

# SLINGSBY

- Journey In Wonder -



By **Erich Kästner**

Adapted for the stage *by* **Nicki Bloom**

Director **Andy Packer**

## ACTIVITY BOOK

Created by *Hannah McCarthy-Oliver*

Design by *Andy Ellis*

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*Materials have been created to support younger student audiences.*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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Welcome to the *Emil and the Detectives* Activity Book. We are very pleased to have worked with Hannah McCarthy-Oliver to develop these activities so that you can get the most out of your theatre experience. The most important thing for you to remember is that your memories of your time in the theatre are unique to you. As we make each new Slingsby show, we think a lot about the experience we want our audience members to have. However, we know that the real meaning of a story lives within you, and the things you think, feel, remember and reflect upon.

Enjoy the world and the story of *Emil and the Detectives*.

**Andy Packer**

*Artistic Director*

Slingsby

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATIONAL ADVISOR

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Hello there!

You are about to embark on a theatrical adventure and I hope this publication will assist you on your journey. You will come to know a very brave, clever, headstrong (and just a little bit naughty) kid named Emil. The pre-show activities will prepare you and give you insight into the show you are going to see, and the post-show activities will give you an opportunity to respond to and build on what you experienced. You may also like to use the Study Guide, which has loads of background information and activity suggestions within it.

**This publication is also available online via the Slingsby website: <http://slingsby.net.au>.**

Accessing it via the internet will enable you to open the links easily.

I have to say, I love this show. It is an uplifting, riveting and empowering production. I hope you will enjoy it just as much as I have putting together these resources for you!

**Hannah McCarthy-Oliver**

*Education Advisor*

Slingsby

For the online version of this publication go to: **[http://slingsby.net.au/eatd\\_education](http://slingsby.net.au/eatd_education)**

## EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES - SYNOPSIS

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I'm Emil.  
Emil Tischbein.  
I live in Newtown  
With my mum,  
Who works hard as a hairdresser to earn enough money for us both.  
My dad is dead.  
I don't have a brother or a sister.  
Friends?  
It's not that I don't like the other kids at school  
But  
Some of them can be mean, and I'd just rather be on my own, ok?  
It's the school holidays, which are my mum's busiest times  
And she trusts me with an important job.  
She has saved up her money to give to my grandmother  
Who lives in the city.  
So much money  
One hundred and fifty.  
And I'm in charge of delivering it.  
This will be my first time away from home by myself.  
Mum gives me a badge that used to belong to my dad  
And I use it to pin the money safely to the inside of my jacket pocket.  
Mum takes me to the train station where I board the train to the city.  
I wave to her as the train pulls away.  
In the carriage there's a man wearing a bowler hat  
Who seems friendly  
But he's also kind of strange.  
He says his name is Mr Grundeis.  
He offers me a cup of tea  
And I drink it  
But then I start to feel sick and before I know it –  
Everything starts to look weird and I can't stay awake anymore.  
When I wake up  
The train is at the big city station.  
The man in the bowler hat has left the carriage.  
My badge is still in place  
But when I check my jacket pocket  
There's nothing there.

## EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES - SYNOPSIS

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The money has gone.  
That man has taken it.  
I have to follow him.  
It's not easy keeping track of someone in a big city  
And I nearly lose him dozens of times.  
I think about going to the police, but –  
I can't.  
Because of something I did at home  
I don't want to talk about it.  
I don't know what to do  
I'm all alone in a city I don't know  
And I have no money  
But then  
A horn sounds in my ear  
And that's how I meet Gustav.  
I tell him what has happened and he offers to help.  
Gustav honks his horn again  
And all the kids in town come running  
We hatch a plan.  
We will all work together  
To track down the thief  
And get my mum's money back.  
It's not easy.  
There's a lot we have to learn together along the way.  
And in the end  
I learn the most important thing of all...

*Synopsis written by Nicki Bloom*

**Listen to Emil's Synopsis by going to**  
<https://soundcloud.com/slingsbytheatre/emil>

## MAIN CHARACTERS

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*\*Some of these characters are only briefly referenced in Slingsby's version... In the Erich Kästner's original they are all prominent.*

**Emil Tischbein** – A brave, intelligent, strong minded 10+ year old who lives with his mother and is sent via train to the city to stay with his grandmother, aunt and cousin. Money entrusted to him is stolen and it becomes his mission to get it back. Emil has to work very hard to be good.

**Emil's Mother** – Is the sole breadwinner in the family as her husband died approximately 5 years earlier. She is hard working, loving and sensible. She must be a good mother as Emil turns out to be an outstanding member of the community in the end.

**Grundeis** – The man in the bowler hat who is a con man. He meets Emil on the train and steals Emil's money. Grundeis bamboozles Emil with nonsense and jokes.

**Gustav** – A local boy in the city who helps Emil and assembles approximately 24 children to help Emil retrieve his money. He owns a car horn that helps in the capture of Grundeis. He is an adventurer.

**Pony** – Is Emil's younger cousin. She lives in the city and rides a bike. Pony is Emil's younger cousin. Pony is helpful, encouraging, positive and has clever ideas. Pony in German means a hair-style with a fringe. Hütchen means a small hat.

**Big Tuesday** – One of the detectives who is given the job of making the phone call when required during the "sting" on Grundeis. He isn't too keen about doing it but is dedicated and executes his task diligently.

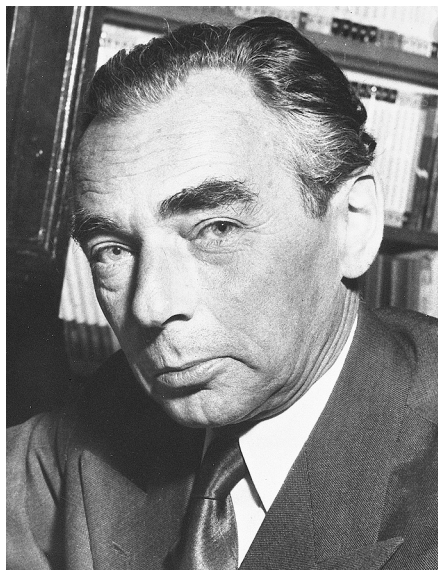
**Petzold** – a boy who puts his curiosity before the interests of the whole detective venture. Therefore, in the end, he has to bear the consequences.

**The Other Detectives** – "children in the spirit of encouraging them to function independently and with little parental supervision, in accordance of their age of development and with a reasonable acceptance of realistic personal risks."

**Emil's Grandmother** – Sensible and loving. Her final insight "Never send cash – always use the postal service." Leaves the audience with wise advice.

## WHO WAS ERICH KÄSTNER?

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Erich Kästner was born on the 23rd February 1899 in Dresden Germany. He was a novelist, satirist and poet. He studied to become a teacher and journalist. Kästner's children's books are famous for their sense of humour and respect for children. *Emil and the Detectives* is his most popular story and has been translated into over 59 languages. It was his only book to avoid Nazi censorship. Kästner printed many of his works in Switzerland because of this issue.

After World War II, Kästner edited the magazine *Die Neue Zeitung* of Munich and also created a children's newspaper. From 1952 to 1962 he undertook the role of president for the German branch of P.E.N., an organisation of international writers.

He died in Munich, West Germany on the 29th July 1974 aged 75.

### His Signature

A handwritten signature of Erich Kästner in a cursive script. The signature is written in black ink on a white background. The letters are connected and fluid, with a prominent 'K' and 'ä'.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erich\\_Kästner\\_signature.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Erich_Kästner_signature.svg)

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY

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What is a play?

What is a theatre?

What is an actor?

What is a director?

In theatre, what does a designer do?

Have you been to see a live theatre show before? YES / NO  
If yes please list what shows you have seen.

In your own words, what do you think *Emil and the Detectives* will be about?

What day, date and time are you going to see the show?

How are you getting to and from the performance venue?

How do you think audience members should conduct themselves when in a theatre?

Why do you think this is important?

## BRAVERY

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*“Courageous, dauntless, perhaps a little bit daring, a person who is brave faces dangerous or difficult situations with courage.”*

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/brave>

In this story Emil Tichsbein is a normal kid who makes a big mistake. Emil must be courageous and brave to fix the issue. Everybody experiences rejection, failure and challenges. It is courage and resilience that helps us to rise above these.

**Can you recall a time in your life when you have had to be brave?**

**When you are faced with a negative challenge in life what do you think is the best way to deal with it?**

*“Sometimes courage is about doing the scary thing, and sometimes it’s about doing the right thing.”*

Things to consider when working out the right thing to do:

**“Will it break an important rule or is it against the law?**

**Will it hurt someone?**

**Does it feel right for you?”**

<http://www.heysigmund.com/building-courage-in-kids/>

**When you are faced with a scary or intimidating situation, how will you deal with it?**

**“A detective is a member of the police force or a private investigator whose function is to obtain information and evidence, as of offenses against the law.”**

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/detective>



## BEING A GOOD FRIEND

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In *Emil and the Detectives* you will see the importance of teamwork and friendship.

### **Good friends:**

- Remember important things (birthdays, accomplishments, etc.)
- Are reliable
- Do kind things for one another and use kind language
- Help out when a friend is sad or has a problem
- Like to spend time together
- Have fun with one another.

<http://kidsactivitiesblog.com/24345/teaching-kids-2>

### **What do you enjoy doing with your friend(s)?**

**Sometimes our friends can hurt our feelings. What do you think is the best way to deal with this when it happens?**

### **Beating the Bullies - Role Play**

*In groups of 3 or 4 role play these two scenarios:*

- 1) Some kids are bullying someone in their friendship group and no one does anything to fix the situation. The outcome is negative.
- 2) Exactly the same as the above but someone steps forward to help the person being bullied and the situation has a positive outcome.

*Each scenario should go for approximately 1 ½ minutes.*

*Rehearse for 30 minutes then perform for the class.*

After each performance give feedback and discuss ideal outcomes for bullying situations.

**Bullying is never ok!**

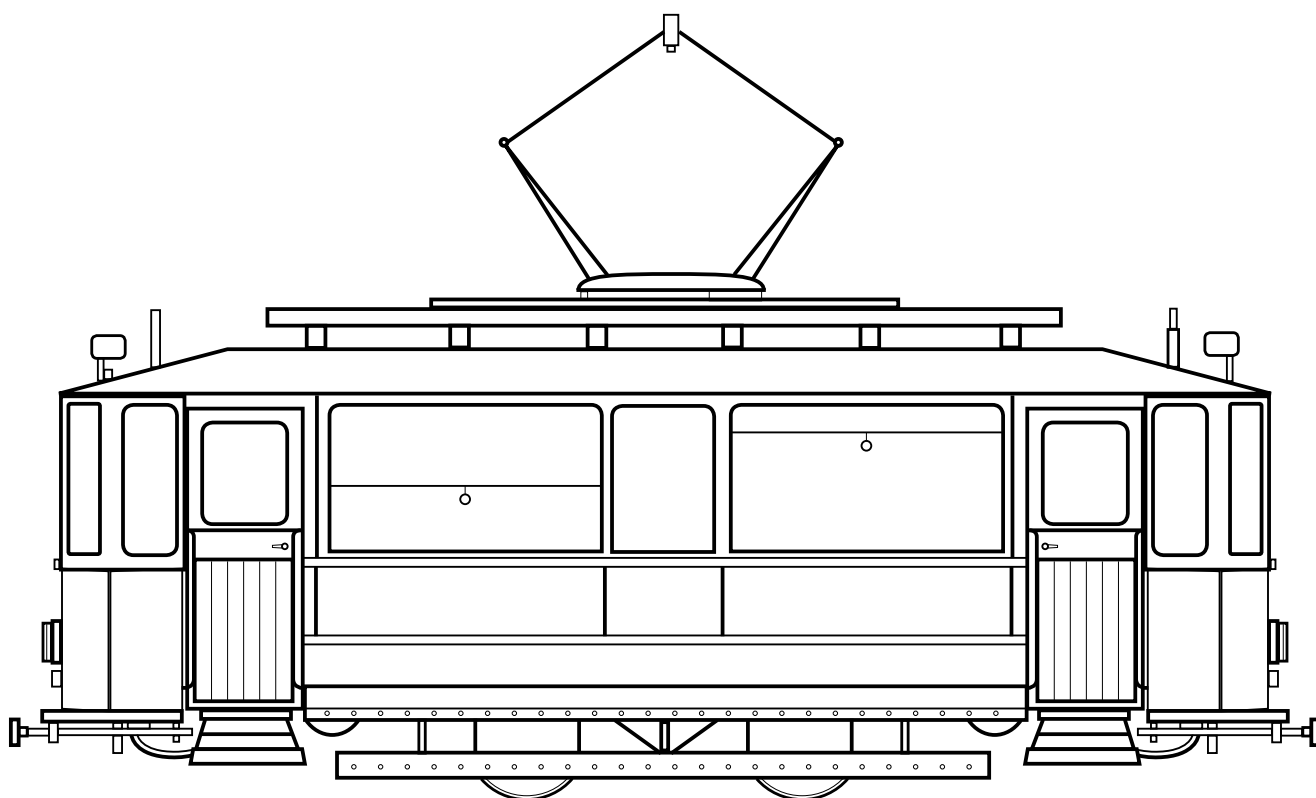
## MODES OF TRANSPORT

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Erich Kästner's *Emil and the Detectives* was written in 1929.

The types of transport Emil travelled in might have looked similar to the tram below.

- *Colour the tram in*



## **1929 – A SIGNIFICANT YEAR IN HISTORY**

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Emil and the Detectives was written in 1929. Slingsby's show is not set in any specific location, however time is referenced by the sound effects of war. The 1920s was an era that sat between the two world wars. (1914-1918 WWI and 1939-1945 WWII) The 1920s was mostly a time of prosperity and rejuvenation. Unfortunately, the New York Stock exchange crashed in 1929 and this led to the Great Depression, a time when many people lost their jobs and lived a life of poverty.

**Research the 1920s in Australia and/or Germany and record your findings here.**

**Research the 1930s in Australia and/or Germany and record your findings here.**

**What are the main differences between how people lived in the 1920s and 1930s?**

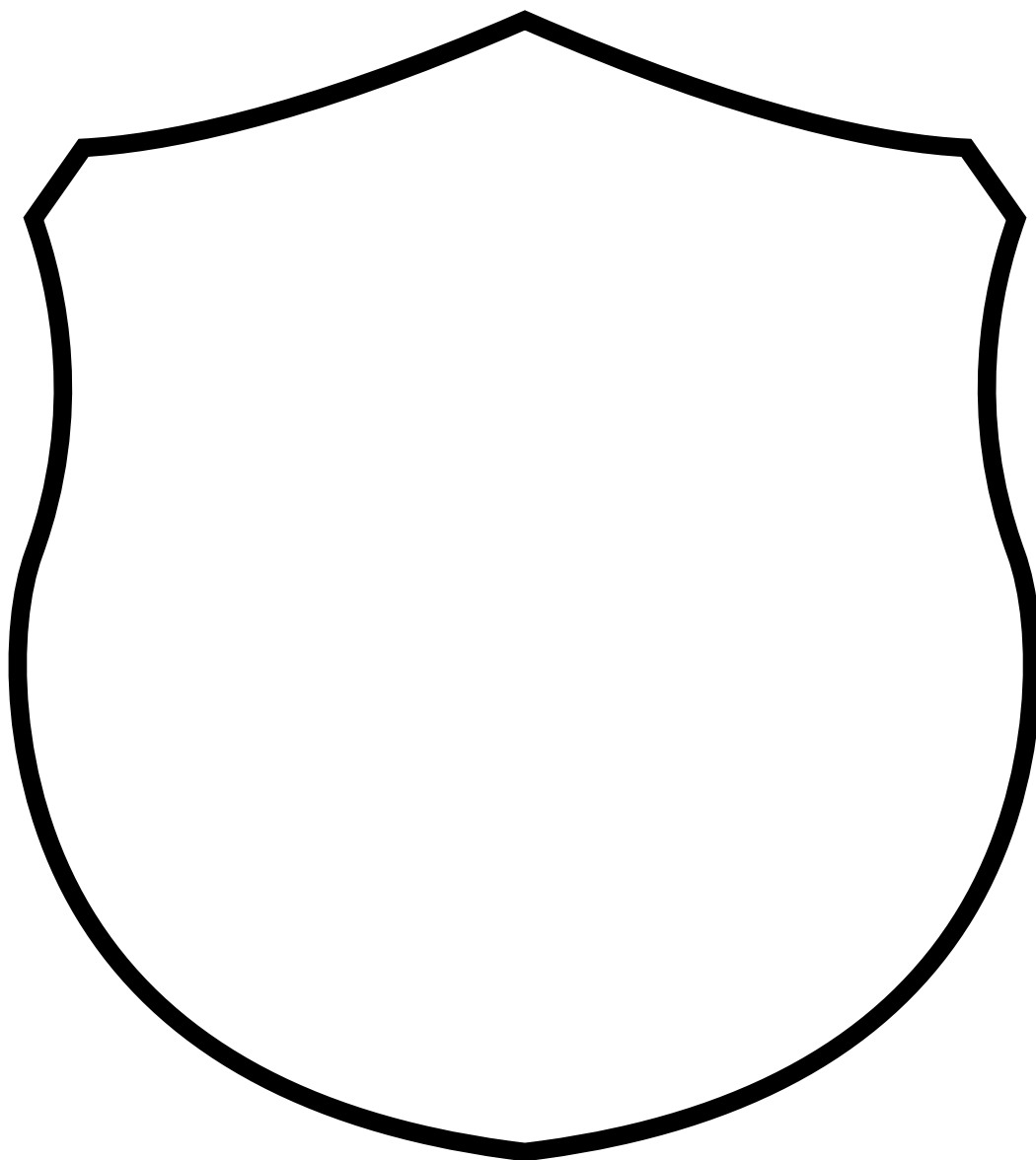
## NOW YOU HAVE SEEN THE SHOW...

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Congratulations!

You are now an official member of Slingsby's Detective Gang - SDG. Shhh, now you know the secret code - "Password Emil".

In the space below, design your own detective badge. Use symbols that represent who you are.



## **DRAW YOUR MEMORIES**

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In class, close your eyes and sit in silence for at least a minute and try to remember everything you can about your experience of Emil and the Detectives. As soon as you open your eyes... try to **DRAW** your memories.

## DETECTIVE WORK - EMIL FIND-A-WORD

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S I C F S C C G E E L T P P A  
R E I H L W R I S V A X B I Y  
U R V O I U O A S H O R I H B  
E N C I N L C D R U A L R S S  
C K I D T T D E A V M D D D G  
S I E C I C L R E H I I C N N  
L I T U O W E R E X S R A E I  
S N S Y O R Y T A N M E L I L  
D Y D B L Q N T E W O C L R S  
N E W S P A P E R D R T E F Y  
G N I T H G I L I H A O M N N  
B A D G E N R O H F L R I I O  
E R Y E N O M P N W S B L A P  
E G A R U O C T E A M W O R K  
T H E A T R E I B N O S H T V

Can you find these words in the puzzle above...

BADGE BIRDCALL BOWLERHAT BRAVERY CHILDREN CITY  
CLOCK COURAGE DETECTIVES DIRECTOR EMIL FIRE  
FRIENDSHIP GRUNDEIS HORN LIGHTING LOVE MONEY  
MORALS MUSIC NEWSPAPER PONY SHADOWS SLINGSBY  
SUITCASE TAXI TEAMWORK THEATRE TRAIN UNICORN

## EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES – WRITTEN RESPONSE

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On entering the “Slingsby Space”, what did you see and do?

What did you like/dislike about this?

Summarise your experience of the “Emil and the Detectives” performance.

What was “Emil and the Detectives” about? (PLOT)

What did the performance space look like?

Describe the music you heard.

What did the costumes look like?

Can you remember who the characters were? Please name them.

Describe the Emil character’s personality.

How did Slingsby’s “Emil and the Detectives” make you feel? (Can be a number of emotions.)

## EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES – WRITTEN RESPONSE

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Was there anything you didn't understand or enjoy?

You could ask your teacher to explain it to you OR you could write us an email and we'll answer your questions!

What did you like about the show overall?

Did you have a favourite part? YES/NO What was it?

What did you learn from your experience of Slingsby's "Emil and the Detectives"?

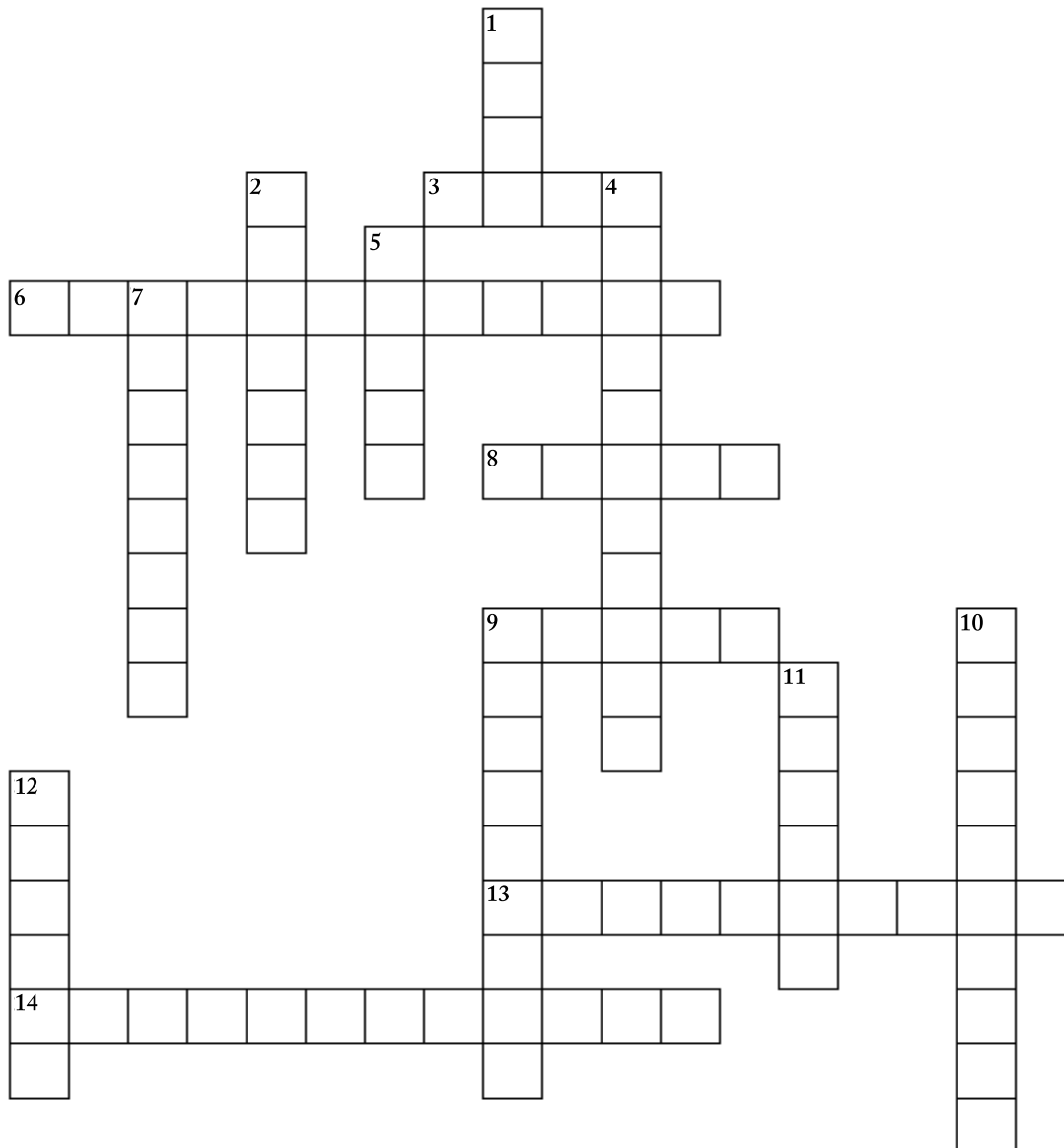
What do you think is the difference between watching TV and going to a live theatre performance?

Describe what happened at the end of "Emil and the Detectives"?



## DETECTIVE WORK – SOLVE THE PUZZLE

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### ACROSS

- 3. Emil and his new friends warmed themselves by this
- 6. Secret code used by the detectives
- 8. Emil needed to be this
- 9. What is stolen from Emil?
- 13. Name of the director of this show
- 14. Actor playing Emil

### DOWN

- 1. Emil rode in one of these
- 2. Place that Emil calls home
- 4. Original Author of the story
- 5. Emil met the man in the bowler hat whilst travelling on this
- 7. Name of the theatre company who produced this show
- 9. What Emil draws on the statue's face
- 10. Actor playing Grundeis
- 11. Name of one of Emil's new friends
- 12. Type of hat worn by the man on the train

## THINGS TO PONDER UPON

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What would have you done if you were Emil and Grundeis stole your money?

When did Emil and other characters in the story show courage?

What foolish things did Emil or others in the story do?

Do you know many mothers today who would send their 10-12 year olds off on a train and allow them to make their own way around a big city alone riding trams and taxis?

Would you love to be able to do whatever you wanted whenever you wanted? Why?

In the end, how did Emil get the money back?

What makes a town a community?

If you ever feel sad and alone, there are people who would be willing to help you! As Emil's grandmother said in Kastner's novel, 'Life is difficult sometimes but there are many kind people in the world and a true friend comes when you need help.' If you needed help, who would you reach out to?

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY IDEAS

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Create a news report – either presented live, on radio or written reporting the events surrounding the theft of Emil’s money and the capture of Grundeis.

Either individually or in pairs, write the next chapter of Emil’s story. Should be approximately one page in length.

Cut out the shape of a taxi, a train, a tram, a kid and a man in a bowler hat. Find a light source – either a torch or mobile light – use the light to enact a scene between Grundeis and Emil on the wall.

When you have finished this you could illustrate your story, read it to the class, get into groups of three or four and “act it out” – (rehearse and perform), make a short film or animation, design the costumes or a set for it, create a front cover or devise a dance/drama performance.

In groups of 3 or 4, work together to create your own abridged version of “Emil and the Detectives”. The performance length should be no more than 1-2 minutes. Your aim is to re-tell the story in this time. Rehearse, then perform to the class.

The above performance could either be performed as a “skit” or in a dance/drama format where students move ritualistically to create physical shapes and gestures to represent the events and messages of the story.

## DEALING WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY

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Emil was put into a situation where the character would have felt stress and anxiety. If we learn skills to deal with these things, it is empowering.

If you ever feel like this, undertaking a relaxation is a great way to make yourself feel better. Here's some links that can teach or help you to do this.

### **Rainbow Breathing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMrV4>

### **Relax Music for Children**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erYQyGHC7fQ>

### **The Fairy and Leprechaun's Garden**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_-FZ2OvvUcM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-FZ2OvvUcM)

### **Bubble Riding**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCirAu07TC8>

### **Magic Bubbles**

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=breathing+relaxation+for+children&&view=detail&mid=65D205E0CAC7B57FE2F465D205E0CAC7B57FE2F4&FORM=VRDGAR>

### **It's Cool to be Different**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usWg9L\\_lpAU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usWg9L_lpAU)

## MAKE YOUR OWN - ANIMATED RAILWAY FOLK

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Do you remember the scene in the train when you saw images of animated railway folk? Here's your chance to bring them to life yourself.

1. Colour in the characters on the next page
2. Carefully cut them out
3. Attach split pins at the joints
4. Set up a backdrop
5. Slowly move the arms, legs and bodies ever so slightly and take a digital photo for every movement.

There are many ways to view these images all together using iMovie or Windows Movie Maker. If you don't have access to these or stop motion software, here are some free basic options:

<http://ticklypictures.com/projects/jellycam/>

<https://monkeyjam.en.softonic.com>

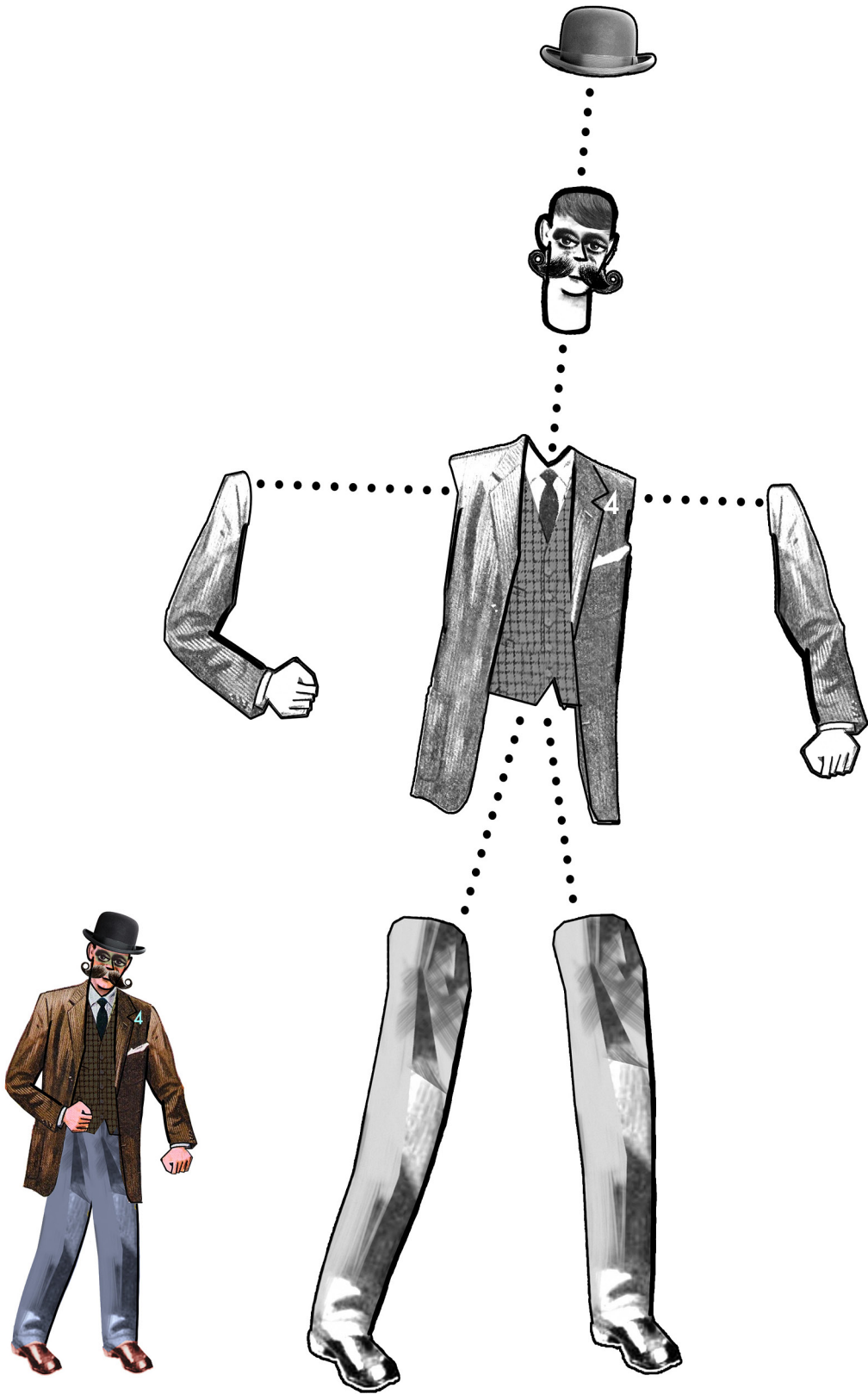
Small fee App - <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/stop-motionstudio/id441651297?mt=8>

Free Trial - <http://www.stopmotionpro.com>

If this all sounds too complicated, a super easy way to bring your images to life is to create your own animated GIF! Using the photos you have taken, go to <http://gifmaker.me> OR <https://giphy.com/create/gifmaker> and have a play! It's simple and fun.

We would love to see your final products!

**TIP** – Enlarge the man to A3 size when printing/photocopying OR you could create your own head for him. – Find online copy here: [http://slingsby.net.au/eatd\\_education](http://slingsby.net.au/eatd_education)



Created *by* Andy Petrusevics | Animated *by* Luku Kuku

## OTHER RAILWAY FOLK TO PLAY WITH

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Created by Andy Petrusevics | Animated by Luku Kuku

## PUT ON YOUR OWN SHOW

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### Free Scripts Based on Children's Stories

<https://www.dramanotebook.com/plays-for-kids/scripts-based-on-childrens-books/>

### Short Scripts – Detective Stories

<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/playhouse/whodoneit.html>

<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/playhouse/thecaseofthemissings.html>

<http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/playhouse/thesillydetective.html>

In groups of 4 or 5, choose one of the above scripts to perform. Here's a process order that you can follow:

- Play reading – (read the script in your group).
- Discuss the plot and work out the “moral of the story”.
- Cast the characters – actors will play one or more characters.
- Highlight your lines.
- If required, read the play again with actors reading their allocated parts.
- Establish the setting.
- Work out what style/genre you will be performing your play in.
- Block the script. (Note all movement on your scripts.)
- Create a back story for your character(s). Who are they? What is their background? How do they walk/talk? What are their likes/dislikes? What are their objectives? Etc.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.
- Work out what technical elements you will be using in your performance. Costumes, music, sets, props, projections etc. and allocate responsibilities.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.
- When you have your final “dress rehearsal” you should wear your costumes, rehearse with ALL technical elements, be ready for your audience AND do not stop if any errors are made.
- Perform.

**Assessment:** Individual Contributions to the Group/Rehearsals AND Individual Performances.  
A group mark may or may not be allocated.



### **What is Emil and the Detectives about?**

Erich Kästner's wonderful story explores how children can find their way in an adult-run world. I am attracted to the world that Kästner paints – a real world of good people and people with ulterior motives.

### **What can kids learn from this story?**

This story reminds us that we can ask for help and people (perhaps even strangers) will come to our aid. Whilst we can be confident in other people assisting us, ultimately we must make the final step to demand justice.

### **What was your role in bringing this story to life?**

As director I lead the process of making the show. I don't have all of the answers but I have an overall vision, then I put together the best possible team to make that happen. My job is about asking questions. The great French Canadian theatre director Robert LePage has said, "the actor is there to teach and the director is there to learn". I agree, and I also think it relates to the whole creative team.

I set challenges and points of inspiration for the team (composer, designers etc.), they then have the responsibility to create their own ideas and suggestions. I'll work with them to make it all fit together.

The director is the filter through which all of the elements are passed. The director is also the audience's representative in the creative process. It is my job to say when things are working, or if they have become boring or too slow or too obvious.

Conflict is often part of creativity. We also spend a lot of time laughing. It really is the best job in the world.

### **Why did Slingsby want to tell this story?**

We are attracted to 'coming of age' or 'getting of wisdom' stories. There is enough at risk in this story to make me really care about the hero's journey. Also Emil learns truths about life that I think we can all (at any age) reflect on:

How do I find my friends in the world?

How do I attain justice?

What is important in life?

**When you were a boy of Emil's age, what were your favorite stories and what did you do for fun?**

I loved the Tintin and Asterix comics and also the Willard Price 'Adventure' series of books. These were books about two brothers away from their parents in exotic locations, doing amazing things and getting into all sorts of danger. When I was Emil's age I was lucky enough to live part-time on a farm. My favorite thing was to ride into the sunset on my motorbike or create jumps and courses through the quarry.

**Why do you make theatre for kids and adults?**

We refer to the Slingsby audience as a 'village'. This includes children (8+), teenagers and adults and grandparents. We are interested in finding stories that can have meaning and provoke an emotional response across generations. In today's society there are so many ways that we are divided into small sub-groups. When we come together to be in the theatre we want the Slingsby experience to bind us together. We may all respond differently, in personal ways to the experience, but we are sharing in the story together. This has always been the role of art, culture and theatre. We are intent on continuing this tradition.

**What do you want the audience to experience (think, feel and see) when they come to see Slingsby's Emil and the Detectives?**

Everyone's response is individual! We do hope that everyone can feel a personal connection to the story, that it can make them reflect on how they deal with people and situations, and what's really important to them.

**What is your message for all the kids who come and see it?**

Never be afraid to ask for help. People will come to your assistance. Be brave enough to demand justice if something unfair has taken place.

We will not forsake you, and  
We, will not mistake our role,  
You will not fall alone,  
Just give a call and we will all be there Soon.

**The Detectives**