little place that was sort of home for each of the characters with lots of nooks and crannies to make it an interesting place. The spider has her web area, the grasshopper sits on top of a jar, the earthworm lives in a flower pot."

*Harley Jessup,  
Set Designer for James and the Giant  
Peach'.*

More than 50 peaches were made using rubber foam and a felt covering. They ranged from real peach size to a massive 20 foot peach weighing 2,000 pounds. That is over 4 times taller than you! The peach was so big and heavy that it had to be put into place using a gigantic crane.

## MAKING YOUR OWN MODELS

**Put on your own performance of 'James and the Giant Peach' using puppets that you can make yourself. You could choose one of the following styles:**

**Finger Puppets** - use small pieces of felt sewn together to fit your finger and stick on faces and other features to make each character. You could use two pieces of thick paper stuck together instead to fit your finger and draw the faces of your characters on.

**Sock Puppets** - Find a pair of unwanted (but clean!) socks. Sew on eyes and use wool and other fabrics for the other features needed.

**Rod Puppets** - You will need to make the creature's head using scrunched up newspaper, papier-mâché or a balloon. Stick on features to make the head look like your character. Attach a rod or bamboo stick to the head and cover the rod with fabric or thick paper for the body.

**OR** - You could use pipe cleaners which can be twisted and changed into the form you need. Stick on beads for the eyes and use small pieces of fabric for the costume.

A simple **puppet theatre** can be built from large cardboard boxes, stuck together and covered with paper. The settings could be painted on depending on the scene that you want to perform: the garden of the Aunts' house, the ocean, the Empire State Building, etc.

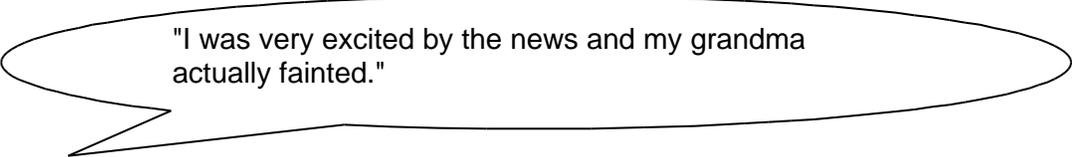
**Decide on the scene that you would like to perform and write out a script showing what every character has to say. This could also be shown on a simple storyboard or cartoon strip.**

**Make sure that you have a different person to work each puppet - get them to try out different voices until they find one that works for the character e.g. Aunt Spiker will need a rough and snarling voice, whilst Miss Spider has a French accent. You may want to add sound effects or music to your scene to add atmosphere**

**Rehearse your scene well. Experiment and change parts that do not work. Once you feel ready, it is time to put on the performance! You could create posters and tickets to advertise your show and put it on for your parents or another class in the school.**

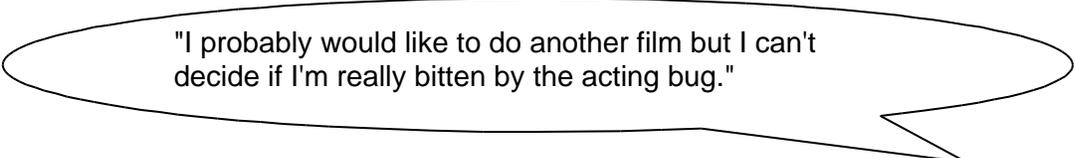
## ABOUT JAMES

The title role of James was played by ten-year-old Paul Terry from Hertfordshire, England. He was selected from hundreds of young boys who auditioned from all around the world. Paul had to audition several times both in England and in the United States. Before working on the film, Paul had been in two stage productions at the theatre and had a small part in a BBC television series, so obviously getting the part of James must have been a tremendous thrill:



"I was very excited by the news and my grandma actually fainted."

Paul found his role hard work but he enjoyed it very much. Paul seems very calm about his acting career:



"I probably would like to do another film but I can't decide if I'm really bitten by the acting bug."

The animated models of James that we see in the film are based on the actor Paul Terry. However, Paul doesn't think that the models look like him at all! The creator of the models - Bonita DeCarlo - thought that it was best to take away some of James' human qualities for the models to make him look more like the other creatures. His human eyes were replaced by button-eyes to help this.

What do you think - compare the pictures of Paul and his animated model. Do they look similar? Use the pictures to help you with your task of drawing/creating a model based on YOU! Try out your drawings in rough first. Now draw the model you would create of yourself on a separate sheet of paper. Can your classmates recognise you from the drawing? Bring a photograph of yourself into school and have a competition in class to guess who all the drawings are based on and match them up to the photographs

**PHOTOGRAPH OF PAUL**

**MODEL OF 'JAMES' BASED ON PAUL**

## THE FILMING TECHNIQUES

The film uses a variety of techniques including live action, stop-motion and computer animation. Live action refers to the filming of people. **Stop-motion** animation is the filming of the puppets. **Computer animation** refers to the drawing of models and sets in the computer - this technique was used for the whole of Disney's film 'Toy Story'.

Write down a scene in the film where you saw the following techniques used.

**TECHNIQUE**

**SCENE FROM FILM**

Stop-motion animation:

Live action:

Computer animation:

Stop-motion and  
live action combined:

Stop-motion animation involves the filming of the puppets. The puppets are positioned and filmed before being moved ever so slightly and filmed again. When these shots are put together as a piece of film, they will give the impression of the models moving. If you have used a flick-book you will have seen a rough style of this type of animation before. A task is included on the next page for you to make your own book.

Obviously, this style of animation takes a lot of hard work and time. About 45 seconds of the movie were completed each week - that's about 10 seconds a day! This is because each creature had so many joints that needed moving for each frame - the centipede had 72 joints that needed moving.

Computer-generated imagery (or CGI) is a very new method of animation and is a lot quicker and more sophisticated than other methods. Many shots in James and the Giant Peach use some form of computer imagery. The shark scene in the film uses CGI. The stop-motion was filmed first - for James and the creatures on the peach - and then the shark, seagulls amid sea were created on the computer. On top of this were created skies, clouds and explosions. The water effect took 3 months of testing before the designers got the look they were after.

## **MAKING A FLICK BOOK**

**You can buy a blank book to draw your flicker pictures on from stationery shops - the ideal size would be about 3 x 5 inches. OR - if you are feeling adventurous you could try making one yourself. Divide some blank sheets of paper into rectangles about 3 x 5 inches in size. You will need about 30-50 of these small 'pages' and a stiff cardboard backing of the same size - this will help you to hold the book when flipping the pages and keep the binding from bending.**

**Think about the storyline or idea that you would like for your book. Make up a character or image — you may want to draw the peach or one of the characters from the film. Plan the movement of this image on scrap paper so that you will not make any mistakes in the book. Keep your drawings simple as you will be drawing them many times and make the movement very gradual otherwise your drawings will jump when flicked.**

**Draw on the right hand side of the page only. Draw your first frame and number it 1 - use this as your master copy and trace the basic outline for the other pages altering it slightly in each drawing. Keep your changes small for each drawing and number them. Draw each picture in pencil first so that you can rub them out if you go wrong.**

**When finished, stack the pages in reverse order with number 1 at the bottom and wind sticky tape around the left hand edges binding them tightly into a book.**

**Use your thumb and flick the paper edges from back to front - hopefully the pictures should come to life in your hands!**

## MAPPING THE PLOT

During the storm James and his friends get to travel to many exciting places

### **TASK:**

Read the sentences below describing the various parts of James' journey and put them in the right order.

- The peach rolls over the countryside of England.
- The peach is carried off course to the freezing Arctic Ocean.
- James lives by the sea with his mother and father.
- The peach is lifted up out of the water by the seagulls and is flown in the air.
- James sets up home in the peach stone in Central Park, New York.
- James is sent to live with his two Aunts in the South of England in their house on top of a hill.
- The peach lands on top of the Empire State Building in New York.
- The peach drops off the cliffs of England and into the sea.

**TASK:** Create a display showing James' adventures.

The scenes above would make a wonderful display or 'mural' plotting James' journey from the start of the film to the finish. Each table in your class could choose a different part of the journey from those above and draw a picture of it. Plan your picture in rough first before drawing it on a large piece of sugar paper. This could then be painted or you could use coloured cellophane and fabric to represent the sea and land, etc. When you are happy with your artwork, all the pictures could be displayed on the wall to show the adventures of James. A sentence describing the scene could be included as part of the picture - perhaps inside one of the clouds or as a speech bubble above one of the characters.

## MAPPING THE PLOT

During the film we are introduced to a group of human-sized insects living in the centre of the peach who quickly become James' friends. Below is a description of each of the characters - but they have got mixed up! Can you sort them out, putting the right description by the correct photo of the character?

<b>MISS SPIDER</b>	Thinks she is gorgeous when really she is greedy!
<b>GRASSHOPPER</b> all!	A loud, cigar-chomping bug who's a real know -it-
<b>LADYBUG</b>	Thinks the worst in every situation- a real worrier!
<b>AUNT SPIKER</b>	A motherly insect who looks after the others
<b>EARTHWORM</b>	A fussy, fatherly, fiddle-playing insect who adds a touch of class. A refined character!
<b>CENTIPEDE</b>	A cool, exotic creature who forms a special attachment to James
<b>AUNT SPONGE</b>	Tall and mean and bossy!

## STUDYING MINIBEASTS

In the film 'James and the Giant Peach', we are introduced to the creatures who take him on the journey to New York. These include Miss Spider, Earthworm, Ladybug, Centipede, Grasshopper and Glow-worm. These creatures are known as MINIBEASTS.

The creatures that we see can be divided up into those that are INSECTS and those that are not.

What are insects?: Insects are ARTHROPODS - this means they have a jointed body and limbs. They also have 6 legs and a hard shell protecting their inner organs. Their bodies are divided into 3 parts - the head, thorax and abdomen. The legs and wings are connected to the thorax. The abdomen is where the insect breaks down food and where eggs are made. Most insects can also fly. Insects make up about 800 of all living animals. There are known to be about one million different kinds on earth. In fact there are 1,500 million insects for every person alive!

Insects can be found almost everywhere from the coldest areas in the polar regions to the hottest deserts. There are about 20,000 species living in Great Britain alone. They may not be very big but they influence almost every community in the world.

Using this information, can you guess which creatures that we see in the film are insects?

Using the information below' as an example, try and find out about the other creatures in the film using books in your library for research.

### THE LADYBIRD

**Types:** About 40 in Great Britain

**Appearance:** Red with black spots. Can be black or yellow-.

Number of spots vary from 2 to over 12

**Diet:** Eats caterpillars and aphids (greenflies amid blackflies that kill plants)

**Where Found:** Plants etc.



## INVESTIGATING MINIBEASTS

Look at the creatures around you in your local environment - they can be found everywhere! The best time to look for them is in the spring or summer when the weather is better.

Find a suitable piece of ground - the school playing fields for example. Lie down - watch and listen quietly. Look on the ground, on leaves and under stones. Take a camera with you and take photographs of the places you find insects. Once you have seen a minibeast, watch it closely and see where it goes and what it does. Draw a quick sketch of it.

Make a branch programme on your computer to distinguish between all the creatures that you have seen. You will need to think of some YES/NO questions that will lead your classmates to the name of their minibeasts. Think about distinguishing features e.g. number of legs, colour, patterns, wings, pincers, etc.

On pieces of card, draw pictures of common minibeasts including those from the film. Colour them in and either laminate them or cover them in transparent sticky-back plastic so that they will last a long time. The cards could then be used as a sorting game - animals with/without legs, MINIBEAST ! animals with/without wings, insects/not insects, live in soil/live on leaves, etc.

## MINIBEAST CARD GAMES

The game of snap could be played if 2 copies of each minibeast were made - you could always photocopy the first one if you get bored! Shuffle the cards and share them out between the players. Start placing the cards down in the middle of the table one by one. When two matching cards come up, rather than shouting "snap", you could shout 'minibeast' or the name of the creature that has come up

The name of each animal could be cards so that you could play a different version of snap - matching up the name and picture of the minibeast. This would be more difficult than the first game, so work up to this level!

## **FAMOUS BUILDINGS OF THE WORLD**

At the end of the film, James and the peach end up spiked on the top of the Empire State Building in New York. The Empire State Building is very famous and can be seen for miles around. It is a great tourist attraction.

Listed below are some more tourist attractions from all around the world. Can you put them together with the city where you could find them? Using reference books try and find out some more about them. Divide into groups and each draw one of the attractions with information about it underneath to create a class wall display.

**GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE**

**EGYPT**

**EIFEEL TOWER**

**SAN FRANCISCO**

**STATUE OF LIBERTY**

**PARIS**

**LEANING TOWER**

**SYDNEY**

**TAJ MAHAL**

**LONDON**

**GREAT WALL**

**MOSCOW**

**OPERA HOUSE**

**IRELAND**

**BIG BEN**

**PISA**

**GIANT'S CAUSEWAY**

**INDIA**

**PYRAMIDS**

**CHINA**

**KREMLIN**

**NEW YORK**

## PEACH RECIPES

James and the creatures get very hungry on their travels until they realise that they can eat the peach. They sing a song called 'Eating the Peach' which describes all the glorious food that might tempt them. The words to the song were taken from the poem that Dahl wrote in the book of James and the Giant Peach'.

*"I've eaten many' strange and scrumptious dishes in my time, Like jellied gnats and dandyprats and earwigs cooked in slime, And mice with rice - they're really nice When roasted in their prime.*

*(But don't forget to sprinkle them with just a pinch of grime.)  
Now comes the burden of my speech:  
These foods are rare beyond compare - some are right out of reach;*

*But there's no doubt I'd go without million plates of each  
For one small mite,  
One tiny bite,  
of this FANTASTIC PEACH!"*

However, eating just peach would get very boring after a few days. Can you make up some recipes using peach to make the fruit more exciting? Be as inventive as possible - peach curry for example. Write down all the ingredients and the amount used. Write down instructions on how to make the food.

Starter - Cream of Peach Soup

Main Course - Peach Curry

Pudding - Peach Pie and Custard

The wicked Aunts are hunting for James who is hiding in the middle of the peach! It is up to James' friends to rescue him but only one trail reaches James - who will find him first? Using a pencil to trace your path, can you find out the way to the centre? Have a guess before you begin and see if you are right.

