



The Gruffalo



Imagine: Talk about the different locations that are described in the book, i.e. the deep dark wood, underground house and treetop house. Discuss the different animals that live in each location and ask the children if they have ever been into the woods. What was it like? How did they feel?

Facial expressions: Go through the story and ask the children to re-enact the expressions that they think the animals would have at various points i.e. when the mouse meets the owl for the first time or when the fox sees the mouse with the Gruffalo. You can ask the children to cover their faces and then count to three before you all reveal your expressions. For this activity you may find our [emotion fans](#) useful.

Draw the Gruffalo: During the story the Gruffalo is described in six different ways: his knobbly knees, his poisonous snout, his sharp fangs, his outward turning toes, his vicious claws and his dangerous spines. First of all see how many of these features the children can remember, then ask the children to draw their version of the Gruffalo.

Memory game: See if the children can identify the different animals in the story. There was the little brown mouse, the cunning fox, the slithering snake, the ferocious owl and the Gruffalo. You can use these [flash cards](#) to remind the children if they forget and also to reward them when they remember.

Meet the characters: For this exercise you are going to pretend to be the different characters in the book and the children are going to try and guess who you are. Explain to the children that you are going to put on a different item of clothing to represent each animal (like a baseball cap for the woodpecker), but don't tell them what the animal is. The children now have to ask questions to try and work out who you are, about where the animal lives and what it eats etc. This activity doesn't involve lots of acting on your part, just speak to the children from the perspective of the animal, you don't have to become it!

Imaginary animals: Ask the children to create their own imaginary animal, what would they look like? What kind of food would they eat? You can then ask them to draw the animal themselves, or for a younger group you can do this activity during circle time and put all the ideas together so you can draw the creature yourself on the board.

Into the Woods: Create your own woodland area inside by closing all the blinds and making a large tent by covering the tables. You can then place a variety of woodland objects in the 'woods' for the children to find, i.e. a pinecone, a leaf, a flat stone, an acorn, a mushroom, and ask them to crawl through the tent and see what they can find. To make the dark wood even darker, you could also blindfold the children (but make sure it's in a fun way, not in a scary way!).

Food Chain: For a slightly older group you could use this story to introduce the idea of the food chain and talk about which animal would be at the top and which animal would be at the bottom.

