

MADE BY
MORTALS

ARMCHAIR ADVENTURES




An activity pack for older people

"Share your imagination"

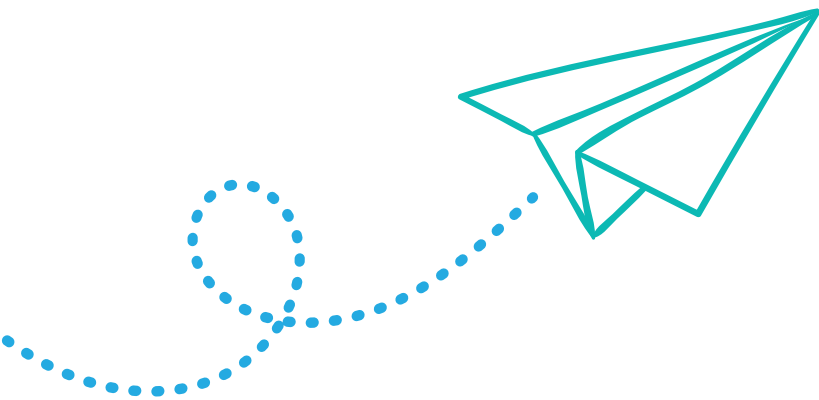
We believe your imagination can set you free. We also believe that creativity can help improve wellbeing - helping people stay happy and healthy. With this activity pack it is our mission to help people make and then perform original musical theatre and share it with children.

This activity pack combines written and audio instructions that guide you through a step-by-step process to create an Armchair Adventure - a journey of the imagination inspired by people’s experience, knowledge and passions and expressed through music, drama, movement, spoken word and song.

The activity pack has been created during lockdown by Made By Mortals, working in collaboration with their over 55s group Hearts & Minds. Content has been developed through online workshops and with audio recorded using equipment the group had to hand.



To begin, please listen to tracks 1 and 2. Notes on how to use the audio and full tracklist can be found on the inside back cover (p15).



Pat says,
“You don’t know what you can do until you give it a go!”

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Barry & Jean say,
“It’s something fun to do together!”

Rita says,
“Have a bit of confidence in yourself, what’s the worst that can happen?!”

First things first, deciding where to go...?

The idea for your Armchair Adventure will come from you, your passions, your interests, your experience. To help you decide, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What activities or hobbies do you have a passion for?
2. What activity or pastime have you been missing the most?
3. What do you have a specialist knowledge or experience of?
4. What would be the ideal place, event or time to live out that passion or knowledge?

For example, Pat discussed missing her line dancing class and socialising. Her adventure took her dancing in Dollywood!

Ronny was missing the footy and his mates down the club. He went to Wembley to see Ashton United win the F.A. Cup!

When choosing a destination and/or activity for your Armchair Adventure pick somewhere that you can get excited about, an adventure that has the feel of a dream come true. Your choice should look to have an element of fantasy and imagination but be grounded in your own real-world experience. When you've chosen where to go, let's get to work on making the drama, movement, music and song to go with it.

 Please listen to the Adventure Medley of music on track 3

This 'Adventure Medley' includes excerpts of 6 different pieces for you to use when creating your adventure. Choose a piece that you feel fits best with your chosen destination, and then write A, B, C, D, E or F in the first box below.

Adventure:

Performance Track:

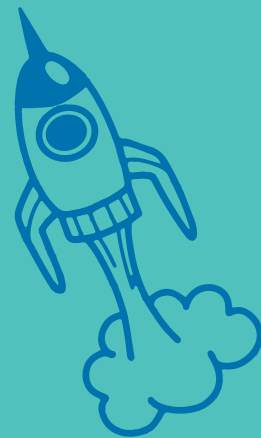
Rehearsal Track:

Now you have selected which piece of music to use for your adventure, refer to the 'Notes On Audio' (page 15) to write down your performance track and rehearsal track numbers in the other boxes above. For example, if you chose Adventure C, your performance track will be track 8, and your rehearsal track will be track 9. This music will accompany activities as you make your way through the pack.

 Please listen to your performance track

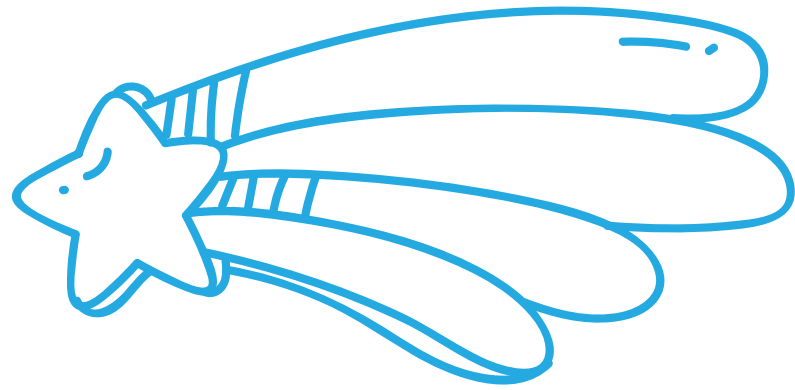
While you are listening to your chosen piece of music, let your mind wonder; begin to imagine yourself on your adventure; be inspired by the music...

When you are ready please turn to activity 1 in your pack. Remember this pack is there to inspire you to create, it is not a test in any way and there are no wrong answers. This is your Armchair Adventure and whatever direction you take it in is absolutely fine. Most importantly, have fun...



Ros says,

"Get your brain and pen going and it'll just flow out of ya."



Activity 1:

Creating Associations

Things needed: Paper, pen and clock if desired.

The idea of this activity is to produce a list of associations to use as inspiration for the drama, movement, song lyrics, percussion and spoken word you will create throughout this pack. Please answer each of the below questions. If it helps, why not give yourself a time limit and challenge yourself to come up with as many answers as you can within that limit? Please be as specific as possible with your answers.

1. What food and drink do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?
2. What clothes, headwear, or accessories do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?
3. What objects do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?
4. What animals or plants do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?
5. What weather conditions or geography do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?
6. What activities or actions do you associate with your Armchair Adventure?

Go back and edit your list. If possible, aim for about 1 to 3 answers for each question.





Activity 2:

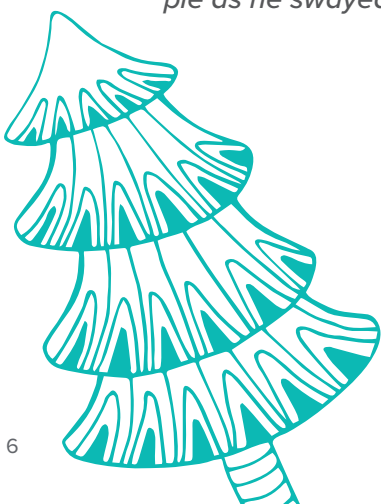
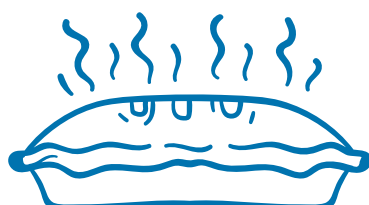
Drama

The idea of this activity is to create a short mime or action for each association you made in activity 1. Fire up your imagination to really picture yourself on your adventure. Interact with each of the things you thought of in the previous activity, one after another. As you live out each association see the colours, experience the smells, hear the impact you have as you engage in the imaginary world you have created. If appropriate feel the weight of any imaginary items in your hands; feel the texture, really live in that moment...

On Pat's adventure she imagined wearing a big cowgirl hat and boots as she danced around the stage.

On Linda's adventure she smelt the tall pine trees and felt the rough bark on her bare arms and legs as she made her way to the top.

On Ronny's adventure he tasted the rich gravy in his steak and kidney pie as he swayed to and fro on the terraces in his version of Wembley.



Activity 3:

Stylised Movement

The idea of this activity is to create a movement piece or dance inspired by the imaginary drama from activity 2.

- Choose one of the mimes you have created in the previous activity.
- Edit the quality of the mime into a simple dance move. Ask yourself, 'how can I capture the overall imaginary experience I had in the mime, into one or two clear moves or actions?' The quality of your movements should change from using your body in a free-form natural way to a more controlled and fixed stylistic way.
- Create a combination of these moves or actions so one flows or cuts into another.
- Set them to music, using your chosen 🎵 rehearsal track (refer to the track number you wrote on page 4).
- As the music plays, try and only make the moves you have choreographed. Be precise with yourself. Be strict with yourself.
- While performing, try and imagine yourself there and use your body to depict the experience of your adventure.
- Remember this is not a test, whatever you create is absolutely fine, just enjoy using your body in different ways. Have fun and smile.

Ronny says,

"If me and Baz can do it, anyone can!"




Activity 4:

Songwriting

Things needed: paper and pen.

The idea of this activity is to create some lyrics for a song. There are many approaches to writing lyrics and for this activity pack we are going to begin by creating a word bank. This is a collection of words associated to your Armchair Adventure.

Please listen to the  **performance track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4.



On a piece of paper write as many words as you can that help describe your adventure. This could be where you are going on your adventure, what you are doing there and why you are going there. You could also use words that you have created and thought about in previous activities.

What do you imagine when listening to this music? Put yourself in your adventure and use your imagination to describe what you see, hear, smell, taste and feel. These can be literal or metaphorical.

For example, on Jean’s adventure to a Brazilian carnival, she wrote ‘bright colours’ (see), ‘people singing’ (hear), ‘warmth of the streets’ (smell), ‘salty air’ (taste), ‘the rhythm in my feet’ (feel).

Try also thinking about a specific moment or happening in your adventure and consider your senses at that particular time.

For example, Linda wrote about ‘leaping from tree to tree’ in her adventure in the Amazon rainforest.

There are no wrong answers, this is your adventure.

Below is an example word bank from Walter’s adventure on African Safari:

Africa amazement discovery animals excitement
journey nature beauty dusty park
listening watching peaceful desert
big five plains adventure wildlife savannah
bumpy water time grassland
hot sun parade blue calm

Now write new words that are associated with the vocabulary already in your word bank.

For example, Walter had the word ‘adventure’ in his original word bank, and so added ‘wonder’ as his word association.

Repeat this activity for as many words as you can, writing your new words anywhere on the paper.

Here’s Walter’s example with new word associations added in blue

nervous Africa amazement stillness discovery animals excitement
pride
nature beauty dusty play park smoke
listening drink watching peaceful life desert
big five plains eyes rocks
march adventure wildlife savannah
bumpy water find king royal grassland
hunt grass parade time wonder
hot sun blue dry calm bright


Once the bank of words has been created, the next step is to form these words into sentences. To do this, try following these three tips:

1. **Create sentences that are a maximum of 9 words.**
2. **Try to only use words from your word bank and conjunctions (words that connect words together, for example ‘and,’ ‘for,’ ‘when,’ ‘if’).**
3. **‘Play’ with the words first, see if there are opportunities for rhythm, rhyme, metaphor (a figure of speech that isn’t literally true), alliteration (same letters or sounds at the beginning of closely connected words) or vivid language when combining words.**

From your list of sentences, choose four that fit together in terms of the story you want to tell and the natural rhythm/rhyming qualities when you read them aloud one after another. Lyrics can rhyme in couplets (two successive lines that rhyme), or on the final word of alternate sentences and some song lyrics don’t rhyme at all. Also don’t be afraid of using repetition within your four sentences.

*Dusty plains burning in the sun,
Wonder, adventure.
Grassland, savannahs, peaceful and calm,
Wonder, adventure.*

Once you have created your four lines you may feel inspired to write more - if so fantastic!


Finally, try saying your finished lyrics like a piece of poetry, using the  **performance track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4 as accompaniment.


 **Listen to Rita’s example of this on track 16.**

For example, take the sentence, ‘the dusty plains are burning in the sun’. This can be edited to ‘the dusty plains, are burning in the sun’ without losing any of its meaning.

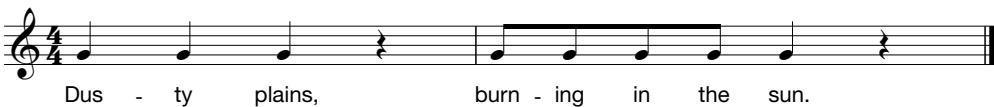
Activity 5:

Turning Lyrics Into Song

The idea of this activity is to apply rhythm and melody to the lyrics you have created in activity 4. Please listen to the  **rehearsal track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4 and while doing so, find and tap along to the pulse, the steady beat running throughout the music.

Now using the first line from your set of lyrics, try speaking that sentence in a rhythm along to the accompanying music (like a chant or rap).  **Listen to Cyril's example of this on track 17.**

BEAT	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
	Dus -	ty	plains	X	bur -ning	in the	sun	X




Once you have composed the rhythm for your first line, move onto composing the next line and so on until you can say all of them, in rhythm, one after another with the musical accompaniment.

Avoid creating rhythms that are the same as the pulse, with every syllable being on the beat. Solve this by using different durations for each word/syllable.


John says,
“Take your time. Just think action... words...poetry...music.”

Once you have your lyrics and have put a rhythm to them, you can start creating a melody. You can do this using a keyboard or other melodic instrument such as a violin or recorder, or more commonly using your voice.

Listen again to your  **rehearsal track**. This is the same section of music repeated 8 times for you to compose your melody/tune. While the track is playing, practice saying the rhythms of each line over and over again. Once you are confident with the rhythms, try applying pitches to them (a mixture of high and low notes). Start with composing a tune for the first line, then developing this into the second line and so on.

 **Listen to Cyril's example of this on track 18.**

Don't be afraid to experiment with this, composing is an ongoing process of refining and editing until you create something you are happy with.

Once you have composed your melody and are confident singing each line, practice along to the  **performance track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4.

 **Listen to Cyril's example of this on track 19.**

Lily & Cyril say,
“Anyone can sing, no matter what key they're in! Have a go and forget your woes for a while.”

Activity 6:

Percussion

The idea of this activity is to create some percussion to play along to your chosen music. You can do this by using a percussion instrument if you have one, sounds using your body (for example clapping, stamping or beat-boxing) or ‘found sounds’ (for example, using pots, pans, empty jars and cutlery) from around your home.

Please listen to the  **performance track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4.




What percussion instruments, sounds using your body or ‘found sounds’ from around your home can you use to play along to this music?

For example, Jean used a big plastic box and a wooden spoon for her Brazilian drum sound.

Once you have chosen your object/instrument, practice using it and consider how to create the best quality of sound. For example, does it sound best when played quick, slow, loud, quiet etc.


Now let's compose a rhythm to play on your chosen instrument/sound, using the syllables in words. To begin, create a short phrase of no more than 5 words to sum up your Armchair Adventure.

For example, ‘African safari’; ‘dancing in Dollywood’; ‘winning the cup at Wembley’.


Play your  **rehearsal track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4, and practice saying your words to a rhythm ensuring that they fit with the pulse/beat of the music. Practice saying your rhythmic phrase over and over again along with the music.

Now try clapping your rhythm.

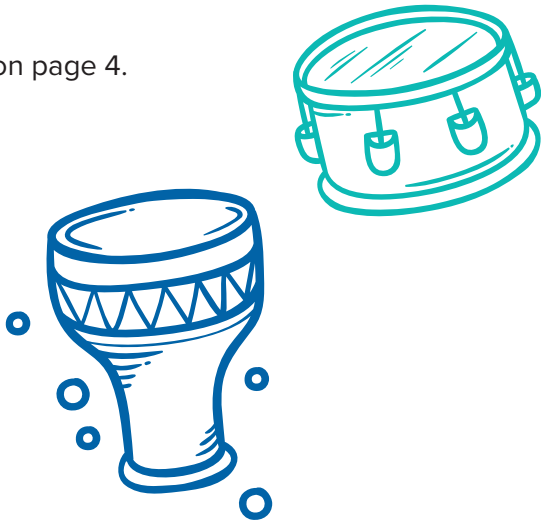
Finally, use your musical instrument/sound to play the rhythm you have composed.

 **Please listen to Barry & Jean's example of this on track 20. They used a pan and a wooden spoon to play a rhythm to the words ‘dancing in India’.**

If you are doing this activity with others, try composing a different rhythm for each player and layering them so multiple rhythms are being played at the same time.

Once you're happy with the rhythm, perform it along to the  **performance track** from the adventure music you chose on page 4.

Lynda says,
“Why not entertain your neighbours through the window.”



Activity 7:

Using Your Senses to Create a Piece of Spoken Word

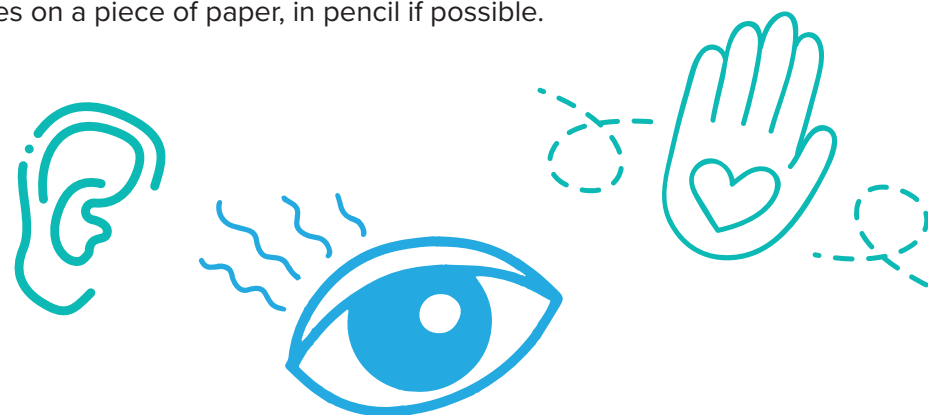
Things needed: A pencil and paper.

The idea of this activity is to write and then perform a piece of creative writing that paints a verbal picture of your Armchair Adventure.

Please listen to the  performance track from the adventure music you chose on page 4.

Write the following sentences on a piece of paper, in pencil if possible.

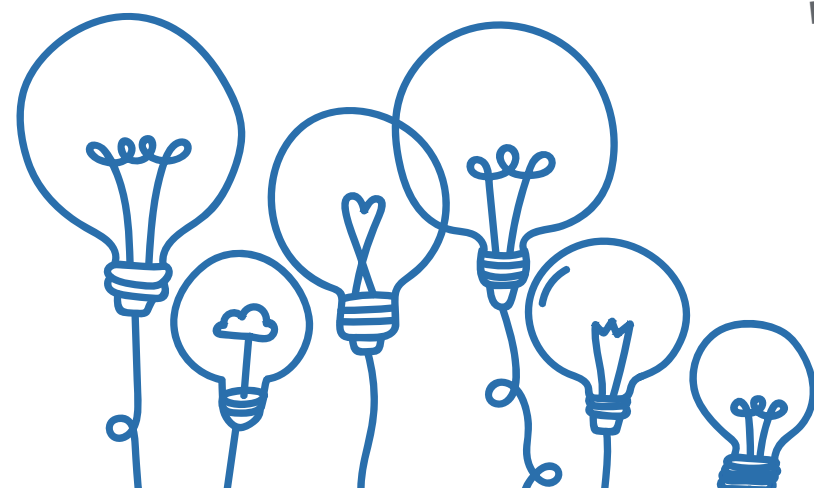
I hear...
I smell...
I see...
I taste...
I feel...
I think...
I dream...



Choose a specific place or moment within your Armchair Adventure. Imagine yourself there. Place yourself right there within your imagination. Breathe the experience in. Immerse yourself. From that place complete the sentences above. Be playful with the language you use. Meanings do not have to be literal; the activity is about evoking an overall feeling of the world you are imagining.

After you have completed this, go back and edit your work. Try adding more description, metaphors and similes. Try rubbing out the sentence starters to see if the piece you have created sounds more poetic without them.

Read your piece out loud, imagine that you are surrounded by children sat cross-legged at your feet. Read the piece you have created to them painting pictures with your words.



Linda says,
"It's helped me
find my voice and
express myself"

Activity 8:

Creating a Story

The idea of this final activity is to structure your Armchair Adventure into a piece of musical theatre that tells a simple story.

Use the following questions to help you structure the work into a story containing a start, middle and end.

Do you take someone with you on your adventure; a friend or a grandchild for example?

How do you get there and how do you move around whilst you're there?

Does your adventure have a mission or is there a challenge that you have to overcome?

Does something go wrong while on your adventure?

Do you meet someone there?

Does something magical happen?

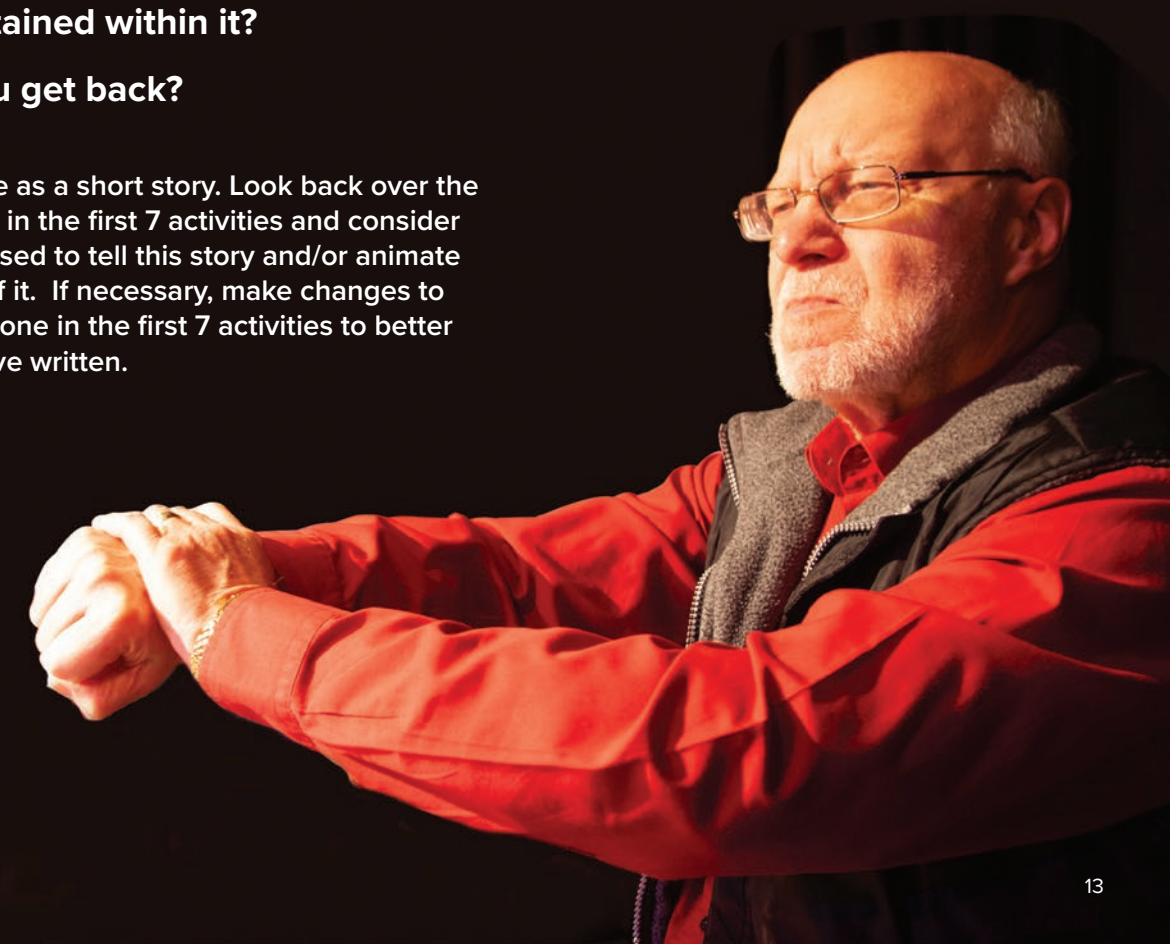
Does your adventure have a moral or lesson contained within it?

How do you get back?

Write your adventure as a short story. Look back over the work you have done in the first 7 activities and consider where they can be used to tell this story and/or animate (bring to life) parts of it. If necessary, make changes to the work you have done in the first 7 activities to better tell the story you have written.

Ann & Keith say,

"This has
been our
little project,
it's given us
a sense of
achievement."



Recording and Sharing

We would like you to share your creations with the world - reach out, connect and be brave!

We'd love you to share your Armchair Adventure with us.
To do so, get in touch by...

Email: admin@madebymortals.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MadeByMortalsCIC

Twitter: [@MadeByMortals](https://twitter.com/MadeByMortals)

Or post: Made By Mortals, Guide Bridge Theatre,
Audenshaw Road, Manchester, M34 5HJ



You could:

- Film your adventure on a smart phone, tablet or video camera and share it using file sharing websites like WeTransfer.
- Record your adventure using a voice recorder and email it or if it is a physical tape/CD post it.
- Write your adventure down in a letter and add photos or drawings of you in action and post it.
- When it is safe to do so and in keeping with government guidelines, find an opportunity to do a live performance of your adventure to children that visit.
- Perform your adventure over the telephone to friends and loved ones.
- Use video conferencing platforms like Zoom, Skype, Facetime or Teams to share what you have created.
- Post your adventure in instalments on social media.
- Tell someone you care about what you have been up to and take time to enjoy their reaction.

For more information about the Armchair Adventures Podcast Series, Hearts & Minds Theatre Company and Made By Mortals please go to www.madebymortals.org

A special thanks to the Hearts & Minds Theatre Company for sharing their imaginations with us in the making of this activity pack: Barry Austin, Jean Austin, Lily Budden, Cyril Budden, Elsa Gee, Rita Hardisty, Ros Harvey, Pat Jones, Lynda Kent, Ann Openshaw, Keith Openshaw, John Reddy, Carla Stokes, Ronny Thomasson, Kenneth Walker, Linda Woodhead, Walter Young.

Made By Mortals would like to thank James Dee, Gino Evans and GOTO Creative for their contribution in making this resource.

Notes on the Audio:

This activity pack is accompanied by a collection of music to assist and inspire you in the creation of your own Armchair Adventure. There are 6 different pieces of music: Adventure A, Adventure B, Adventure C, Adventure D, Adventure E and Adventure F. Each 'Adventure' piece of music, has 2 versions, a 'performance track' and a 'rehearsal track'. A 'performance track' is the whole piece of music. A 'rehearsal track' is a short excerpt of the music, repeated on a loop for you to use when creating words, drama, music and movement for your Armchair Adventure.

There are also audio examples of the activities performed by the Hearts & Minds group.

You can access the full list of tracks by either:

Copying or typing this link into your web browser:
<https://www.madebymortals.org/armchair-adventures/>

Scanning the QR code below - all you need to do is hold your smartphone camera over the QR code and it will take you to a website with the full list of tracks.

Using the enclosed MP3 player (only for physical copies of the activity pack).

Track list:

1. Introduction
2. Armchair Adventures Podcast Trailer
3. Adventure Music Medley
4. Adventure A - Performance Track
5. Adventure A - Rehearsal Track
6. Adventure B - Performance Track
7. Adventure B - Rehearsal Track
8. Adventure C - Performance Track
9. Adventure C - Rehearsal Track
10. Adventure D - Performance Track
11. Adventure D - Rehearsal Track
12. Adventure E - Performance Track
13. Adventure E - Rehearsal Track
14. Adventure F - Performance Track
15. Adventure F - Rehearsal Track
16. Example 1 - Reciting Lyrics
17. Example 2 - Rhythm & Words
18. Example 3 - Composing A Melody
19. Example 4 - Singing
20. Example 5 - Percussion

* Bonus track for MP3 players/CDs
- Armchair Adventures Episode 1,
Linda's Treetop Adventure



Carla says,
"Go for it, you can inspire young minds!"



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