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## Introductory theme (Secondary): Engaging with Magic Pencil through the artists and samples of their work By Carol Read

The aim of this set of materials is to introduce students to the Magic Pencil artists and samples of their work with a view to subsequently reading some of the books and exploring the themes which they contain. The suggested activities and tasks described below can be used either on their own or in combination with others to create a longer sequences or units of work.

**Age range:** 12/13+

**Language level:** Common European Framework A2+

### Main objectives

#### Language learning skills:

**Listening:** to descriptions of people; to descriptions of pictures; to other people's opinions; to stories; to poems; to reasons for choices.

**Speaking:** asking and expressing personal opinions; making guesses and predictions; describing people; asking for and giving personal information; asking about and describing daily routines; describing a picture; asking for and giving reasons; explaining and justifying choices; comparing and contrasting pictures and people

**Reading:** for gist; for specific information; for detailed understanding; in order to prepare for a role play; in order to match what artists say to their work; in order to respond to other people's views.

**Writing:** descriptions of people, descriptions of pictures, daily routines, questions to elicit personal information, stories, poems, newspaper headlines, articles, posters, dialogues.

#### Visual education skills:

Observing and noticing detail in photos and art

Exploring personal responses to visual stimuli

Responding imaginatively to visual stimuli

Making deductions and constructing hypotheses from visual stimuli

Using photos and pictures as springboards into creative language work

Exploring connections between art and language

#### Cross-curricular links:

**Art:** developing skill in looking at and talking about art; responding personally and imaginatively to art; recognising the connection between words and images to create meaning; experimenting in imitating an artist's style.

**L1 language and literacy:** finding out about artists and illustrators in your own country and culture; understanding the influence of art and illustrations in books; exploring your own response to art and books.

**Citizenship/Cultural links:** Interest in the role of artists and illustrators in society; recognition of the role of illustrations in books; awareness that books and illustrations may vary in different countries and cultures; respect and tolerance for other people's opinions and points of view.

**Learning strategies:** predicting; hypothesising; deducing; comparing; contrasting; researching; sequencing; matching; observing; creative thinking; willingness to take turns; willingness to work collaboratively.



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## Suggested activities and tasks

### 1 Portraits of the artists

**Outcome:** To describe, predict and write about people in photos.

**Classroom organisation:** pairs/groups, whole class

**Materials:** portrait photos of Magic Pencil artists (click to expand on website); the task sheet (Portraits of the artists)

**Procedure:** Choose a photo of one of the artists. Work with the whole class at first. Ask questions in order to encourage students to look carefully at the photo and to predict what this may reveal about the artist. e.g.

How old is he/she?

What does he/she look like?

What is he/she wearing?

What is his/her expression or mood?

Where is he/she?

What can you see? Describe the surroundings.

Why do you think the artist has chosen to be photographed here?

Are there any details in the photo that you think may reveal things about the artist's character, personality or life-style?

What kind of illustrations can you imagine this artist doing? (e.g. Would they be for younger or older children? Would they be full of detail? Would they be colourful? Would they be serious or funny?

Would they be done on a computer?)

Divide the class into pairs or groups. Give each pair or group a different portrait photo of one of the Magic Pencil artists and the questions above on a task sheet. Students work together, look at the photo carefully and make notes on the task sheet in answer to the questions. They then present the photo and describe the artist and their predictions about him or her to the rest of the class. Students can subsequently use their notes to write a description of the artist in the photo. They can also look at the slide-show of the artist's work on the website and compare this with their predictions.

### 2 Hot seating

**Outcome:** To role play a character and ask and answer questions about invented personal information.

**Classroom organisation:** Individual students/pairs, whole class

**Materials:** portrait photos of Magic Pencil artists (click to expand on website)

**Procedure:** Give individual students or pairs a copy of one of the Magic Pencil artist portrait photos.

Ask the students to invent information in various categories about the artist's life e.g. their family, where they live, their hobbies, likes/dislikes, where they go on holiday, their past, their dreams for the future etc.. (You can make the task more or less challenging depending on the number and type of categories you choose.) Students then take turns to come and sit in the 'hot seat' and pretend to be the artist in the portrait they have got. The rest of the class ask questions to find out as much as they can about the artist and the student in the 'hot seat' responds in character. Students can subsequently write up the profile they have invented.



### 3 Artists' party

**Outcome:** To act out a role play based on invented information in the context of a party.

**Classroom organisation:** individual students; whole class

**Materials:** portrait photos of Magic Pencil artists (click to expand on website)

**Procedure:** Do this activity as a follow-up to either 1 and/or 2. Announce to the class that your school or centre is organising a party for artists. Assign or students choose to take on the role of one of the artists. If they have not done so already, they invent information about their life-style, family, where they live etc. based on the portraits. If they prefer to invent a completely different artist or base their character on another artist they know, they can do this instead. Students then come to the 'party' in character. They walk round introducing themselves and talking to other 'artists'. As soon as they have found out two things that they have in common with another 'artist' at the party, they move on to talk to someone else. At the end of the activity, students report back on the artists they met at the party and the ones they would like to see again.

### 4 A day in the life of ...

**Outcome:** To invent and talk or write about a day in the life of an artist.

**Classroom organisation:** pairs, whole class

**Materials:** portrait photos of Magic Pencil artists (click to expand on website)

**Procedure:** Choose one of the artists. Invent and build up their daily routine with the whole class contributing ideas. Encourage the students to be as creative as possible and to use details in the portrait photo to shape their ideas (e.g. for Charlotte Voake, details about when she feeds her cat). In pairs students then invent and make notes or write the daily routine of another artist based on the portrait photo. Depending on the level of the students, this can be more or less structured by asking students to include information about times, routines for getting up and going to bed, meals, free time activities etc.. Student then either tell or exchange and read each other's descriptions and guess the artist it is based on.

### 5 Find the artist who ...

**Outcome:** To read artists' website profiles for specific information.

**Classroom organisation:** individual/pairs, whole class

**Materials:** Artists' profiles on the website, task sheet.

**Procedure:** Give a copy of the task sheet to each student or pair. Check understanding of the questions. Explain that you want the students to read the artists' profiles on the website and find the answers as fast as they can. Either they can write the names or the initials of the artists in answer to each question. As a follow up, ask students to prepare five more similar questions. They then exchange their questions and find the answers in the same way. At the end, ask students which of the illustrators they are interested in reading about more in more detail. You can then use this as a lead-in to 6.

Key: 1 Sara Fanelli

2 Tony Ross

3 Charlotte Voake

4 Patrick Benson

5 Lauren child

6 Emma Chichester- Clark

7 Michael Foreman

8 Angela Barrett

9 Posy Simmonds

10 John Burningham



## 6 Artists' profiles

**Outcome:** To read and complete a table with detailed information about an artist. To exchange and discuss the information with a partner.

**Classroom organisation:** individual students, pairs, whole class

**Materials:** Artists' profiles on the website, task sheet (Artists' profiles)

**Procedure:** Give a copy of the task sheet to each student. If students have done 5, use their response at the end of the activity to determine the artist they read about. Students read about one of the artists and note information in the table (in the column Artist 1). If they cannot find information in any of the categories, they should write a question mark. For the column 'one key feature of the artist's work' explain that students should note one aspect they think is important, after reading what the artist says about their work and looking at the samples. Once the students have read the artist's profile and completed the table, divide the class into pairs. Explain and demonstrate that they should take turns to ask each other questions about the artist they have read about and note the information in the second column in the table (Artist 2). Students then compare the information about the artists in their completed tables e.g. ... is younger/older than ... / They were both inspired by E.H. Shephard (Winnie the Pooh) etc.. They can also decide if they have a preference for one or other of the artists they have read about and their reasons for this. At the end ask different pairs to report back to the class.

## 7 TV chat show

**Outcome:** To act out a role play based on real information about an artist.

**Classroom organisation:** individual students, pairs/groups

**Materials:** Artist profiles of Magic Pencil artists on website.

**Procedure:** Explain that the students are going to do a role play in which a well-known illustrator of children's books is interviewed on a TV chat show. Divide the class into two groups. Ask the students in one group to read the profile for one artist in order to prepare for the interview. Ask the students in the other group to work in pairs and prepare the introduction to the chat show and questions to ask the artist e.g. Where did you study? Have you ever won a prize for your work? Students then rehearse their role play in pairs or groups. You can then ask different pairs or groups to act out the role play to the whole class.

## 8 What's in a picture

**Outcome:** To talk about and explore meaning in pictures.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class

**Materials:** Samples of Magic Pencil artists' work from the slide show

**Procedure:** Choose several contrasting pictures from the samples on the slide shows of different artists. Ask questions to encourage students to notice detail and formulate a personal response to each picture e.g.

What can you see?

What do you notice first about the picture?

Then what do you see?

How is the picture made? (e.g. line drawing, collage, painting, computer)

What do you notice about the lines?

What do you notice about the colours?

What do you notice about the character(s)?

What's the relationship between the characters? (if there's more than one) How are they feeling?

What do you notice about the mood of the picture? Is it funny, happy, sad, scary etc? What makes it like this?

What kind of book or story is the picture from?

Is it for very young children or older children, do you think?

What makes you think this?

Does the picture remind you of stories you know or read when you were younger? Which ones? In what way?

Is there anything else the picture makes you think of?



## 9 Story in a picture

**Outcome:** To invent, tell and write a story using a picture as a springboard.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs/individual

**Materials:** Selected picture of Magic Pencil artist's work from the slide show.

**Procedure:** Choose a picture such as Angela Barnett's illustration from 'Snow white', but don't say the name of the story. Talk about the picture with the students as in 8 above. Then tell the students that this picture is one moment in a story (you can choose whether to say that the moment is the beginning, somewhere in the middle or the end). Students then invent and build up collaboratively with you a story of what happened, either before or after this moment, or both. Ask questions to help the students structure their ideas for the story and note key ideas on the board. Students then write their own version of the story in pairs. If you like, they can make a book and illustrate their story and possibly also read it to children in another (younger) class.

## 10 Poem in a picture

**Outcome:** To write a poem using a picture as a springboard.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs/individual

**Materials:** Selected picture of Magic Pencil artist's work from the slide show.

**Procedure:** Choose a picture such as Michael Foreman's picture of war. Talk about the picture with the students as in 5 above. Draw a topic web on the board with the word 'war' inside the central circle and the verbs 'see', 'smell', 'hear', 'touch', 'taste' in surrounding circles. Students brainstorm images and vocabulary associated with the picture and topic for each of the five senses. Note their ideas on the board. Use their suggestions to build up and write a poem with the whole class. Model the process out loud as you do this and involve the students in drafting, editing, changing and improving each line. Divide the class into pairs. Students repeat the procedure and write a poem with their partner based on another picture from the slide show. Students take turns to read their poems to the class. If you like they can also illustrate their poems and make a class book.

## 11 Headline news

**Outcome:** To write newspaper headlines which interpret pictures imaginatively.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs/individual

**Materials:** Selected pictures of Magic Pencil artist's work from the slide show.

**Procedure:** Choose a picture such as Charlotte Voake's illustration of the fox in the chair from 'The Best of Aesop's fables'. Talk about the picture with the students as in 8 above, but don't name the book it is from. Tell the students that the fox in the picture is in the news. Ask the students to think about why the fox is in the news and to invent a headline. If appropriate talk about the style of newspaper headlines and give a few examples to demonstrate what you mean e.g. Fox wins national lottery / Fox buys royal palace / Foxes share human genes etc.. Encourage the students to be imaginative and creative with their ideas. Divide the class into pairs. Students work with their partner and invent news headlines for other pictures. Students then compare their headlines and vote for the one they like best for each picture. As a follow-up, students can write a newspaper article to accompany the headline they have invented for one of the pictures.



## 12 Wanted or missing posters

**Outcome:** To design, write and illustrate a missing or wanted poster.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs/individual

**Materials:** Selected pictures of Magic Pencil artist's work from the slide show.

**Procedure:** Choose a picture such as John Burningham's picture of Aldo. Talk about the picture with the students as in 5 above. Tell the students that the character is either missing or wanted, whichever is more suitable. Build up a profile of the character collaboratively with the students. Encourage the students to be as creative and inventive as possible. Either individually or in pairs students then design, write and illustrate a missing or wanted poster based on the picture. This includes a description of the character, details about why they are wanted or when they went missing, where they were last seen and a reward.

## 13 Speech bubbles

**Outcome:** To write a dialogue using a picture as a springboard.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs/individual

**Materials:** Selected pictures of Magic Pencil artist's work from the slide show.

**Procedure:** Show the students examples of speech bubbles from Raymond Briggs' work. Show the students pictures which show interaction between characters e.g. Quentin Blake's dogs from 'Ten frogs'. Talk about the pictures as in 8 above. Draw on a speech bubble for each character. Divide the class into pairs. Students invent what the characters are saying to each other with their partner. They then develop a dialogue by inventing the rest of the conversation either before or after the moment in the picture. Either students can do this orally or in writing. They then read or act out their dialogues to the class.

## 14 Preferences

**Outcome:** To order six of the artists' work based on personal preferences.

**Classroom organisation:** individual students, pairs, whole class

**Materials:** Slide shows or sample work of six of the artists.

**Procedure:** Ensure students have done activity 8 or similar close visual observation work before doing this activity. Choose six of the artists with contrasting styles. Students work individually and rank order them according to their personal preferences. Divide the class into pairs. Students compare the way they have ranked the artists and explain their reasons e.g. I like ... because / What appeals to me is .... They negotiate a new consensus based on their opinions. Students then repeat the procedure in groups of four. At the end ask the groups to present their ranking and reasons to the rest of the class. Discuss and compare the similarities and differences between the groups.

## 15 Choose an illustrator

**Outcome:** To choose an illustrator for a traditional story from your country or culture.

**Classroom organisation:** pairs, whole class

**Materials:** Slide shows or sample work of the artists on the website

**Procedure:** Either suggest or elicit the name of a traditional story from the students' culture or country. Ask questions to get the students to re-construct the story orally. Ask the students to imagine that a new version of the story is going to be published and they need to choose an illustrator. Divide the class into pairs. Give the children a time limit to look at the samples of artists' work on the website and decide on the artist they would like to choose. Ask them to prepare at least three reasons for their choice. Bring the class back together and get the students to compare and exchange their views, giving the reasons for their choice. At the end organise a class vote to decide on the artist they would like to choose.



## 16 Profile of artist from my country

**Outcome:** Students write a profile of an artist from their country.

**Classroom organisation:** whole class, pairs

**Materials:** Computers and access to the Internet / books and/or access to library; example of Magic Pencil artist profile.

**Procedure:** Do this activity after others which have familiarised the students with Magic Pencil artists and their work. Before the lesson, ask the students to bring in books with illustrations by artists from their own country either that they find appealing or that they liked when they were younger. Talk about some of the illustrations as in 8. Discuss whether the books or artists the students have brought in are popular in their country and the reasons for this. Encourage the students to compare and contrast the style of illustrations with the Magic Pencil artists and to identify any features that reveal the country or culture which they are from.

Explain that the students are going to find out more about one of the artists they are interested in and write a profile (similar to the Magic Pencil artists' profiles on the website). Divide the class into pairs. Either give or get the students to prepare a list of 6-8 things they wish to find out about the artist they choose (or you can use the categories on the task sheet in 6 for this). Students then use the Internet, a library or other reference materials to research the artist they have chosen. (It is best if you have also prepared this in advance and can guide the students to websites, e.g. the author's own or their publisher's, where relevant information may be found). Students write a profile of the artist they have chosen using the Magic Pencil artist profiles as a guide.

At the end students can take turns to give an oral presentation to the rest of the class about the illustrator they have researched and written about. They can also use the profiles to make a class book or display of 'Artists from our country'.

## 17 Magic Pencil Exhibition

**Outcome:** Students select artists from their own country for a Magic Pencil exhibition.

**Classroom organisation:** pairs/groups; whole class

**Materials:** Computers and access to the Internet / books and/or access to library

**Procedure:** You can do this activity as a follow-up to 16. Tell the class to imagine that they are going to organise a Magic Pencil exhibition with artists and illustrators from their own country. The exhibition can include the work of a maximum of six artists. Divide the class into pairs or groups. Students use the Internet or the library to research and identify six artists that they think should be included in the exhibition. Get them to note two or three reasons for choosing each one. Students take turns to present their choices of artists for the exhibition to the rest of the class. If you like, at the end you can organise a vote to decide on the final six artists (or, alternatively, you can announce a sudden expansion of the budget to be able to include them all).



## 18 Match the art and artists

**Outcome:** To read and connect ideas expressed through language and art. To draw or produce a picture in the style of one of the artists.

**Classroom organisation:** pairs; groups; whole class

**Materials:** task sheet (Match the art and artists) plus samples of artists' work (without the names of the artists or the books) as follows: A Lauren Child, B Tony Ross, C Charlotte Voake, D Raymond Briggs, E Patrick Benson, F Michael Foreman, G Stephen Biesty, H Sara Fanelli

**Procedure:** Show the students the pictures for the task and elicit immediate responses and impressions. Give out the task sheet with the quotations from the artists talking about their work. Read the quotations and check understanding. Divide the class into pairs. Students try and match what each artist says about their work to the pictures. Students compare their answers in groups before checking with the whole class. As a follow up, students draw a sketch or produce a picture imitating the style of one of the artists. They then take turns to show each other their pictures and guess the artists whose style they have imitated.

Key: 1E, 2G, 3A, 4H, 5F, 6B, 7C, 8D

## 19 Books and pictures debate

**Outcome:** To discuss agreement/disagreement with artists' views about books and art.

**Classroom organisation:** individual students; pairs; whole class

**Materials:** Task sheet with some opinions of Magic Pencil artists.

**Procedure:** Show the students one or two picture books or ask them to bring in books they liked when they were younger. Ask the students questions e.g. What difference does it make having illustrations in a book? How do illustrations affect your understanding and response to books? Listen to their ideas re-modelling and expanding their answers as appropriate. Give out the task sheet. Explain that these are some of the Magic Pencil artists personal opinions about books, art and the relationship between the two. Students read the statements individually and circle the numbers according to whether they agree or disagree with each one. They then compare their answers in pairs giving reasons for their views. Discuss the statements with the whole class. Encourage the students to justify and explore their views with reference to their own experience of books as far as they can.

## 20 Invitation to an artist

**Classroom organisation:** pairs, whole class

**Materials:** Artists' profiles and slide show samples on website.

**Procedure:** This can be done as a follow-up to other activities familiarising students with the artists and their work. Tell the students to imagine that they can invite one of the artists to their school. In pairs, students choose and prepare a case for inviting one of the artists they have found out about e.g. We'd like to invite ... because ... / We think it'd be interesting to hear ...'s views on ... etc.. When they are ready, students present their case to the rest of the class. At the end, organise a class vote to decide which artist to invite.





**Magic Pencil Activity Sheets: Introductory Theme (secondary)**  
**Portraits of the artists (Activity 1)**

Name of artist	
How old is he/she?	
What does he/she look like?	
What is he/she wearing?	
What is his/her expression or mood?	
Where is he/she?	
What can you see? Describe the surroundings.	
Why do you think the artist has chosen to be photographed here?	
Are there any details in the photo that you think may reveal things about the artist's character, personality or life-style?	
What kind of illustrations can you imagine this artist doing?	



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**Magic Pencil Activity Sheets: Introductory Theme (secondary)**

**Find the artist who... (Activity 5)**

1 ... was born in Italy.

\_\_\_\_\_

2 ... dreamt of being a cowboy.

\_\_\_\_\_

3 ... didn't go to art school.

\_\_\_\_\_

4 ... worked in the fashion business.

\_\_\_\_\_

5 ... started a company.

\_\_\_\_\_

6 ... lived in Ireland as a child.

\_\_\_\_\_

7 ... designed Christmas stamps.

\_\_\_\_\_

8 ... left school at the age of 15.

\_\_\_\_\_

9 ... became famous for newspaper cartoons.

\_\_\_\_\_

10 ... created posters for London Transport.

\_\_\_\_\_

11 ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12 ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

13 ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14 ... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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**Magic Pencil Activity Sheets: Introductory Theme (secondary)**  
Artists' profiles (Activity 6)

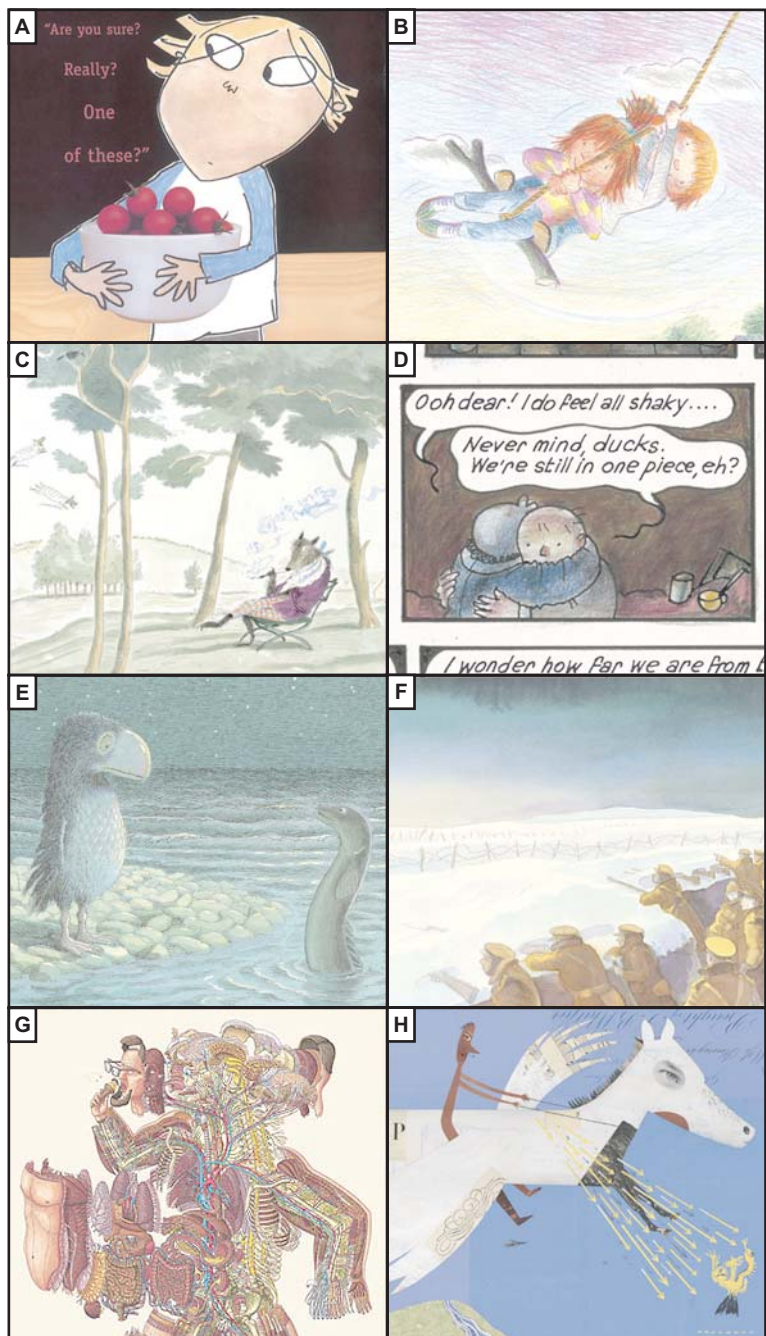
Artist 1	Artist 2
Name <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Place and date of birth <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Place of study <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other jobs and/or hobbies <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
One key feature of the artist's work <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
One person who has inspired the artist <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>



**Magic Pencil Activity Sheets: Introductory Theme (secondary)**

**Match the art and artists (Activity 18)**

1. *Usually I start with a pen and ink drawing on which I apply the colour.*  
- Patrick Benson
2. *There's really no end to the amount of detail you can include.*  
- Stephen Biesty
3. *I use a computer for a lot of the work ... I put together backgrounds ... of photographs, collages etc. After that I can superimpose the figures.*  
- Lauren Child
4. *I use the bits and pieces I have collected to create texture and interest ... in my collages'*  
- Sara Fanelli
5. *I keep trying to make things more real, not in a literal, photographic sense, but in an emotional sense, telling a story by capturing the essence of the situation, giving it some meaning.*  
- Michael Foreman
6. *Line is the most important element in my work – the line is the basis of the whole thing. If it works in line it works; if it doesn't work in line it's no good. To me colour always comes second.*  
- Tony Ross
7. *I just draw with ink, over and over again – doodle doodle doodle – until suddenly it's right.*  
- Charlotte Voake
8. *Using crayons, I find the colours grow into the picture and you get a certain softness.*  
- Raymond Briggs





## Magic Pencil Activity Sheets: Introductory Theme (secondary)

### Books and pictures debate (Activity 19)

Read the opinions of the artists. Circle the number that best reflects your opinion. Be ready to explain the reasons for your opinion.

**Key:** 1 I agree. 2 I agree to some extent. 3 I disagree.

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | <i>Books should be wild and adventurous ... offer you something to escape into.</i><br>(Emma Chichester- Clarke)                            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| B | <i>A picture book has an effect on a reader not so very different from a good lesson.</i><br>(Quentin Blake)                                | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| C | <i>An illustrator has to ... provide ...visual clues that will act as a sort of springboard for the imagination</i><br>(Patrick Benson)     | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| D | <i>However powerful the text, it's the images that stick in the mind.</i><br>(Patrick Benson)   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| E | <i>It's all in the drawing. It's a question of creating another world, believable in its own right.</i><br>(Michael Foreman)                | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| F | <i>... illustrations can fail. I know that the wrong ones can literally destroy a dream.</i><br>(Patrick Benson)                            | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| G | <i>Drawing is like playing the piano.</i><br>(John Burningham)  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| H | <i>I love the combination of words and pictures, the way they can complement or illuminate or contradict each other.</i><br>(Posy Simmonds) | 1 | 2 | 3 |



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## Acknowledgements

Illustration from **I Will Not Ever Eat a Tomato**

written and illustrated by Lauren Child

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Illustration from **Susan Laughs**

written by Jeanne Willis and illustrated by Tony Ross

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Illustration from **The Very Best of Aesop's Fables**

written by Aesop, edited by Margaret Clark and illustrated by Charlotte Voake

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Illustration from **When the Wind Blows**

written and illustrated by Raymond Briggs

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written and illustrated by Sara Fanelli

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