



YOU ARE ONE  
LUCKY OGRE TO  
MEET UP WITH!

## LET YOUR FREAK FLAG FLY

### INTRODUCTION

In **SHREK THE MUSICAL**, Shrek, Princess Fiona and the other Fairy Tale Creatures all behave oddly at different times. It is their need for acceptance that makes them behave in strange and often self-destructive ways. Shrek, a frightening-to-behold green ogre, isolates himself in his swamp rather than suffer rejection by society because of his looks.

He rejects Donkey's friendship, refusing to believe that anyone could possibly want to befriend an ugly ogre. It never occurs to him that someone may accept him despite his appearance.

### NEWSFLASH, OGRE!

With your students, explore the theme of friendship in **SHREK THE MUSICAL**. What makes a friendship and, at the beginning, how do you know?

Ask students to imagine that they have been asked to help Shrek to find out who his friends are. They should write a job description for a friend for Shrek. What are the qualities that would make somebody ideal for the job? They may wish to consider the sort of person that Donkey embodies when thinking about somebody ideal for the position. Next, ask them to come up with a second job description, this time for their own friend. This should be a fictional person who embodies everything that they want in a friend – perhaps elements of their current 'best friend' and elements of lots of other people too!

### THEMES

- "Beautiful isn't always pretty."
- "What makes us special...makes us strong!"
- "Onions have layers. Ogres have layers."
- "We are different and united. This is our story."
- "Take me as I am."
- "I always dreamed I'd get a happy ending."
- "Make a move and don't be afraid."
- "Fairy tales should be updated."
- "It's what's inside that counts."

from **SHREK THE MUSICAL**  
Book by David Lindsay-Abaire

### WHEN WORDS FAIL, WHAT WILL I DO?

Apart from friendship, **SHREK THE MUSICAL** explores a multitude of themes – but which is the most important? Ask students to consider the themes and decide on which they think most successfully sums up the ethos of the show. **SHREK THE MUSICAL** follows the story of the first film. What is the most important message for the audience to come away with? Ask students to consider the possible slogans in the themes section and decide on which they think most successfully sums up the ethos of the show. In small groups, ask them to discuss their ideas and to justify their reasons. Next, provide them with copies of the photocopyable worksheet and ask them to create their own poster for the show, using their artistic skills to complete the image of the Shrek, adding in a background with a place for him to live and perhaps some friends to keep him company. For more able students, look at the codes and conventions of a theatre poster and develop the image on the worksheet to become a new theatre poster for **SHREK THE MUSICAL**. Finally, ask students to add the slogan that they selected earlier to their poster, placing it in the most appropriate place to gain the maximum impact.

### YOU'RE SO WRAPPED UP IN LAYERS, ONION BOY!

**SHREK THE MUSICAL** is living proof that musicals can have depth and complexity. After all, Shrek himself is a complex character, with complicated emotions and feelings that even Donkey struggles to get his head around! Ask your students to explore the character of Shrek. What is he really like, underneath all of those onion layers? Provide them with copies of the photocopyable worksheet and ask them to create their own role-on-the-wall. This technique is used to explore character. Any words, phrases, thoughts or feelings that Shrek thinks about himself should be written inside the body. Any words, phrases, thoughts or feelings that other characters have towards Shrek should be written outside of the body. You may like to ask more able students to use their role-on-the-wall to create a monologue for Shrek. Ask them to set their speech during the moment at the beginning of the show when Shrek has been rejected by his parents and is all alone in his swamp. Ask them to use their monologue to explore the feelings that they have identified in their character study.

### RESOURCES

SEE RESOURCE SECTION ON PAGE 27