

Animal Tales



Shakespeare uses animal **similes & metaphors** in his plays and poems to compare something, or someone to an animal's appearance or character. Sometimes these are nice comparisons, but not always!

What: is the jay more precious than the lark because his feathers are more beautiful?
Taming of the Shrew

I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream
Henry IV, Part 1

In **Tudor** times, when Shakespeare was alive, animals were part of everyday life. Horses were the main form of transportation. Animals were farmed for food and worked on the land. They were often used for entertainment, with cruel sports such as bear-baiting and dog fighting drawing large crowds of people. Animals were generally not cared for in the same way they are today.

Many Tudors kept pets. Dogs were the most common but it was not unknown for people to have monkeys and caged birds at home.



Gray-hound, *The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Sepents*, Topsell, 1658, University of Houston Collection



In **Victorian** times, when Birmingham's Shakespeare Memorial Library was created, working animals were still a large part of everyday life and entertainment. The ever expanding British Empire provided opportunities for people to take animals from all over the world to have as unusual pets in Britain. Exotic birds were a particular favourite.

The first National Dog Show was opened by the Birmingham Dog Show Society in 1860 and in the late 1800s the famous Hengler's Circus Company, well known for their horse performances, had shows in Birmingham. Some of the (human) performers even visited Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon during their stay!

In 1827 The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was set up to help pit-ponies in mining towns. Royal approval followed in 1840 (RSPCA) leading to better care for all animals.

Ariel: *On the bat's back I do fly, After summer, merrily.*
The Tempest. Hand-coloured illustration from The Forrest Collection of scrapbooks, Library of Birmingham



Birmingham's Shakespeare Library has many pictures, photos and posters of animals that feature in Shakespeare's work. Make yourself a mini book about animals you like or animals you have discovered in Shakespeare's plays. Make sure you add a picture and then create a short, fun poem about your chosen animal.



1

Print and cut out the mini book blank on the next page.

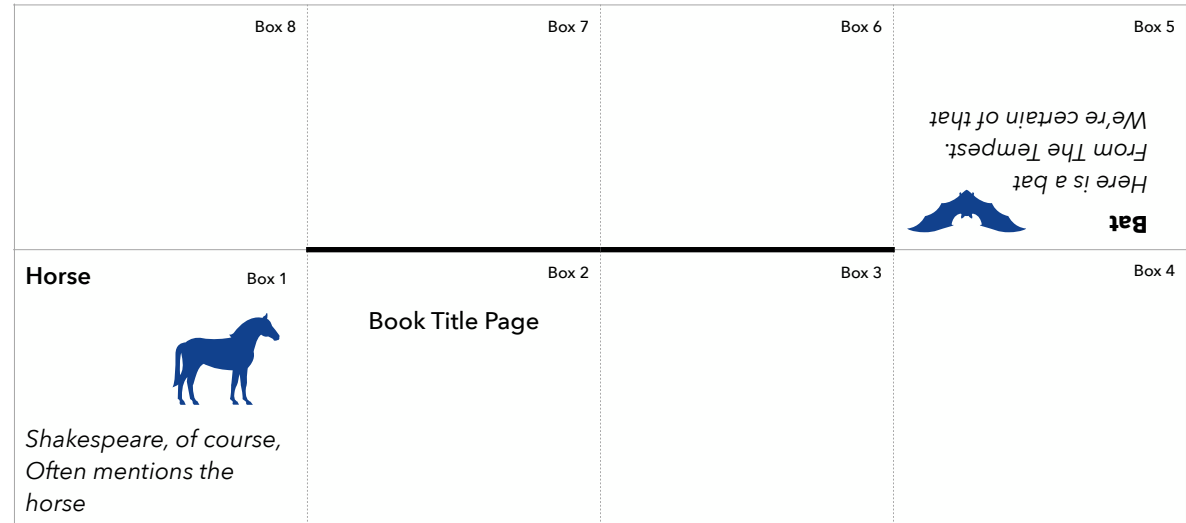
Fill in boxes 1,3,4,5,6,7 & 8 with an animal drawing and a short, rhyming poem about your animal. Box 2 should be your mini book's title page. You will need to do boxes 1,2,3 & 4 first and then turn the page around so boxes 5,6,7 & 8 are facing you (1-4 will look upside down for the moment).

Make sure you do a different animal in each box. We're sure your poems will be 100% better than our examples!

Complete all the boxes and then follow steps 2-6 to fold your book.



How to make your Amazing Animal Miniature Folding Book.

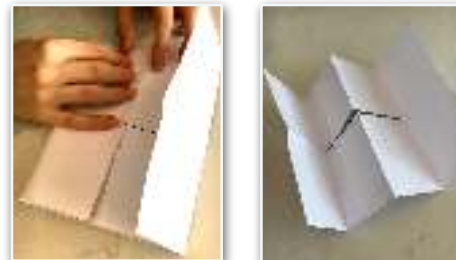


2



Fold in half and then cut through the thick black line

4



Fold again along the dotted line and do the same on the other side.

3



Open up the book and fold along the long line so it looks like a long tent!

5



Push the two ends together and fold up until you have your book shape.

For further inspiration:

- www.nationalgeographic.com/news/2016/04/160419-shakespeare-animals-play-theater-the-bard/
- www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/blogs/ten-facts-about-tudor-farming/
- www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zjhhvcw/articles/zqjgrdm (rhyming words)

8

2

9

9

1

2

3

4

