

# Linking Art with Literature

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## Teaching Resources

The following is a list of some of my favourite teaching resources – with great inspiration for many wonderful art projects!

### **Usborne Resources**

Usborne Books publish some of the best art resources I have ever used. They are sold through home parties and are often at teaching conventions and conferences. Go to their website ([www.usborne.ca](http://www.usborne.ca)) to locate a consultant near you if you are not able to visit the display at this conference.

Usborne Preschool Activities series: NEW!!!

- **Christmas Fun**
- **Farm Fun**
- **Animal Fun**

... designed specifically for the preschool years... using every day craft materials... easy to implement with young children...

Usborne Activities series:

- **Easter Things to Make and Do**
- **Pirate Things to Make and Do**
- **Things to Make and Do For Christmas**
- **Wizard Things to Make and Do**

... and many more thematic collections...

... this series is great because it shows step-by-step directions with visuals of each step... and it doesn't require unusual materials or media...

**Usborne Farmyard Tales: Big Book of Things to Make and Do.** This title is perfect for playschool/kindergarten years. It has colorful illustrations of every step of the process, so you can see the art projects every step of the way. Easy directions to follow using every day materials.

**Usborne: Playtime Activities** (Lots of things to crayon, paint, cut and stick). This was my first Usborne art book, and I used it again and again at home when my kids were preschool/kindergarten age! Easy enough that the kids can follow the directions in the book.

**Usborne: What Shall I Do Today? (Lots of things to paint, draw and make)** Excellent resource for preschool, kindergarten and early elementary art.

**Usborne Activities: 365 Things To Make and Do.** Excellent resource for preschool, kindergarten and early elementary art

**The Usborne First Book of Art (with lots of projects to do)**

- this is a beginner level art history book, with ideas to link art projects to famous masterpieces... easy projects to use, requiring no art history knowledge and very accessible materials

### **The Usborne Book of Art Projects**

### **The Usborne Book of Art Skills**

### **The Usborne Book of Art Ideas** by Fiona Watt

- these three books are probably my favorite art books of all time... but are most appropriate for the elementary years. They have recently been bound together in a 3-in-1 volume that includes all lessons/projects from all three books at a reduced price.

**The Usborne Big Book of Science Things to Make and Do.** All of the art ideas in this book are linked to science, and are easy lessons to follow. Approximately 60 art ideas!

**Usborne Children's Book of Art** by Rosie Dickins. This is a great introduction to famous paintings, and a gentle introduction to art history.

**The Usborne Art Treasury: Pictures, Paintings and Projects** by Rosie Dickins. This is easily one of my favorite art resources for teaching using art history. Each section introduces you to one famous piece of artwork, a short (but adequate) introduction to the artist (all you would need for a lesson) as well as a great lesson plan with pictures of the final project. Extremely teacher-friendly!

### **Other Art Resources**

**Making Amazing Art! (40 activities using the 7 elements of art design)** by Sandi Henry. This resource is divided into sections based on the elements of line, shape, texture, color, value, form and space. Although most projects are best-suited for elementary classrooms, some projects are suited to much younger audiences.

**Storybook Art: Hands-On Art for Children in the Styles of 100 Great Picture Book Illustrators** by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter. This resource connects art and literacy, using some well-known and some not-so-well-known picture books as inspiration for art projects.

**Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artists** series by Mike Venezia. This series is amazing if you want to integrate the artwork of a specific artist. Simple, colourful, with enough background information for teachers to feel comfortable with an artist's personal history. The series includes Henri Matisse, Van Gogh, da Vinci, Jackson Pollock, Seurat and more.

**My Friend Bear** by Jez Alborough

This is a great story about fears and friendships, real bears and teddy bears. Read this story before having a Teddy Bear Picnic in the spring.

Kids will make their own line design teddy bear using watercolours and permanent markers.

**Materials:**

Watercolour paper  
Sharpie markers  
Pencils  
Watercolour paints  
Brushes  
Teddy bear models

**Procedure:**

Have each kid bring in a favorite teddy bear.

Talk about teddy bears and why they are important to us. Are all bears alike?

Model how to draw a simple outline of a bear on the board.

Kids draw the outline shape of a teddy bear, and fill in each section with a pattern (using the Sharpie markers).

Using watercolour paints, kids paint in each section of the bear a different colour, and then paint the background as well.

## **The Bear in the Cave** by Michael Rosen

Michael Rosen writes wonderful stories for younger audiences, and this is a favorite. It is full of great noises and sound effects that appeal to the children. The bear in the story decides to adventure into a city, but finds it a bit noisy for his taste.

Kids will create a scratched paint picture after reading this book.

### **Materials:**

Heavy white paper

Wax crayons or oil pastels

Black liquid tempera paint mixed with a bit of dish soap

Toothpicks and/or popsicle sticks

### **Procedure:**

This is a two day project. First day, kids will use oil pastels or crayons to colour over the entire piece of paper. Try to encourage them to fill in all the white spots with random colours.

Mix a small amount of dish soap into the black tempera paint. Kids then paint over the entire coloured paper with black paint. Leave to dry overnight.

On Day Two, kids use toothpicks and popsicle sticks to scrape off a picture of a big bear. They use the toothpicks to add fur to the bear by scraping feather-like lines all over the bear's body. Where the paint is scraped off, you will see bright colours poking through.

## **Fox Walked Alone** by Barbara Reid

Barbara Reid is an amazing artist – all of her illustrations are made entirely out of plasticine. You could replace this title with any other Barbara Reid title if you choose.

Children will create a plasticine picture of a favorite animal using Barbara Reid's style. (Or, alternately, a self-portrait).

### **Materials:**

Large plastic margarine lid – one per child

Pictures of animals

Plasticine

- You can order plasticine through an art supply catalogue, but I have been very lucky buying it at dollar stores as well.

### **Procedure:**

The first step is the hardest, and the kids may need some assistance. They need to choose what colour is in the background of their picture. An aquatic animal would need blue, a arctic animal may need white, etc. Have the students completely cover the underside of the margarine lid with a thin layer of plasticine. Show the kids how to knead the plasticine first so that it is soft and easily spread.

After the background is done, they can form the animal and attach it to the background. Try to get the kids to think about the basic shapes that make up the animal (circles, ovals, etc). Once they are done the animal, they can add details to the habitat like trees, flowers, etc.

## **Woolbur** by Leslie Helakoski

The illustrations in the book are wonderful. This is a gorgeous story about a little lamb that just doesn't want to follow the rules, and he thinks that is "just great."

Kids will create a fingerprint sheep using paints and their imaginations.

### **Materials:**

White tempera paint

Coloured cardstock for background

Black markers

Coloured cardstock (for embellishments)

Finger punches (flowers, stars, etc).

Glue sticks

### **Procedure:**

Students begin by making the sheep's body by fingerprinting a large cluster of white fingerprints in the centre of the cardstock. Next, they create the sheep's head by painting a large oval (they can still paint with fingers). Leave this to dry.

In the meantime, students can use the finger punches to punch out various embellishments to decorate their sheep pictures. They might punch out flowers for the ground or stars for the sky, or something else they imagine. They need to decide where their sheep is standing and what he is looking at.

Once the painting is dry, students add details to the sheep, like legs, face and ears, using the black markers. They glue the embellishments onto the cardstock to create their background design.

## **Wee Little Chick** by Lauren Thompson

Lauren Thomson writes some of the most beautiful stories for the youngest readers, including the Little Mouse series. This title explores the life of a little chick, and has beautiful illustrations. You could also introduce this activity with Nancy Tafuri's Five Little Chicks. The kids will create an illustrated picture of little chicks that introduces printmaking, drawing and cutting skills.

### **Materials:**

Circle sponge stamps  
Cardstock pieces cut into cloud shapes  
3 inch by 3 inch pieces of thick cardboard  
heavy white paper for background  
scissors  
masking tape  
thin black markers  
blue, green and yellow tempera paint

### **Procedure:**

Using the cardstock pieces, kids begin by lightly taping a couple of clouds near the top of their paper (tape underneath clouds, not over edges).

Next, using the circle sponges, kids print blue circles all over the top half of the paper, covering the taped-down clouds. This is creating a textured sky appearance.

Next, kids dip the edge of the 3x3 cardboard in the green paint, and use it to print lines of grass along the bottom of the paper.

The next step is to sponge five yellow circles over the grass. These will become the bodies of the chicks.

When this is all dry, students use the thin black markers to draw the eyes, beak, legs, wings and fur onto the chicks. Peel off the cloud shapes, and white paper will show through to make the clouds.

## **I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean** by Kevin Sherry

This book is so funny! It is all about a giant squid that keeps bragging about being the biggest thing in the ocean... until he realizes that he is not! The kids love the text and illustrations.

This project is a group art project, created by the whole class.

### **Materials:**

Old magazines

Very large picture of a whale outline (6 or 8 feet long)

Scissors

Glue sticks

### **Procedure:**

After reading the story, talk about all the things one might find in the belly of a whale. Does any one know the story of Pinocchio? Jonah and the Whale? Have the kids imagine what might be in the belly of the whale on the wall. Pin up the giant outline of a whale. Have the kids look through old magazines and cut out pictures of things they think might be in his belly. They then glue them inside his belly.

## **In the Tall, Tall Grass** by Denise Fleming

Denise Fleming's books are a treat to read, as the illustrations are appealing to the children, and the stories have such good rhythm. This title centres around all of the things you might discover in the tall, tall grass.

Kids will participate in a printmaking activity that allows them to create pictures of their favorite spring/summer images.

### **Materials:**

Styrofoam plates, cut into circles (rims off)

Brayers

Thick tempera paint, or preferably water soluble block printing ink (I use Speedball brand)

Newspapers

Construction paper in a variety of colours

Sharp pencils

### **Procedure:**

Students draw a picture of spring on the Styrofoam plate. They must use a sharp pencil, and press hard, so that the picture is "carved" into the plate. Encourage them to create a border or some design around the edge of the plate as well.

Set up different tables with different colours of ink (put some ink in a meat tray or other flat container), and leave a brayer in each colour. Set up newspapers for kids to work on.

Using the brayers (and some adult assistance), students roll the ink/paint all over the carved image. They then turn the plate over, and press it down onto the construction paper. If you are using printing ink, then any ink colour will cover any colour of paper. Have the child rub the back of the plate without moving it, and then carefully lift the plate off the paper.

Kids can move from colour to colour, using a new brayer for each new colour. They can make multiple prints using the same Styrofoam plate.

## **How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?** By Jane Yolen and Mark Teague

This is a great rhyming series about dinosaurs. The books have great rhythm, and the kids love the illustrations.

You could choose any of the books in the series before doing this project. The art project is a watercolour salt painting, using dinosaur tracers.

### **Materials:**

Large tracers of dinosaur shapes (fit on a 10x12 paper)

10x12 watercolour paper

coarse salt

watercolour paints

wax crayons or oil pastels

brushes

### **Procedure:**

Have students choose their favorite dinosaur, and trace it onto the watercolour paper using an oil pastel or crayon. It doesn't matter what colour – they choose. Encourage them to get lots of oil/crayon on the paper (dark lines). Remove the tracer, and have the kids draw in eyes and a ground with the oil pastels.

They then proceed to paint in the dinosaur using watercolour paints. While the paint is wet, sprinkle coarse salt on the painting. Paint in the background the same way and sprinkle coarse salt on it as well.

When the painting dries, dump the remaining salt in the garbage. You will see a beautiful textured paint wherever the salt touched.

## **Froggy's First Christmas** by Jonathon London

The Froggy books are always popular with younger readers – they are light, funny, and appeal to most kids. This one is about Froggy's quest to find a perfect tree with his friends.

The art project is a finger-painted Christmas tree, decorated with sequins and/or glitter.

### **Materials:**

Stencil of a tree shape  
Cardstock  
Masking tape  
Green finger paint (or tempera)  
White glue  
Sequins or glitter  
Star stickers

### **Procedure:**

Precut tree stencils for kids, or have the kids cut out a tree stencil (fold paper in half first, and cut along the fold). They need the outside of the stencil (with the hole where the tree has been cut out). Tape this stencil down onto the cardstock paper. Kids dip a finger into the green paint and fill the inside of the tree shape with green fingerprint dots. When the paint is dry, lift the paper off. Put a drop of glue onto each spot and stick a sequin down, or sprinkle it with glitter. Put a sticker star at the top of the tree.

## The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee

Ho, for the Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee!□  
He was as wicked as wicked could be,□  
But oh, he was perfectly gorgeous to see!□  
The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee.□□

His conscience, of course, was as black as a bat,□  
But he had a floppety plume on his hat□  
And when he went walking it jiggled - like that!□  
The plume of the Pirate Dowdee.□□

His coat it was crimson and cut with a slash,□  
And often as ever he twirled his mustache□  
Deep down in the ocean the mermaids went splash,□  
Because of Don Durk of Dowdee.□□

Moreover, Dowdee had a purple tattoo,□  
And stuck in his belt where he buckled it through□  
Were a dagger, a dirk, and a squizzarmaroo,□  
For fierce was the Pirate Dowdee.□□

So fearful he was he would shoot at a puff,□  
And always at sea when the weather grew rough□  
He drank from a bottle and wrote on his cuff,□  
Did Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee.□□

Oh, he had a cutlass that swung at his thigh□  
And he had a parrot called Pepperkin Pye,□  
And a zigzaggy scar at the end of his eye,□  
Had Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee.□□

He kept in a cavern, this buccaneer bold,□  
A curious chest that was covered with mold,□  
And all of his pockets were jingly with gold!□  
Oh jing! went the gold of Dowdee.□□

His conscience, of course, it was crook'd like a squash,□  
But both of his boots made a slickery slosh,□  
And he went through the world with a wonderful swash,□  
Did Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee.□□

It's true he was wicked as wicked could be,□  
His sins they outnumbered a hundred and three,□  
But oh, he was perfectly gorgeous to see,□  
The Pirate don Durk of Dowdee.

Source: Unknown... SORRY!

## **The Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee (a poem)**

This is my favorite poem to read with the class during a pirates unit! It is equally wonderful for a lesson on descriptive language, and “painting pictures in our minds.” Students love the language in this poem.

Students read the poem for details and then illustrate the pirate using construction paper scraps.

### **Materials:**

Construction paper scraps  
Glue sticks  
Scissors  
Pencils  
Copies of the poem

### **Procedure:**

Read the poem aloud to the class, using your voice to emphasize the descriptions of the pirate. You may choose to do some choral reading, or paired reading, or back-and-forth reading. Talk about what the students think about this pirate, and what images jump out at them. Talk about unfamiliar vocabulary, and guess what a squizamaroo might be.

Students are given a wide variety of construction paper scraps to use to create a detailed illustration of the Pirate Don Durk of Dowdee. They need to refer back to the poem to make sure all of the details are included on the picture. They draw the various shapes and cut/glue them together to create their portrait.

Post the pictures along with a blown-up version of the poem. The illustrations are always wonderful!

## **Rhinos For Lunch and Elephants For Supper** by Tololwa Mollel

Mollel's African folk tales are appealing to kids of all ages. This title is always a favorite read-aloud, and follows the adventures of many animals as they try to confront the spooky animal in the cave. It has a great "twist" for an ending.

African folk art is some of the most colorful art in the world. Students will design and paint on homemade "bark cloth" or "tapa cloth" which is commonly used in African folk art.

### **Materials:**

Brown paper bags (the heavier weighted ones are the best)

Scissors

Water

Newspapers

Markers

Watercolour paints and brushes

### **Procedure:**

Cut a brown paper bag into a square shape. Soak the paper in water. Squeeze out the excess water, then flatten it out on newspapers. Leave it to dry overnight under a heavy weighted object. When it is dry, it will look like bark cloth or tapa cloth, a common fabric made with tree pulp.

Using markers, create a design on the tapa cloth with patterns found in nature and/or in African art.

Finish the design by painting the patterns in using watercolour paints. The result looks like a piece of traditional African folk art.

## **How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird by Jacques Prevert**

This is a delightful story about art and creativity, and the way one little boy paints a bird.

Students will create a multimedia series of 3 birds, using the styles of three famous artists. My recommendations are to use Mondrian, Seurat and Matisse, but you can adapt this to suit your lesson. You might want to do this project over three consecutive lessons.

### **Materials:**

Pictures of birds (old calendars, books)  
Picture of a Mondrian, a Seurat and a Matisse piece of art  
Pencils  
Paints  
Construction paper  
Felt pens  
Scissors  
3 pieces of paper per child (all same size – one watercolour paper)  
glue sticks

### **Procedure:**

**Bird #1** – Show kids Piet Mondrian artwork (black, white, blue, red and yellow squares). Talk about how Mondrian used only these colours and basic shapes to create his artwork. Students draw an outline of a bird shape and fill it in with Mondrian designs using paint.

**Bird #2** - Show kids a pointillism piece by Georges Seurat. Explain that pointillism is a fancy word for “dot art.” Have students draw the same bird (same size and shape) but this time fill it in with multicoloured dots using felt markers.

**Bird #3** – Show kids a papercutting piece by Henri Matisse. In Matisse’s later years, he was not able to stand and paint, and he started cutting paper to create new and beautiful artwork – later to become some of his most famous pieces. Kids use the construction paper to cut out the various shapes necessary to create a beautiful bird.

### **Other alternatives:**

Ted Harrison, Van Gogh (impasto paintings), Warhol (pop art)... any artist could work!

## **Whose Eyes Are These?** By Elizabeth Burman Patterson

Each page of this book presents the reader with a puzzle. You are given a clue with an illustration of a set of eyes. Students then need to guess whose eyes are the picture. Simple text that the kids will love!

In this project, students create their own set of eyes in their artwork, and have others guess whose eyes they have illustrated.

### **Materials:**

Pencil crayons  
8x11 drawing paper cut in half (4x11 paper)  
Pictures of various animals

### **Procedure:**

Show students the different animal pictures, and talk about the shapes and colours of the various pairs of eyes.

Students choose an animal to illustrate. They are ONLY drawing and colouring the eyes of the animal, with the surrounding part of the face (brow, top of nose/beak/trunk).

Have students sketch the shape of the eyes and any other details necessary. Check their work before they start colouring to ensure that they have drawn it large enough.

They colour in the eyes and surrounding facial features using pencil crayons.

## **Tadpole's Promise** by Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross

This is a hilarious story that highlights the life cycle of a frog and a butterfly, with a surprising twist at the end!

Kids will complete a watercolour painting of the various life cycles of a frog, with a "kitchen chemistry" twist!

### **Materials:**

Watercolour paper  
Watercolour paints and brushes  
Pencils  
Lemon juice  
Q-tips

### **Procedure:**

Paint a yellow watercolour wash over the entire paper. Leave to dry for a few minutes. During the drying time, have students look at pictures of frogs and tadpoles.

Drawing lightly with a pencil, students start by sketching the various stages of a frog's life cycle repeatedly across the yellow page.

Next, students paint in the frog and tadpole pictures using green paint.

Pour a small amount of lemon juice in a Dixie cup (a teaspoon is plenty). Students dip their Q-tips in the lemon juice, and then use the wet Q-tip to make spots on the frogs. They touch the Q-tip to the frog, then lift it off and use a piece of Kleenex or paper towel to dab the wet spot. The lemon juice will react with the paint and lift some of the colour off, leaving the frog looking spotted.

## **O Canada** by Ted Harrison

Ted Harrison is one of Canada's most beloved artists. His style is unique and appealing to children. His painting style is easy for students to imitate. **O Canada** is an illustrated book of our national anthem, with each province and territory being represented in one painting. But because it was published in 1992, there is no painting done of Nunavut.

Students read the book, and imagine what the missing Nunavut painting would look like.

### **Materials:**

Pencils  
Heavy paper  
Tempera paint  
Sharpie markers

### **Procedure:**

Begin by explaining to the kids that this book was made before Nunavut became a territory of Canada. Have the kids look at books that have pictures of Nunavut. Brainstorm some images that they might see there (eg. Inukshuks, northern lights).

Have students sketch out a picture of Nunavut in Ted Harrison's style. Show them how he uses a variety of shades and tints of a colour to create water, land and sky. Show them how to mix white or black with a colour to create new shades.

Kids paint in their Nunavut illustration using Harrison's techniques.

Once dry, you may want to have the kids outline the different sections and colours using a Sharpie marker.

## **Chameleons Are Cool** by Martin Jenkins

Kids are fascinated with the camouflaging skills of the chameleon. This is the most captivating non-fiction book I have ever read about these wonderful creatures – the artwork is fantastic!

Kids create watercolour chameleon art using a tracing template and their imaginations!

### **Materials:**

Watercolour paper  
Watercolour paints and brushes  
Tracing template of chameleons in various poses  
Pencils  
Sharpies (optional)

### **Procedure:**

Have a parent volunteer cut out several tracing templates of chameleons in various poses (out of cardboard).

While reading the book, pay special attention to the bright colours and patterns on the chameleons, and the variety of physical attributes.

Students trace (lightly) several chameleons on their paper. They can add branches and trees, and other background details if they choose.

Paint the chameleons and the background using watercolour paints. If they use a wet-on-wet technique the paints will bleed together to make interesting effects.

Once dry, you may choose to add details to the chameleon using a Sharpie marker.

## **Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed** by Mo Willems

Don't let the title scare you off! In typical Mo Willems style, the story is a little bit quirky and a lot funny. Willems is the author of the Pigeon books, which are very popular with young readers. This story is a fun tale about one naked mole rat's desire to get dressed.

Students will have fun creating clothing for the star of this book.

### **Materials:**

Photocopies of the Naked Mole Rat

(I enlarge one of the clearest, front-facing pictures of the Mole Rat, and copy it onto white cardstock)

Construction paper scraps

Scissors

Glue sticks

Pencils

### **Procedure:**

Very simple! Kids get a copy of the Naked Mole Rat outline, and design clothes for him out of construction paper.

Begin by cutting out the picture of the mole rat, so he appears like a "paper doll."

Students draw shirts, hats, pants, shoes, glasses etc. out of paper, cut them out and glue them on top of the picture.

Encourage the kids to add designs such as stripes and checks.

## **The Legend of the Poinsettia** by Tomie dePaola

Tomie dePaola writes amazing retellings of folk stories, and this is no exception. This book explains how the poinsettia came to be, through the unselfish gift of a young girl to the Christ Child. It is a beautiful Christmas story.

Students paint beautiful paintings of poinsettias that can be given as gifts at Christmastime.

### **Materials:**

Good quality paper (11x17)  
Pictures of poinsettias or real poinsettia plants  
Tempera paints and brushes  
Pencils

### **Procedure:**

After reading the book, bring out pictures of real poinsettias or real poinsettias. Have students look at the shapes of the leaves and the petals. Have them practice sketching them on scrap paper.

Demonstrate how you overlap flowers and leaves to create a 3D effect.

On the good paper, have students sketch lightly their images of their poinsettia flowers. Kids may choose to have a few or several flowers, in any arrangement they find pleasing.

Using the paints, students paint in the flowers in intense colours. The background should be contrasting colours, but could be designs or solid colours. Have them consider the background as carefully as the foreground, including design and colour choice.

Once it is dry, students may choose to outline using a Sharpie marker. The pictures are always beautiful.

## **All You Need for a Snowman** by Alice Schertle

This is a simple story about all the things you need to think about when you are building snowmen. The beauty of this book is in Barbara Lavalee's incredible paintings (you may remember her as the illustrator of Mama, Do You Love Me?)

Students will create a tempera painting of a group of snowmen.

### **Materials:**

Good quality paper (11x17)  
Pictures of snowmen  
Tempera paints and brushes  
Pencils

### **Procedure:**

After reading the book, talk about how a real snowman is built. What items can you add to make the snowman more interesting?

Demonstrate how you overlap the three sections of a snowman, so they look connected and three-dimensional. Explain that they need to have a group of snowmen on their painting – 3, 4, 5... they choose.

On the good paper, have students sketch lightly their images of their snowmen. Kids may choose to have any arrangement they find pleasing. They need to make sure they add hats, scarves etc. to these snowmen. (Make sure you demonstrate how to add a hat that covers the top of the head, but doesn't just balance on the top of a circle). They can also sketch trees and other items in the background.

Using the paints, students paint in the painting in intense colours. The background should be contrasting colours, but could be designs or solid colours. Once it is dry, students may choose to outline using a Sharpie marker. The pictures are always beautiful.

## **Snoring Beauty** by Bruce Hale

This is a new retelling of the classic Sleeping Beauty tale, but with some wonderful twists. Older readers will love the “adult humour” while the younger readers will enjoy the colourful illustrations and funny characterizations. Queen Esophagus, King Gluteus, and Princess Drachmina Lofresca Malvolio Margarine (Princess Marge for short) are fabulous characters. Kids will love looking at all the little details – it is a book you will read several times and still not notice everything.

The class will work together to create a full-scale dragon, similar to the one in the story.

### **Materials:**

Construction paper  
Scissors  
Glue stick  
Tracers in the shape of a half-oval (8x11 size)

### **Procedure:**

Each student will be given a large piece of construction paper and a tracer in the shape of a large dragon scale. They begin by tracing out the dragon scale and cutting it out.

Each student is responsible for designing one (or two or three) dragon scales. The more scales you design, the larger the dragon will be. (Hint: this is great for those kids who finish quickly... they can make a second one or make the dragon that much bigger). Students will use the construction paper to create patterns to cut out and glue on the dragon scale. The scale might be striped, checked, or covered in many tiny scales.

Once all of the dragon scales are completed, they should be pinned to the wall to create the dragon’s body. The teacher paints or otherwise creates the dragon’s head to attach, as well as some paper legs. The result is a full-scale, colourful dragon!

## **Too Many Toys!** By David Shannon

Kids will completely identify with the main character of this story – a young boy with too many toys! It is funny, and completely accurate...

Kids will create a collage using their photograph and old magazines/catalogues. A simple project (as long as you have the magazines ready...)

HINT: Ask parents to save their toy flyers or their Sears Wish Books after Christmas...

### **Materials:**

A close up photo of each child  
Old toy magazines and flyers  
Scissors  
Glue sticks  
paper

### **Procedure:**

Look closely at the illustrations in the book, and see how the little boy has piles and piles of toys, and how they overlap each other to look realistic.

Students cut out their face/upper body of the photograph, and glue it onto their paper. Next, they cut out lots of pictures of toys, and glue them down around the photo to make it look like the child is covered in too many toys.

Easy but cute!

## **My Penguin Osbert in Love** by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel

This is the sequel to the adorable Christmas story My Penguin Osbert, in which a young boy receives a real penguin from Santa. In this second book, Osbert the penguin decides he wants to travel to the South Pole, where he subsequently falls in love. It is a great Valentine's Day story. The illustrations of the southern lights are beautiful, and are the inspiration for this art project.

### **Materials:**

Dark coloured heavy paper (textured is even better)

Artists chalk

Q-tips or kleenex

Fixative spray

[www.antarcticimages.com](http://www.antarcticimages.com)

### **Procedure:**

After reading the book to the class, turn back to the pages about the southern lights. Kids might be familiar with the northern lights (aurora borealis) as they may have seen them before. Explain to them that there are similar lights that can only be seen near the south polar cap. The website [www.antarcticimages.com](http://www.antarcticimages.com) has some beautiful videos and photographs of the southern lights that you may want to show before doing this project.

Each child will create his own southern lights images using artists chalk (soft pastels not oil pastels). Demonstrate how you can blend colours together using Q-tips or Kleenex (not fingers). Students will draw swirling images in the sky, so that the sky is very bright. The ground should remain darker, with only minimal chalk applied.

If you wish, the last step would be to add a silhouette of two people (maybe holding hands?) to make it more Valentine's Day-ish. This would be done using the black chalk.

Take the artwork outside to spray it with a fixative spray. (I use workable fixative by Krylon, in case kids want to add more later). Give the artwork a light spray back and forth horizontally and then vertically. Without the spray, the chalk will eventually rub off.

## **Scaredy Squirrel Makes a Friend** by Melanie Watt

You can use any of the Scaredy Squirrel books – I just think that this one is especially cute! There are so many possibilities with this series of books, as there are great links to mapmaking, charts, lists, how-to's and more.

Use this great character to create welcome posters for your school! Welcome posters are great to have for parent-teacher nights and other community open houses.

### **Materials:**

Several copies of the Scaredy Squirrel books (or make a few photocopies so the kids have a close-up picture of his various poses)

Pencils and pencil crayons

White drawing paper

### **Procedure:**

Explain to the kids that you will be creating welcome pictures for your school, using Scaredy Squirrel as the main character.

Brainstorm various words of welcome on the board, so that the kids have the correct spelling (!!!)

Have the kids each design a poster using pencil crayons, depicting Scaredy Squirrel in various environments. So simple and so cute!

### **Alternative:**

Have each student choose a favorite book character to depict in a welcome poster. It is a great way to promote literature in a very public setting!

## **Not Norman: A Goldfish Story** by Kelly Bennett

A colleague shared this book with me recently, and it is one of my favorite new titles! It is the story of a little boy who doesn't appreciate the finer qualities of his pet goldfish, until "Norman" proves himself a hero.

Kids will create their own mini-aquariums in a bottle!

### **Materials:**

Empty individual water bottles WITH the lids

Water

Blue food coloring

Glitter

Small shells and aquatic toys (fit through bottle opening)

Aquarium rocks

### **Procedure:**

Gather as many different small aquatic items as possible. Metallic confetti in the shape of fish/shells, aquarium rocks, mini-shells, mini-fish... be creative!

Each student begins by putting all of their bits and pieces into their water bottle – beginning with a small handful of rocks and shells. Add a half teaspoon of glitter (colour does not matter). If you can find a plastic fish that is small enough to fit through the opening of the bottle, put this in as well.

After all the goodies are in the bottle, have the kids fill the bottle with water, leaving about an inch at the top. Add a few drops of blue food coloring.

Put the lid on TIGHTLY and give it a shake. The result is a private aquarium for each student. The glitter makes the water look sparkly and beautiful!

## **Keep Your Ear on the Ball** by Genevieve Petrillo

This story is about Davey, a blind boy, who helps his classmates understand his skills and his limitations.

This lesson is more of an “activity” than an actual finished project.

### **Materials:**

Paper  
Pencils

### **Procedure:**

Students will learn how to do blind contour drawings, and experiment with drawing different things in this manner.

A blind contour drawing is one that is done without looking at your paper. Students will look at an item and try to draw it without looking down at their paper at all. This may be challenging for the younger ones, as they will want to peek. To ensure that they don't use their erasers, you can have them draw with a felt marker instead.

Alternatively, you can have them blindfolded to simulate drawing without being able to see. In this case, they would draw something that you are describing to them. For example, you might say “Start by drawing a circle at the top of your paper. Next draw a circle right underneath it, and a larger circle underneath that one...” (and continue the directions for drawing a snowman).

When the drawings are done, the kids will get quite a giggle looking at their work. Make sure, though, that you spend some time talking about how it might feel for someone who is blind when they are asked to do some of the tasks that other kids take for granted.

## **The Boy Who Was Raised by Librarians** by Carla Morris

Melvin loves libraries, books and his heroes – the librarians! This is a great story about the value of books, and the importance of libraries in our lives!

Students will create a piece of artwork that displays their favorite titles!

### **Materials:**

Photo of each student's face  
Construction paper or cardstock in a variety of colours  
Felt markers  
Scissors  
Glue sticks

### **Procedure:**

After reading the book to the kids, have the kids look at the different designs and colours on book covers and book spines. What information is provided on a book spine?

Students will then create a picture of themselves peeking through a book shelf, surrounded by books (like the cover of the book).

Begin by having them cut out their face from the photograph and gluing it near the bottom of their cardstock paper. Their next job is to cut out several narrow rectangular shapes (book spines) and glue them down surrounding the face on the left, right and bottom.

The last step is to decorate the spines with titles, call numbers, trademarks, etc. They should try to make them look like real books. (And, of course, the titles should be their favorite books!)

## **Splat the Cat** by Rob Scotton

Splat the Cat starts school, in this funny book about a very fuzzy cat. You can use the sequel, Love, Splat if you are reading it around Valentine's Day. In the sequel, Splat has a crush on another kitten – so cute.

Students will create their own Splat the Cat pictures using straws and a bit of hot air!

### **Materials:**

Heavy paper (for background)  
Watered down black tempera paint  
White tempera paint  
Black tempera paint  
Pink tempera paint  
Straws

### **Procedure:**

Have the kids look closely at the pictures of the cats in the book (especially how fuzzy they are!)

Students begin their project by painting a big watery black oval on their paper. While the paint is still very wet, have the kids blow around the edges with the straw to make the paint trickle out, creating the fuzzy edges of the cat.

Next, have them paint long, skinny arms, legs and a tail using the same paint. Again, have them blow with the straw to make the paint spread. The result is a big fuzzy outline of "Splat."

Leave this to dry. Once completely dry, kids can use the regular black, pink and white tempera paint to add the eyes, nose, inside of the ears and muzzle.

If you want to make this more "Valentine-ish" have the kids attach a paper Valentine made out of red construction paper. You can attach it so it pops out in a 3D manner.

## **Michael Recycle** by Ellie Bethel

This book is similar to a Dr. Seuss story, with its rhythm and rhyme – a modern day Lorax! Michael Recycle is a superhero that arrives in the town of Abberdoo-Rimey to save the town from a huge garbage problem.

Kids will create their own superheroes that do great things to help the Earth!

### **Materials:**

Pencils  
Paper (painting)  
Tempera paints  
Sharpie markers

### **Procedure:**

Read the book and talk about recycling, and being environmentally friendly. What can we do to save the Earth? Have them imagine a superhero that comes to save their home town. What would he/she look like? Dress like? What would be his/her main mission?

Students draw a new superhero, including a background. Have the superhero doing something to save the Earth.

Paint with tempera paints. Leave to dry. Kids can then use the Sharpies to add details and outline the various parts of the picture.

## **Gone Wild: An Endangered Animal Alphabet** by David McLimans

This is a Caldecott Honor Book – the entire alphabet is illustrated in black and white – each letter is made from an endangered animal.

Students will create their names out of animals that begin with the same letter. The illustrations can be black only, or coloured – you choose!

### **Materials:**

Long strips of paper (approx. 6 x 18 inches)  
Letter tracers (precut several of each letter for kids to use)  
Pencils  
Felt markers  
Animal books

### **Procedure:**

Students begin by LIGHTLY tracing their name on the long paper using the letter tracers. Explain to them that the letters will later be transformed into animal pictures.

Next, kids need to find an animal that begins with the same letter as each letter in their name. Example SAM might be snake, ant, moose.

Next, kids turn each letter into an animal. They will need some help with this – but remember that it does not need to be the whole animal – the face might be enough.

Colour these animals in with felt pens.

## **Looking for Jaguar (and other rain forest poems) by Susan Katz**

This is a beautifully illustrated book of poetry all about the rain forest – add it to your rain forest theme unit!

Students will create their own off-centered rain forest pictures by choosing an animal to illustrate.

(Or, any animal, if you are not doing a rain forest unit).

### **Materials:**

Drawing paper  
Pictures of rain forest animals  
Pencils  
Pencil crayons

### **Procedure:**

Use this opportunity to talk about “focal point” in a picture – basically, that place that you look at first in a picture.

Kids will illustrate a rain forest animal, but they need to change the focal point so that it is either:

- a.) off centre, and only part of the face showing
- b.) zoomed right in so it is a very close-up illustration

Show them how sometimes a picture is more interesting to look at if it is not a traditionally centered piece.

Students draw their animal face (or other part) and use bright colours to colour the animal in.

## **I Ain't Gonna Paint No More!** By Karen Beaumont

This story plays on the song lyrics “It ain’t gonna rain no more, no more...” In this tale, a young boy goes a little bit wild painting himself all sorts of colours!

Kids will paint their silhouette in a wide variety of colours and patterns.

### **Materials:**

Large white paper (rolled paper) – big enough to trace the child’s silhouette

pencils

tempera paints

art shirts recommended

### **Procedure:**

Cut out long sheets of the white paper rolls, large enough for each child to be able to trace their silhouettes.

In partners, kids trace each other’s silhouette. The kids lie on the paper, with their hands at their sides or in the air (they choose a pose). (You may want a parent volunteer or two to help with younger classes).

Using tempera paints (washable), kids paint in their entire silhouettes in bright patterns and line designs.

## **Baghead** by Jarett J, Krosoczka

This is a funny story about Josh, a young boy who chooses to wear a paper bag on his head all day, much to the surprise of his family and friends... but there IS a reason...

Kids will create their own paper bagheads.

NOTE: It is sometimes a bit hard to find brown paper grocery bags these days, so start looking early).

### **Materials:**

Brown paper grocery bags – one per student  
Paint, felt markers  
Glue  
Feathers, sequins, buttons, decorative items

### **Procedure:**

Ask the kids what kind of bag they would wear over their head if they were in the same predicament as Josh. How might they decorate it?

Ahead of time, ensure that eye holes have been cut out of each bag.

Set all of the supplies out on the tables, and allow the kids to be as creative as they can! They need to decorate their bags to make some sort of mask-like head.

Have a baghead parade around the classroom and let the kids show of their creations!

## **Olivia Helps With Christmas** by Ian Falconer

Olivia is the most adorable pig ever! If you haven't read the Olivia stories, you need to, soon! In her latest adventure, Olivia the pig wants to help out around the house at Christmastime. This quirky pig helps out, in her own way!

Students create a colourful cut-out of themselves dressed like Olivia, with crazy winter gear!

### **Materials:**

Picture of each child's face (a close-up)

Photocopies of a winter touque, scarf, sweater, pants, mittens and boots

Felt markers

Glue

Scissors

### **Procedure:**

Each child is given a copy of the touque, scarf, sweater, mittens, pants and boots. They colour these in using bright colours and patterns.

(An alternative is to copy the patterns onto a heavier paper and use paint instead).

Once the colouring is completed, the kids cut out their work, and assemble it together to create a body. They use their face photo as well to make it look like a picture of themselves in winter gear!

## **Ms. McGraw Learns to Draw** by Kaethe Zemach

An inspirational teacher learns something from her struggling student.

Just as in the picture book, students learn to draw profile pictures. This is a quick project that requires very little preparation, but provides an important drawing technique for kids.

### **Materials:**

Pencils  
Black markers  
White drawing paper

### **Procedure:**

Read the book aloud to the class. Explain the difference between a front-facing face and a profile picture. Show the kids how Dudley and Mrs. McGraw drew their profile pictures.

Demonstrate a profile picture on the board. Show how by changing each feature slightly you get an entirely new face.

Each child is challenged to fill their drawing paper up with profile pictures in pencil. See if they can make some faces that are happy, sad, mad, surprised, etc.

Divide a second piece of drawing paper into four quadrants. Have the kids choose their favorite four profiles to enlarge on this paper, and then go over with black markers.