

“Wallace and Gromit: A Grand Day Out / The Wrong Trousers” starring Nick Park, Peter Sallis, Peter Hawkins, 1989-1993, NR, 53 minutes

Major themes:

- Humor
- Clay
- Man
- Dog
- Friendship
- Invention
- Adventure
- Moon
- Cheese
- Picnic
- Knitting
- Crime
- Art

Major characters:

- Wallace
- Gromit

Movie Nights for Thinkers and Seekers

Background info:

- *A Grand Day Out* took over six years to make, almost all of it single-handedly done by Nick Park, forming part of his graduation project from the *National Film and Television School*.
- *The Wrong Trousers* won the 1994 Academy Award for Best Short Animated Film. *A Grand Day Out* was nominated but lost to another of Nick Park's animations! (Nick Park has gone on to win three other Academy Awards for animated shorts or features.)
- Wallace lives at 62 West Wallaby Street, Wigan, along with his dog Gromit. His surname is never given. He usually wears a white shirt, brown wool trousers, a green knitted pullover, and a red tie. He is fond of cheese, especially Wensleydale, and crackers. Wallace's love interest is Wendolene Ramsbottom. Nick Park, his creator, said of Wallace: "*He's a very self-contained figure. A very homely sort who doesn't mind the odd adventure.*"
- Gromit (born February 12) is a beagle who is Wallace's pet dog and best friend. He is very intelligent, having graduated from *Dogwarts University* with a double first in Engineering for Dogs. He likes knitting, playing chess, reading the newspaper, drinking tea, and cooking. His prized possessions include his alarm clock, dog bone, brush, and a framed photo of himself with Wallace. He is very handy with electronic equipment and an excellent aeroplane pilot. He often threatens the plans of the villains he and Wallace encounter in their adventures. Gromit has no visible mouth and expresses himself through facial expressions and body language. Gromit seems very "*cultured*" in the arts and reads books such as *Electronics for Dogs*, *Kites*, *Sticks*, *Sheep*, *Penguins*, *Rockets*, *Bones*, and *Stars*, along with classics *The Republic* by Pluto and *Crime and Punishment* by Fido Dogstoyevsky.
- The creators made Wallace say "*Wensleydale*" (in naming a type of cheese) because it made his face look nice and toothy. What they did not realize was that the cheese factory where Wensleydale cheese is made was on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. Happily, this film's success brought the factory back from the brink.

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- The Wallace and Gromit films are shot using the stop motion clay animation (“*claymation*”) technique. After detailed storyboarding and set and plasticine model construction, the films are shot one frame at a time, moving the models of the characters slightly to give the impression of movement in the final film. In action scenes, sometimes multiple exposures per frame are used to produce a faux motion blur. Because a second of film constitutes 24 separate frames, even a short half-hour film (43,200 frames) takes a great deal of time to animate. Filming took place at approximately 30 frames per day per animator.
- Plasticine is used for children's play and as a modelling medium for more formal or permanent structures. Plasticine is approximately 65% bulking agent (principally gypsum), 10% petroleum jelly, 5% lime, 10% lanolin and 10% stearic acid. It cannot be hardened by firing, melts when exposed to heat, and is flammable at higher temperatures. Because of its non-drying property, it is a popular choice of material for stop-motion animation. Plasticine is also used in long jump and triple jump competitions to help officials determine if the competitors are making legal jumps. To make the first of these films, Nick Park wrote to the Harbutt Plasticine company to request a long ton of it. The block he received had ten colors, one of which was called “*stone*”. He used that for Gromit.

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Scriptures:

Psalm 9:1-2 (The Message) – *“I’m thanking you, God, from a full heart, I’m writing the book on your wonders. I’m whistling, laughing, and jumping for joy; I’m singing your song, High God.”*

Psalm 30:2-5 (The Message) – *“God, my God, I yelled for help and you put me together. God, you pulled me out of the grave, gave me another chance at life when I was down-and-out. All you saints! Sing your hearts out to God! Thank him to his face! He gets angry once in a while, but across a lifetime there is only love. The nights of crying your eyes out give way to days of laughter.”*

Proverbs 17:17 (NLT) – *“A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need.”*

Proverbs 17:22 (The Message) – *“A cheerful disposition is good for your health; gloom and doom leave you bone-tired.”*

2 King 18:5-6 (The Message) – *“Hezekiah put his whole trust in the God of Israel. There was no king quite like him, either before or after. He held fast to God—never loosened his grip—and obeyed to the letter everything God had commanded Moses. And God, for his part, held fast to him through all his adventures.”*

Proverbs 2:2-9 (The Message) – *“Tune your ears to the world of Wisdom; set your heart on a life of Understanding. That’s right—if you make Insight your priority, and won’t take no for an answer, Searching for it like a prospector panning for gold, like an adventurer on a treasure hunt, believe me, before you know it Fear-of-God will be yours; you’ll have come upon the Knowledge of God. And here’s why: God gives out Wisdom free, is plainspoken in Knowledge and Understanding. He’s a rich mine of Common Sense for those who live well, a personal bodyguard to the candid and sincere. He keeps his eye on all who live honestly, and pays special attention to his loyally committed ones. So now you can pick out what’s true and fair, find all the good trails!”*

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Discussion points:

1. The Bible tells us that a cheerful disposition is good for your health. Discuss the place of humor in promoting good emotional health.
2. What are some differences between healthy and unhealthy forms of humor?
3. What was your favorite invention in these films, and why?
4. What do you appreciate the most about Wallace?
5. What do appreciate the most about Gromit?
6. What creative pursuit would you most like to develop further in your life?
7. What do you see as the primary benefits of an animal companion? What is your preferred type of animal companion (if any), and why (or why not)?
8. On what adventure is God inviting you to join Him? What needs to happen in order for you to begin?