

## Suggestions for Staging

### ► How to Stage the Play

A stage plan is shown below to give you an idea for staging the play “Puss in Boots” and the *General Stage Directions* that follow are based on this plan. These directions can be easily adapted to suit the space and facilities available to you. If there is no stage at your school, you can chalk a stage area on your classroom floor.

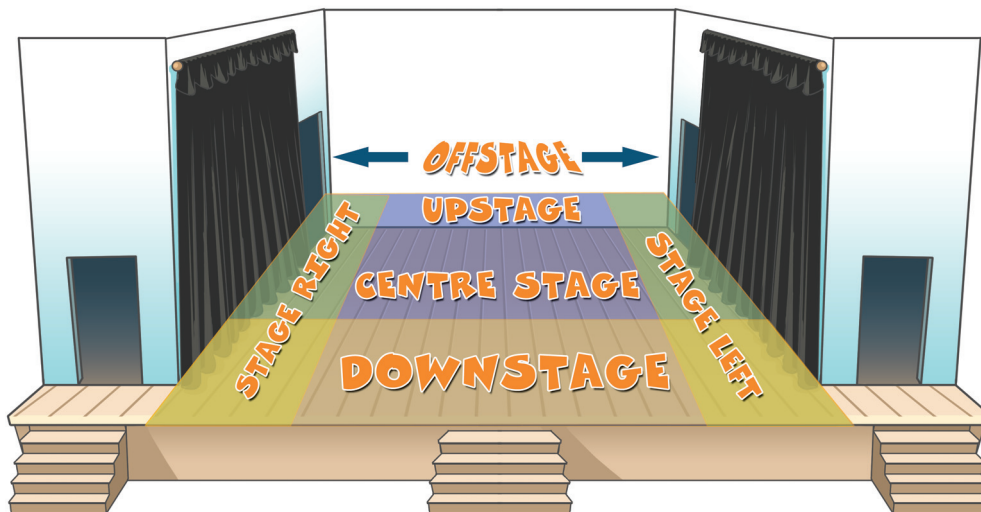
We have also included some suggestions for *Scenery*, *Set Arrangement* and *Props* which should be simple enough to find or make. It would be a good idea to involve the students in designing/making/finding sets and props, either as a whole class activity, or as a task for any students who do not wish to perform in the play.

Once you have an idea of how you want to stage the play, start assigning roles. The number of roles in this play can be adapted to fit the number of students you have available or who are willing to perform. For example, the role of the narrator could be performed by one student or split into parts to be performed by several students.

It is advisable to assign the narration to the older students in the class, and the non-speaking parts to younger or shyer students. The narrator(s) may stand to the right or left of the stage so as not to be in the way of the action, and may be dressed as farmers to add to the atmosphere on stage.

Additionally, students who like to sing may perform in the choir. Depending on the number of students you have available, the choir can be separate from the cast, or, if necessary, members of the cast, such as the farmers, can serve as the choir.

As well as working on sets and props, students who do not wish to perform may work backstage on sound, lighting, makeup and prompting or as stagehands. In this way they will feel like an important part of the production, even if they are not acting on stage.



A very important part of any production is the rehearsal period, so you should start rehearsing the play well in advance of the actual performance. After completing all the lessons in “Puss in Boots”, students should have a clear idea of the story and should be ready to start working on the production.

Included in this book are some *Drama Activities* which can be used at the beginning of each rehearsal to relax and motivate students and give them a greater understanding of the skills which are used in acting. Students can use our audio recording to practise their lines at home. In class, details such as the way actors move, speak, enter or exit, etc, should be discussed at the beginning of each rehearsal. Then the actors can rehearse and get feedback from you on their performances.

Finally, before the actual performance it is essential to have one full dress and technical rehearsal with lighting and sound, etc, so that everybody knows exactly what to do in the actual performance.

## ► Scenery

### ***Scene 1: At the windmill***

A backdrop painted to show a green field in the middle, a Dutch-style windmill on the stage left side, and a forest on the stage right side. Around the windmill is a fence, to which a painted donkey is tied. Alternatively, the donkey can be drawn and cut out of thick cardboard and propped up on a stand, to give some depth to the set. Downstage left, a chair (preferably an armchair/rocking chair) for the miller.

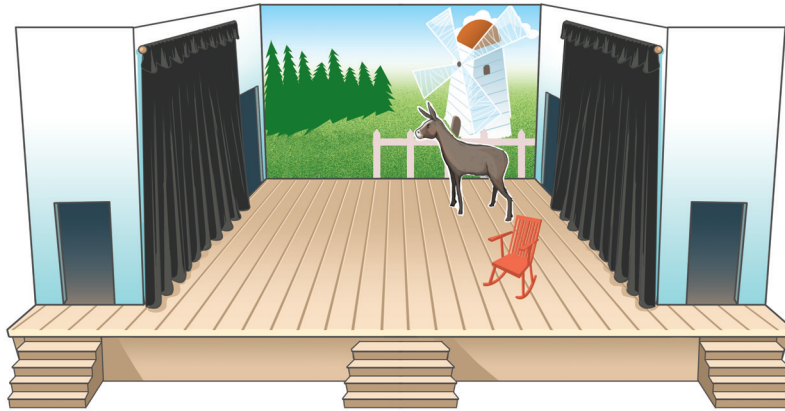
### ***Scene 2: At the Ogre’s fields***

A backdrop painted to show a hay field on the stage right side with bundles of hay. In the background, the Ogre’s castle is painted on the stage left side, on top of a hill. Beneath the castle is painted a forest with a river flowing offstage left. Upstage centre is a bush, either cut-out of thick cardboard and propped up on a stand, or a potted plant. Scattered around stage right, are some bundles of hay, which will be carried towards stage left at the end of the scene (when the farmers appear), so as to make room for the king and company to enter stage right.

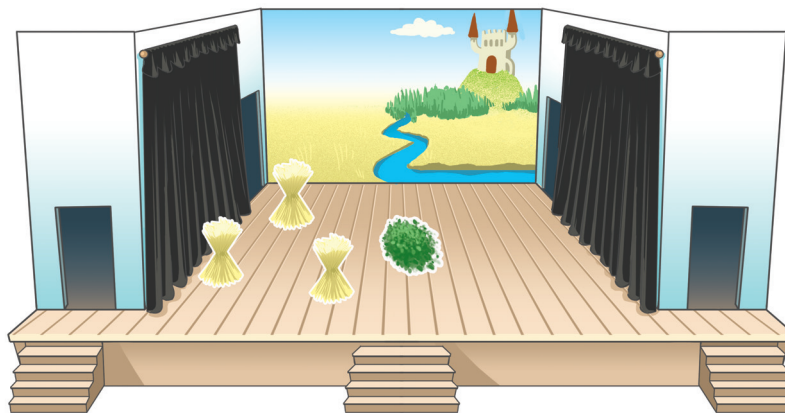
### ***Scene 3: At the Ogre’s castle***

A backdrop painted to show the interior of the Ogre’s castle. The walls are made of stone and his throne is painted in the centre. In front of the painted throne is an armchair covered in a red cloth to add depth to the painted backdrop. Downstage centre steps will serve as the gate of the castle in this scene.

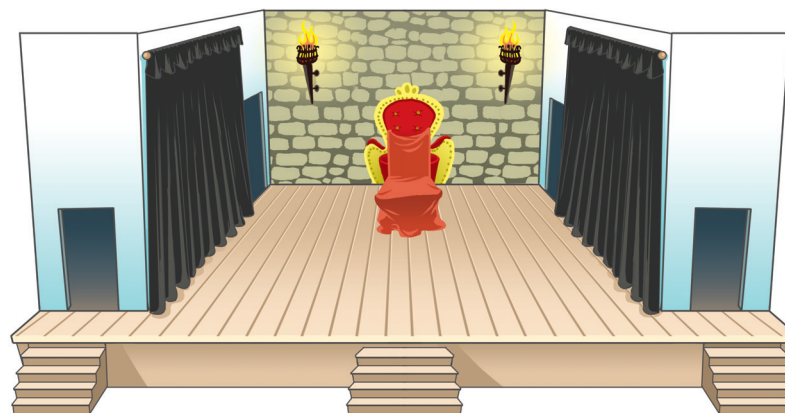
## Set Arrangement



Scene 1: At the windmill.



Scene 2: At the Ogre's fields.



Scene 3: At the Ogre's palace.

## ► Script and General Stage Directions

**Actors:** Puss  
Tom  
William  
George  
King  
Princess Alice

Royal Footman  
Farmers  
Ogre  
Lion  
Mouse  
Miller

**Narrator(s):** One, or as many Ss as necessary, dressed as farmers.

### **Scene 1 (At the windmill)**

*Curtains open to show the windmill exterior. Father is seated on his chair, downstage left. His three sons stand in line on his right. Father is tired, sick and weak, and a blanket is covering his legs. Puss is lying on the floor centre stage, sleeping.*

*Father looks at William and points to the mill. William nods and kisses his father's hand.*

*Father looks at George and points to the donkey. George nods and kisses his father's hand. Father looks at Tom and points to Puss. Tom nods and kisses his father's hand. William and George help their father get up and exit stage left, holding him between them. Tom walks slowly towards Puss. Disappointed, he speaks thoughtfully, looking at Puss.*

*Puss opens his eyes and speaks to Tom. Tom, startled, jumps, looks around him, then at Puss, amazed, with his mouth open.*

*Tom stares at Puss in disbelief, shakes himself, then speaks.*

*They both exit stage left. Curtains close and music for the first song begins.*

**Narrator:** This is where our story starts—inside a little mill. The miller asks to see his sons, because he's really ill.

**Father:** I'm dying, sons, there's not much time—but what I have is yours. William, you're the oldest, so the mill is yours, of course. George, you take the donkey—don't let it get too fat! And Tom, my son, the youngest, you can have my cat!

**Tom:** I know my father loves me. I'm very sure of that. But I need food and money and not a silly cat!

**Narrator:** The cat looks up at Tom and says,

**Puss:** I'm not a silly cat! Please bring me a pair of boots—and I need a coat and hat!

**Tom:** What a clever cat you are to talk to me like that! I'm going to call you 'Puss in Boots'. That's a good name for a cat!

**Song: The Father's Gift**

Oh, poor young Tom!  
What can you do?  
You've just got a cat.  
It's not much, it's true.

But, look! It speaks!  
It wants a hat,  
a coat and red boots!  
What a strange cat!

Your father's gift  
looks very small.  
But soon you will see  
it's not small at all!



**Scene 2 (At the Ogre's fields)**

*Curtains open to show hay fields, forest and the Ogre's castle. King enters stage right. Puss, now dressed and carrying a sack with a rabbit inside, enters stage left. Puss sees the King, walks to him and bows.*

*Puss shows the King the rabbit in the sack.*

*King looks happy and takes the sack.*

*Puss bows again and exits stage right. King exits stage left. Lights out.*

*Lights up. Tom on centre stage, sitting down and daydreaming in the sun. Puss enters stage right, walks purposefully to Tom and speaks slyly.*

*Tom yawns, stretches and exits stage left to go to the river. We hear him whistle and he throws his clothes onstage. Play SFX 1 (splashing water). While offstage, Tom changes into the clothes he should wear when he appears onstage again.*

**Narrator:** Puss takes a sack into the woods and gets a little rabbit. And then he takes it to the king, who is very pleased to have it.

**Puss:** It's from the Prince of Carabas. He caught it in the woods.

**King:** I want to thank him for his gift and tell him that it's good!

**Narrator:** Puss goes back to his master And then he says to him,

**Puss:** It's such a lovely sunny day! Why don't you have a swim?



*Puss quickly picks up the clothes and hides them behind the bush upstage centre.*

*King and Alice now enter from the back of the auditorium and walk down centre aisle towards the stage. Footman is following, carrying a small trunk. Puss enters stage left and runs down to the auditorium to meet the King. He is excited. He bows, then points to the river area offstage left.*

*King gestures to his Footman, who opens the trunk. King takes a pile of clothes and feathered hat from the trunk and hands it to Puss. Puss bows and runs offstage left towards the river and disappears behind the wing curtains.*

*Tom enters stage left with Puss dressed in clothes identical to the ones given to Puss by the King. Both Puss and Tom bow before the King and Alice. He and Alice look at each other and are obviously attracted.*

*Puss exits stage right, running. King, Alice, Tom and Footman exit stage right, slower. Lights out.*

*Lights on to show the farmers working downstage right. Puss enters, running, stage right. Puss sees farmers, stops, thinks of plan, looks at the castle on the backdrop.*

*Puss speaks to the audience.*

*Puss approaches farmers. They stop working and pay attention to Puss.*

*Puss leans over and whispers to the farmers, who gather around him. They nod their heads in agreement. Puss shakes hands with the farmers and exits.*

**Narrator:** While Tom is in the river Puss takes his clothes away, and then he runs along the road, where the King is on his way.

**Puss:** Someone stole my master's clothes! We need your help today! He doesn't have a thing to wear—they took them all away!

**King:** Please give him these,

**Narrator:** the good king says, and now Tom's clothes are new.

Then Alice asks her father,

**Alice:** Can the Prince come with us, too?

**Narrator:** And now the clever little cat has got a clever plan. He knows about a castle with an ogre—a giant man!

**Puss:** I can get that castle—and make Tom rich today!

**Narrator:** He sees some farmers working. They are cutting down the hay.

**Puss:** I'd like you to say something to the princess and the king. And then I promise to help you with the giant—and everything.

*King, Alice, Tom and Footman enter through the auditorium and stop as they approach the farmers. The farmers bow and present themselves to the King.  
King and Alice wave royally and exit stage right. Lights out and curtains close. Music for the second song begins.*

**Song 2: Puss in Boots!**

**Scene 3 (At the Ogre's castle)**

*Curtains open to show the interior of the Ogre's castle. Lights on. Ogre and Puss are standing centre stage, facing each other.*

*Ogre is angry and insulted.*

*Lights out. Play SFX 2 (magic jingle). The lights come back on. Ogre exited stage left when the lights were out, and Lion entered stage right to take Ogre's place. Play SFX 3 (lion roaring).*

**Narrator:** So when the men see the king,  
they all bow down and say,

**Farmers:** We work for the Prince of Carabas,  
and we wish you a good day!



Puss is clever, it is true.  
And now he's got a plan.  
He wants to help his master  
and make him a rich man.

**Chorus:** Puss in Boots! Puss in Boots!  
Red boots, a coat and hat!  
Puss in Boots! Puss in Boots!  
What a clever cat!

First he goes to see the king  
and gives him a fat rabbit.  
He tells him it's a present.  
The king's so pleased to have it!

*Repeat chorus*



**Narrator:** Clever Puss goes to the castle  
and says to the giant man:

**Puss:** Can you turn into an animal?  
I don't think you can!

**Ogre:** I can turn into an animal,  
or anything at all.

**Narrator:** And the ogre turns into a lion,  
right there—inside the hall.

*Puss scratches his chin and looks thoughtfully at the lion.*

*Lion puts his paws on his hips, then starts turning around. Lights out again. Play SFX 2. Lights up.*

*Mouse is standing in Lion's place on stage. Mouse looks at Puss, then takes off with a start, running around the stage squealing, as Puss chases Mouse offstage left. Puss enters stage left again, rubbing his belly. Puss goes downstage centre and waits.*

*King, Alice, Tom and Footman enter through the auditorium. Puss takes off his hat and bows grandly to them. Tom looks surprised to see Puss.*

*Puss points grandly to the castle with his hat.*

*Tom turns to Alice, looks at her lovingly and gets down on one knee.*

*Tom faces Alice and takes her hand.*

*Alice smiles shyly and nods.*

*Everyone is happy and shaking hands, while Tom and Alice hold hands. Curtains close.*

*Music for the final song begins.*

**Puss:** A lion is good. It's big and strong.  
But a mouse is best of all!  
It's easy to be something big,  
but hard to be so small.

**Narrator:** The giant turns into a mouse  
and runs along the floor.

Puss catches it and kills it,  
then waits outside the door.

Soon Puss sees the king approach  
and waves for him to wait.

Tom is shocked to see his cat  
standing at the gate.

**Puss:** This is my master's castle.  
He's very rich, you see.

**Narrator:** And then Tom turns to Alice  
and gets down on one knee.

**Tom:** I want to be your husband.  
Will you be my wife?  
You're the woman that I want  
to be with all my life.

**Narrator:** And so we end our story  
with a wedding—yes, it's true!  
And everyone is happy  
because of Puss in Boots!



**Song: Presents!**

When you get a present  
be happy! Say 'thank you!'  
Any present, big or small,  
is good and that is true!

*Chorus:* Presents are all special  
even if they're small.  
We get them out of love—  
the nicest gift of all!

Tom thought Puss was silly,  
but he was wrong, you see.  
Now he's rich because of Puss  
and as happy as can be!

*Repeat chorus x 2*



## ► Props

The **blanket**, **rabbit** and **trunk** may be brought from home by students. The **rabbit** should either not be seen at all, in which case any clothing item can be used to fill in the sack, or a stuffed toy can be used instead. The **sack** can easily be hand-sewn from any kind of cotton fabric. **Tom's old clothes** are the clothes the actor takes off and throws on stage in Scene 2, while his **new clothes** should be a second set of clothes, identical to the ones he will be wearing when he appears before the King. The **bundles of hay** can be substituted with thin twigs or plants collected by students and tied into bundles.

Props	SCENE 1	SCENE 2	SCENE 3
Miller's blanket	✓		
Puss' sack with rabbit inside		✓	
Tom's old clothes			✓
Tom's new clothes (2nd set)			✓
King's trunk with new clothes			✓
bundles of hay			✓



## ► Costumes

- Puss:** Preferably an orange fleece top with a matching pair of fitted trousers or tights. A tail can be made of the same material and attached to the back of the trousers. A hood can be made of the same material with two ears attached on the top to make the cat's head. When he is dressed up as Puss in Boots, he should also wear a cape, a pair of boots and a wide-brimmed feathered hat, in any colour available. His face should also be painted orange with brown stripes and black whiskers can be drawn around his nose using eyeliner. The tip of his nose should be painted either pink or black.
- Tom:** When dressed as the miller's son, he should wear simple clothes; a pair of blue trousers, plain shoes in any colour, a light long-sleeved top and a brown waistcoat. When dressed as the Prince of Carabas, he can keep the same trousers on so as to avoid spending a lot of time changing offstage, but tuck them in a pair of boots. A bright-coloured long-sleeved top, a matching cape and a feathered hat.
- King:** A pair of red trousers, a matching long-sleeved top, preferably lined with fake fur and long red cape. A golden crown made of thick paper as a headpiece. As an option, he can also wear a pair of white gloves. A beard can be drawn using eyeliner or mascara.
- Alice:** Any bright coloured long dress with long puffed sleeves. Fake jewellery on the neck, wrists, fingers. A golden tiara made of stiff paper on her head.
- William/George:** Both brothers should wear different coloured trousers, light-coloured long-sleeved tops and straw hats. A waistcoat for William and a neck scarf for George. Small satchels or purses can be worn on a shoulder strap.
- Miller:** A long nightdress in any colour and a pair of slippers. Optionally, he can also wear a nightcap.
- Royal Footman:** A bright-coloured long-sleeved top and a matching pair of trousers. Knee-length socks in which the trousers will be tucked and a matching pair of shoes. A moustache can be drawn using eyeliner.
- Ogre:** A large green shirt and a neck scarf, along with a brown pair of trousers. Padding may be used to make him look bigger. Plain shoes and a small golden crown made of stiff paper on his head. He may also carry a large plastic club that looks like wood. His hands and face should be painted blue.

- Lion:** A blue long-sleeved fleece top and a matching pair of trousers with a tail attached at the back. Preferably, the tail should end in a tuft. A hood made of the same material with two small round ears attached at the top to make the lion's head. The Lion should also be wearing the same neck scarf as the Ogre and the same crown, which can be stapled on the hood so as not to fall off. The Lion's face should also be painted blue, and black whiskers should be drawn around his nose using eyeliner. A black line should be drawn under his nose and along the top lips to form the lion's mouth.
- Mouse:** A blue tight-fitting long-sleeved top and a matching pair of trousers or tights with a thin tail. A headband with two round blue paper ears stapled on. The Mouse's face should also be painted blue, and he should also wear the same neck scarf and crown. Black whiskers can be drawn using eyeliner.
- Farmers:** All farmers should be dressed in worn-out, or even patched, clothes in faded colours. Trousers, shirts and waistcoats with different kinds of hats (straw hats, woven hats, etc) for the boys. Long skirts, long-sleeved tops, aprons and scarves around the hair for the girls. They should be holding pitchforks or scythes made of wooden sticks with cardboard tips attached on one end.



## ▶ Drama Activities

### 1 Line up!

**Aims:** To help the Ss to get to know each other.

**Preparation:** You need to know all the Ss' names and dates of birth.

**Materials:** None.

**Description:**

- 1 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line from the tallest to the shortest.
- 2 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line with people whose name begins at the start of the alphabet at one end.
- 3 Ask the Ss to arrange themselves in a line from the oldest to the youngest. Now Ss will have to find out what part of month and the year their peers were born.

### 2 First-time listening and reading

**Aims:** To familiarise Ss with the story they are going to perform.

**Preparation:** Read the story and decide at which points it would be suitable to stop at and ask Ss to speculate on the story.

**Materials:** The audio CD and the Pupil's Books.

**Description:**

- 1 Introduce the story to the Ss by showing them the Pupil's Book cover and front page. Point to the characters and ask for Ss' speculations on both story and characters.
- 2 Play the audio CD while Ss follow in their books. When you reach the first stopping point, ask Ss to close their books and tell you what they think is going to happen next. Accept all answers and then continue.
- 3 After listening to the development of the story, stop again and ask Ss which of their suggestions were correct. Then play the story until the next stopping point.





### 3 Chanting

- Aims:**
- 1 To practise in a group before speaking alone.
  - 2 To help Ss learn their lines.

**Preparation:** None.

**Materials:** The script pages from the Pupil's Book.

- Description:**
- 1 Divide the class into groups so that each group plays a different character. Read out the scene you have decided to practise while the Ss follow in their scripts. Change your own voice as you change character.
  - 2 After every page, stop and allow the groups to chant the lines of their character in chorus.
  - 3 Go through the play page by page.
  - 4 Then read an entire scene and allow the Ss to chorus the scene.
  - 5 By this stage, the Ss should be able to chorus the entire play while you listen.

### 4 Listen for the cue!

**Aims:** To help Ss learn their lines and identify when to say them.

**Preparation:** None.

**Materials:** The script pages from the Pupil's Book.

- Description:**
- 1 Point out that knowing when to speak is important in a play and that, in order to do that, Ss should identify the lines of the characters who speak before them (i.e. the cues).
  - 2 Allocate the roles and ask Ss to underline their lines in one colour and circle the lines before them. Ss that are not willing to act can work as prompters.
  - 3 Ask Ss to read out the play. Prompters can make sure that confused actors get their lines right.
  - 4 You can repeat the reading, focusing on intonation, pronunciation, clarity, etc.





## 5 Stop – Start – Action!

- Aims:**
- 1 To practise giving and receiving visual clues when on stage.
  - 2 To practise working co-operatively.
- Preparation:** Read the story and memorise the position and movements of the characters in each scene.
- Materials:** Audio CD and the Pupil's Book.
- Description:**
- 1 Pick a S to come to the front and tell them to start miming a scene, while listening to the recording.
  - 2 Play the recording. After about 15 seconds shout "Freeze!" and pause the recording. S1 freezes in place. Point to another S and S2 replaces the frozen S1, taking the exact same position. Shout "Go!" S2 continues and extends the action that S1 was in the middle of performing.
  - 3 Continue until all the Ss have had a turn.

## 6 Who am I?

- Aims:**
- 1 To encourage Ss to work together and practise co-ordination.
  - 2 To revise lines from the play they are about to perform.
- Preparation:** Practise miming a simple scene from the play.
- Materials:** The Pupil's Book.
- Description:**
- 1 Revise the basic plot of the play with the Ss.
  - 2 Mime the scene you have prepared and ask them to guess who you are. After they have guessed, see if they can remember the lines of the character in that scene. Allow Ss to check their guesses by finding that scene in the book.
  - 3 Divide the class into teams of 3 or 4. Tell them that now they have to do the same. Give time to each group to prepare a different part of the play.
  - 4 When they are ready, each group performs its scene. The rest of the class tries to guess who is who and what is said.





## 7 Mirrors

**Aims:** To encourage Ss' observation and concentration abilities.

**Preparation:** None.

**Description:**

- 1 Ask Ss to sit or stand in pairs facing each other. Explain that one of them, S1, has to act as if he/she is looking in a mirror, and the other, S2, has to mirror their exact movements.
- 2 Ss start practising in pairs. After a few minutes, ask Ss to change roles and S2 takes over the lead while S1 mirrors the movements. Point out that concentration is important and monitor the class, watching each pair.
- 3 This activity can be turned into a game, where the best pair wins, by eliminating pairs if they do not mirror the exact movements of their partners.

## 8 On my way to school today ...

**Aims:** To encourage Ss to memorise things.

**Preparation:** None.

**Description:**

- 1 Ask Ss to sit in a circle.
- 2 Select a S to start by saying "*On my way to school today, I saw a ... (e.g. dog).*" Each S in the circle continues by adding an item to the list.

