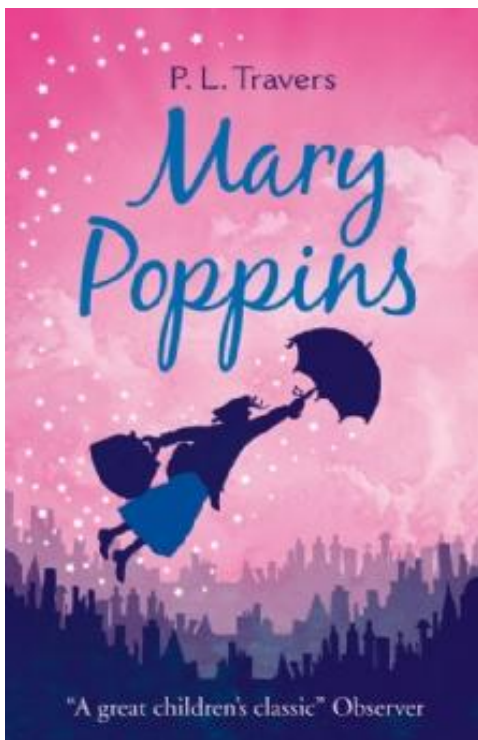




Mary Poppins

Chatterbooks activity pack

for children, families, and adult reader groups



PB: 9780007286416



HB: 9780007542598

DISNEY PRESENTS

Saving Mr Banks – discover the extraordinary true story of how *Mary Poppins* was brought to the big screen in Disney's *Saving Mr Banks*.

THE
READING
AGENCY

Mary Poppins Chatterbooks activity pack

About this pack

This is a pack of reading ideas and activities inspired by P L Travers' well-loved book *Mary Poppins*, brought to you by The Reading Agency in partnership with Disney and the publisher HarperCollins Children's Books.

The pack contains activities and further reading ideas for children and families, and for children's reading groups – plus information about the new Disney film ***Saving Mr Banks***, which tells the extraordinary story of how *Mary Poppins* was brought to the big screen.

Chatterbooks [www.readinggroups.org/chatterbooks] is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 14 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children's literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books.

The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See www.readingagency.org.uk

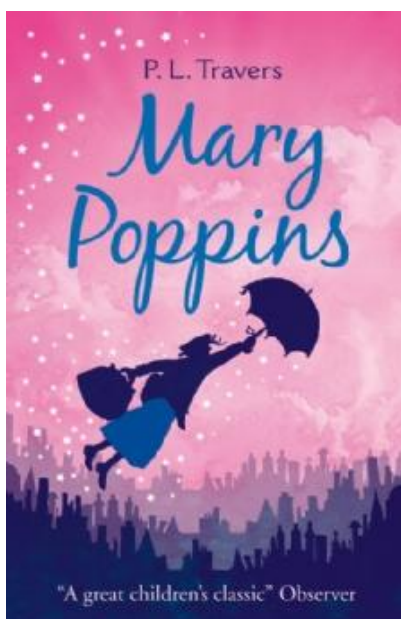
Children's Reading Partners is a national partnership of children's publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many children and young people as possible.

Contents

- *Mary Poppins* – the book
- More books to enjoy
- Some reading activity ideas for reading groups, and for families
- *Saving Mr Banks* – all about the film
- *Saving Mr Banks* – links to trailer and downloads

Chatterbooks groups: For help in planning your Chatterbooks meeting, have a look at these [Top Tips for a Successful Session](#)

Mary Poppins – the book **HarperCollins Children’s Books** 978-0007286416



The original, best-loved classic about the world’s most famous nanny – Mary Poppins.

When Jane and Michael Banks draw up an advertisement for a new nanny, Mary Poppins, complete with magical travelling carpet bag and talking umbrella, appears out of the sky on a strong wind and ready to take them on extraordinary adventures.

Mary Poppins is strict but fair, and soon the Banks children are whisked off to a funfair inside a pavement picture, a birthday party at the zoo, and on many more magical outings with their wonderful new nanny!

Needless to say, when at last ‘the wind changes’ and she flies away, the children are devastated. But the magic of Mary Poppins will stay with the Banks family forever.

About the author: P.L. Travers (Pamela), was born in 1899 and grew up on a sugar plantation in Australia, as one of three sisters. She was a keen reader, particularly of all kinds of myths and legends.

Pamela deliberately kept her life very private. She lived for a while in Ireland and London, and travelled frequently to America, where she was made writer in residence to both Smith and Radcliffe Colleges in Massachusetts.

Although she worked as a secretary, a dancer and an actress, writing was P.L. Travers’ real love, and for many years she was a journalist. It was while she was recuperating from a serious illness that she wrote *Mary Poppins* – ‘to while away the days, but also to put down something that had been in my mind for a long time’, she said. She received an OBE in 1977 and died in 1996.

A taste: *‘Now,’ she said, ‘spit-spot into bed.’ And she began to undress them. They noticed that whereas buttons and hooks had needed all sorts of coaxing from Katie Nana, for Mary Poppins they flew apart almost at a look. In less than a minute they found themselves in bed and watching, by the dim light from the night-light, the rest of Mary Poppins’ unpacking being performed.*

From the carpet-bag she took out seven flannel nightgowns, four cotton ones, a pair of boots, a set of dominoes, two bathing-caps and a postcard album. Last of all came a folding camp bed-stead with blankets and eiderdown complete, and this she set down between John’s cot and Barbara’s.

Jane and Michael sat hugging themselves and watching. It was all so surprising that they could find nothing to say. But they knew, both of them, that something strange and wonderful had happened at Number Seventeen, Cherry Tree Lane.

More *Mary Poppins* titles – and more books to enjoy

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| P.L. Travers | <i>Mary Poppins Comes Back</i> (eBook edition) | HarperCollins | B00BAJ3WL4 |
| | <i>Mary Poppins Opens the Door</i> (eBook edition) | HarperCollins | B00BAJ3WQE |
| | <i>Mary Poppins in the Park</i> (eBook edition) | HarperCollins | B00BAJ3WQY |
| | <i>Mary Poppins in Cherry Tree Lane</i> * | | |
| | <i>Mary Poppins and the House Next Door</i> * | | |
| | <i>Mary Poppins: The Complete Collection</i> | HarperCollins | 9780007398553 |
| | For more stories about families see the Chatterbooks Activity Pack: Family Fun and Adventures | | |
| | More stories about magic | | |
| Frank Cottrell Boyce | <i>Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again</i> | Macmillan | 978-0330544191 |
| Christianna Brand | <i>Nanny McPhee: the collected tales of Nurse Matilda</i> | Bloomsbury | 978-0747578994 |
| Susan Cooper | <i>Over Sea Under Stone</i> | Red Fox | 978-1849411110 |
| Cornelia Funke | <i>Inkheart</i> | Chicken House | 978-1908435118 |
| E. Nesbit | <i>Five Children and It</i> | Vintage | 978-0099572985 |
| Mary Norton | <i>Bedknobs and Broomsticks</i> | Orion | 978-1842550724 |
| Diana Wynne Jones | <i>Howl's Moving Castle</i> | HarperCollins | 978-0007299263 |
| C. S. Lewis | <i>The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe</i> | HarperCollins | 978-0007323128 |
| T. H. White | <i>The Sword in the Stone</i> | HarperCollins | 978-0007263493 |

*Search on Amazon for available editions



Discussion and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks sessions, and for families reading *Mary Poppins* together.

Quiz

1. What are the names of the two youngest Banks children?
 - a) Sarah and James
 - b) Barbara and John
 - c) Brenda and George
2. What does Mary Poppins' medicine taste like for Jane?
 - a) Lemonade
 - b) Lime juice cordial
 - c) Cream soda
3. What does Mary Poppins' umbrella have for a handle?
 - a) A golden rose
 - b) A lion's face
 - c) A parrot's head
4. What does the dancing cow have fixed to her horn?
 - a) A daffodil
 - b) A star
 - c) A ribbon
5. Who do Mary and the children meet when their compass takes them to the East?
 - a) A dolphin
 - b) A macaw
 - c) A panda
6. What do they buy from Mrs Corry's shop?
 - a) Cupcakes
 - b) Caramel shortbread
 - c) Gingerbread
7. Which group of stars does Maia belong to?
 - a) The Pleiades
 - b) The Milky Way
 - c) Cassiopeia
8. How long does Mary Poppins stay with the Banks family?
 - a) A year and a day
 - b) Until the children are well-behaved
 - c) Until the wind changed.

(Answers: b, b, c, b, c, c, a, c)

Wordsearch

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

Find these words in the squares above – they go backwards, forwards, sideways or diagonally!

CARPET BAG

MEDICINE

SPIT SPOT

MICHAEL

GAS

MR BANKS

RED COW

JANE

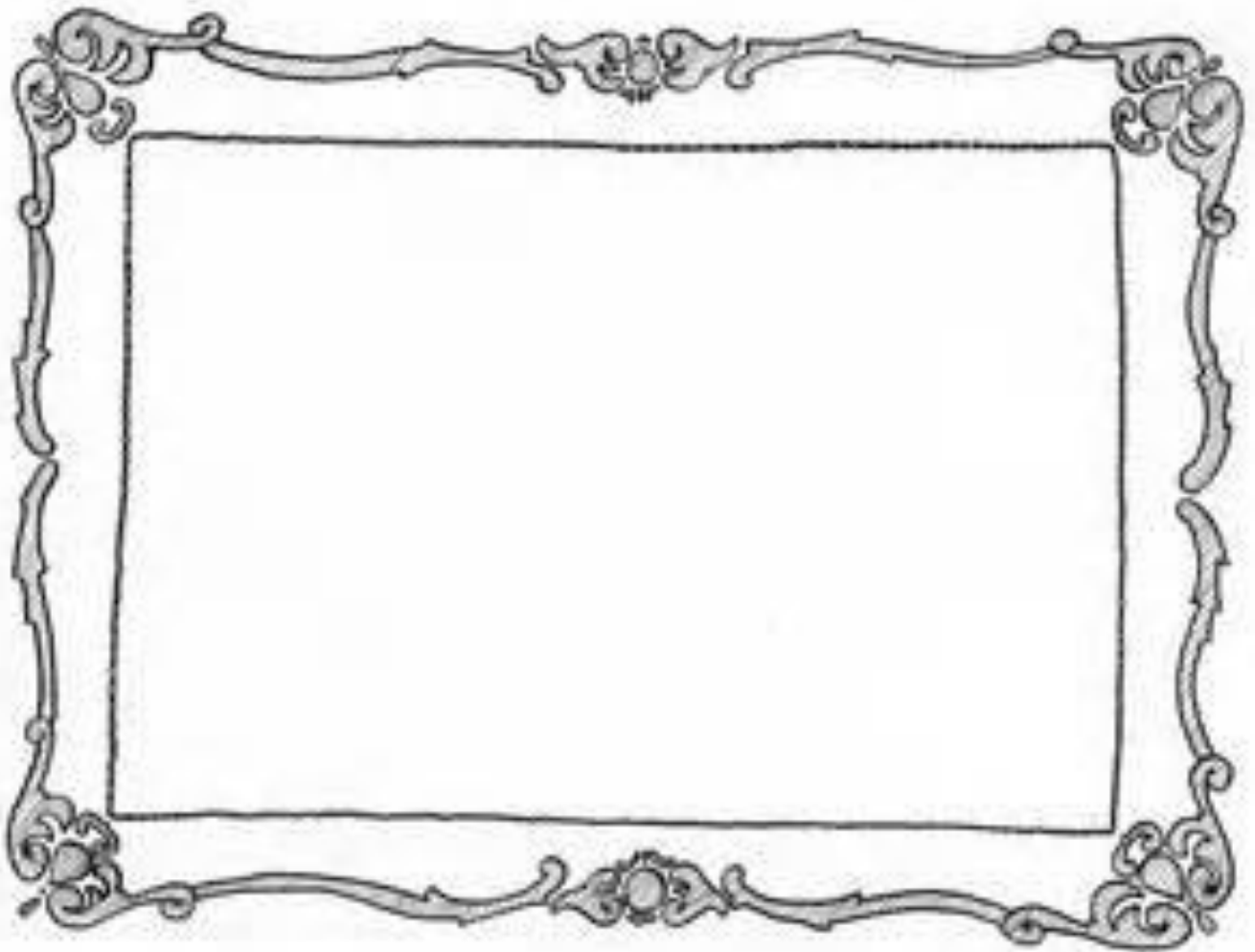


Adventures inside a picture

When Mary Poppins has a day out with Bert, the Match Man, they step right inside a pavement picture of trees and grass and sea which comes to life, and they have a wonderful time with Afternoon Tea and a Merry-go-Round.

Draw a countryside picture in this frame and imagine what adventure you might have if you stepped inside it.

Give your picture a title and write about your adventure.



Title of your picture:

The story of your adventure: what happens when you step inside the picture?

Full Moon

Changing places: In the story 'Full Moon' things get turned around, and when Jane and Michael go to the zoo they find that people are in cages and animals are looking at them instead. Think of some more situations which would be funny and/or thought-provoking, where people and animals might change places.

Have a look at Anthony Browne's picture book **Zoo**, which has a similar theme – it shows a family who spend a day at the zoo, looking at the animals in the cages – or is it the animals that are looking at them?

Moon quiz: See if you know or can find out these things about the moon:

| | ANSWER |
|--|--------|
| 1. How often is there a full moon? | |
| 2. What is a crescent moon? | |
| 3. What is a lunar eclipse? | |
| 4. What is the sea like when there is a full moon? | |
| 5. What do we mean when we say 'Once in a blue moon'? | |
| 6. What do we mean when we say that somebody is 'crying for the moon'? | |

Things to talk about together

- What is your favourite story in the book *Mary Poppins*? Is it the dancing cow who jumped over the moon? Or Christmas shopping? Or the story about Miss Lark's dog Andrew and his friend Willoughby? Talk about which you like best, and why.
- Would you like to have someone like Mary Poppins to look after you?
- If someone magical could be blown into your house by the wind, who would you like it to be?

- In 'Bad Tuesday' Mary Poppins says that Michael has got out on the wrong side of bed – what does this mean? Have you had days like this?

Enjoy and compare the book and the film

Mary Poppins was made into a film in 1964 by the Walt Disney Studios – it starred Julie Andrews and won several Oscar awards.

This film is based on all the books in the *Mary Poppins* series, and the story of how Walt Disney persuaded P.L. Travers to allow him to make it is told in the fascinating new 2013 film *Saving Mr Banks* – see page 10 in this pack.

You can still see the film *Mary Poppins* on DVD – when you've read the book, have a special showing with your reading group or family and talk about what you like best in both the book and film.

Songs

In the film *Mary Poppins*, there are several songs you or your family might know, such as *Feed the Birds* and *A Spoonful of Sugar*. Which stories are these two songs about?

See if you can find the words and tunes – write down the words and sing the songs together!

You will find more activity ideas in the back pages of the HarperCollins paperback edition of *Mary Poppins*!



Saving Mr Banks

Disney is proud to present SAVING MR BANKS, the extraordinary untold true story of how one of the most beloved tales of all time, *Mary Poppins*, was brought to the big screen. Starring Academy Award® winners Emma Thompson and Tom Hanks, SAVING MR BANKS hits cinemas nationwide on November 29th, 2013.

When Walt Disney's daughters begged him to make a movie of their favourite book, P.L. Travers' *Mary Poppins*, he made them a promise - one that he didn't realize would take 20 years to keep. In his quest to obtain the rights, Walt comes up against a curmudgeonly, uncompromising writer who has absolutely no intention of letting her beloved magical nanny get mauled by the Hollywood machine. But, as the books stop selling and money grows short, Travers reluctantly agrees to go to Los Angeles to hear Disney's plans for the adaptation.

For those two short weeks in 1961, Walt Disney pulled out all the stops. Armed with imaginative storyboards and chirpy songs from the talented Sherman brothers, Walt launches an all-out onslaught on P.L. Travers, but the prickly author doesn't budge. He soon begins to watch helplessly as Travers becomes increasingly immovable and the rights begin to move further away from his grasp.

It is only when he reaches into his own childhood that Walt discovers the truth about the ghosts that haunt her, and together they set *Mary Poppins* free to ultimately make one of the most endearing films in cinematic history.

Posters and Downloads

You can download the **SAVING MR BANKS** teaser poster below:

UK poster portrait / [Download](#)

UK poster landscape / [Download](#)

Click [here](#) to watch the trailer for **SAVING MR BANKS** on YouTube.

***Saving Mr Banks* – some discussion points for adult reading groups**

- 'If you are looking for autobiographical facts,' Travers once wrote, '*Mary Poppins* is the story of my life.' – why did she weep at the film's Hollywood première in 1964?
- How did P. L. Travers use her own past in her stories of *Mary Poppins*; how is this exposed in the film *Saving Mr Banks*?
- If P. L. Travers' aunt was Mary Poppins, how different was she from the version of the character in the classic Disney film? Are there other people from her life also written into Mary Poppins' character?
- What would Mary Poppins make of her continuing hold over children? – how much does the Disney film of *Mary Poppins* match our notions of what is ideal childcare?
- How much does *Saving Mr Banks* reveal about Walt Disney's understanding of childhood happiness?
- How does the story of *Mary Poppins* compare with J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*?

Further reading – the biography of P.L. Travers, which inspired the film *Saving Mr Banks*:

Mary Poppins, She Wrote: The Life of P.L. Travers by Valerie Lawson
Pocket Books 978-1476764733