

DROMKEEN SKETCHBOOK

TEACHING NOTES

Dromkeen Sketchbook showcases five of Australia's amazing illustrators. In this DVD, each illustrator reveals significant ideas and practical tips for creating images using a range of illustrative tools and media.

MEET THE ARTISTS

SALLY RIPPIN

Watch Sally as she creates her character, Millie, using coloured pencil, and Chinese inks applied with brush on watercolour paper to convey Millie's cheeky, mischievous personality.



LEIGH HOBBS

Using a nibbed pen and black ink, Leigh creates his charismatic characters, Old Tom and Horrible Harriet. Leigh's skill in using line to capture the personalities of each character is evident as he works towards creating drawings that are fresh and alive.

ANDREW MCLEAN

Conveying the emotions and attitudes of a character is central to Andrew McLean's approach to illustration. Initially using charcoal, Andrew works and reworks his drawings, utilising the elements of line, movement and proportion, until his character is revealed.



JOHN NICHOLSON

As an illustrator of nonfiction books, John Nicholson's drawings must be historically, scientifically and physically accurate representations. Perspective is an essential tool that he uses to realistically capture the image of a 3-dimensional object on a flat, 2-dimensional surface.

JANE TANNER

While most people have used coloured pencils as a drawing or colouring tool, Jane Tanner's skill in using coloured pencil lifts this particular drawing medium to a new level. Her meticulous use of coloured pencils to capture light, shade and tone enables her to create emotive portraits with depth, warmth and clarity.



ARTISTIC MEDIA AND TOOLS

The illustrators in the program refer to the following artistic media and tools.

PENS, BRUSHES AND DRAWING INKS

Sally Rippin and Leigh Hobbs both use inks to create their artworks. Sally applies the black ink with a Chinese brush while Leigh uses a nibbed dipping pen. Inks can be diluted with water then applied with a brush to cover broader areas resulting in a wash effect. Pens come in a wide range of nib sizes and shapes enabling the illustrator to use the inks for a range of drawing effects.

CHARCOAL

Andrew McLean uses charcoal as a sketching tool. Charcoal pencils and sticks are made from charred wood and can be used for fine lines when sharpened to a point, or for broad sweeping strokes when used on the side. Charcoal is particularly useful for shading as it can be smudged for blurry effects or rubbed back with a kneadable eraser to create a smoky appearance.

GRAPHITE PENCILS

Commonly known as lead pencils, graphite pencils come in a range of grades from a very hard such as a 9H to a very soft such as a 9B. Pencils are used for both preliminary sketch work and finished artworks. John Nicholson, Jane Tanner and Sally Rippin show how they each use graphite pencil as a sketching or outlining tool.

WATERCOLOUR PAINTS

Andrew McLean often uses watercolour paint for his finished artwork. Watercolour is a thin, watery, translucent paint — you can see the paper or painting surface through the colours of the paint. It can be spread easily and quickly over the paper, making the painting process quick as compared with using other paints. In contrast to acrylics or oils, watercolours can be made lighter by adding more water or darker using less water, not by adding white or black paint. As there is no white watercolour, an illustrator will use the white of the paper to show white in the required areas.

GOUACHE

Jane Tanner may use gouache for her finished artworks. Gouache is watercolour paint with white pigment. Consequently, it is opaque rather than translucent — the paper or painting surface cannot be seen through the paint. It can be used thickly or diluted and applied as a thin wash. Jane may use both gouache and coloured pencil in the one illustration.

PAPER

Paper can be smooth or rough, heavy or lightweight. Paper can be absorbent or resist water. Paper can be coloured or white. Some papers are specifically designed for a particular medium. For example, absorbent watercolour paper is designed for watercolour paints and cartridge paper for graphite pencils. Sally Rippin used high-quality watercolour paper for her illustration of Millie. Jane Tanner is careful to be aware of the changing surface of the paper as she builds up layers of colour.



ERASERS

Andrew McLean and Jane Tanner both use kneadable erasers which can, as the name suggests, be moulded and reshaped.

LIGHT BOX

Andrew McLean uses a light box to trace over his sketches. After working and reworking his sketches using charcoal, he will trace over the finished sketch using the light box then add colour using his medium of choice — perhaps coloured pencil or watercolour.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

EXPLORING ARTISTIC MEDIA AND TOOLS

In the words of the illustrators:

Sally Rippin: 'With one brush and a little bit of ink, you can get lots of textures, different shades of black and white.'

Andrew McLean: 'I use charcoal or a medium that helps me create movement, and charcoal is particularly good. And movement is one of the key things—it unlocks proportion, movement of the figure and where it's going on the page.'

Jane Tanner: 'I always test out my coloured pencils on the edge of my paper before I use them to see that I have exactly the tones that I need.'

- Talk with the students about creating pictures.
 - What do you like to draw?
 - What media do you usually use to make pictures?
 - What steps do you take when you draw or paint?
- Show students a range of picture books.
 - What media do you think illustrators might use to create pictures?
 - What tools do you think they use—brushes, pens, eraser etc?
- Allow students the opportunity to experiment using some of these media, focussing on the media rather than a finished product. Plan on using one particular medium at a time or, as an alternative, divide the class into small groups, providing each with a medium to explore then reporting their findings to the class. It may only be feasible to give the students experience with accessible media such as coloured or graphite pencils, depending on the available resources.



Encourage the students to change the way they use the media.

For example:

- apply heavy and light pressure to pencils or charcoal
- sharpen a pencil to a point for fine work
- mix colours on paper using coloured pencils
- create broad, sweeping strokes holding charcoal on the side
- make charcoal marks using free movements on large sheets of paper
- use pencils with a more controlled technique on a small piece of paper space
- draw dots, shapes, squiggles, scribble patterns or irregular designs using pencils
- make marks by changing the direction lines using pencils, pens or charcoal
- create different textures using coloured or graphite pencils, or charcoal by making different marks on the page
- use an eraser to remove parts of charcoal or pencil
- blend charcoal with a finger, cotton bud or blending tool
- hold pencils or charcoal at different angles to the page.

Have the students use the media on different types of paper.

For example:

- use coloured pencils on coloured papers
- apply white pencil to black paper
- use rough, textured paper and smooth paper
- use absorbent dry paper such as blotting paper or paper with a shiny surface.

Have students reflect on their explorations.

For example:

- Which media were easy to use?
 - What different effects could you achieve and how did you create them?
 - What did you discover about the media that you didn't know before?
- Talk with the students about Jane Tanner's tips for using coloured pencils. Notice the way she organises her pencils in tins according to the shades of colours. Have the students organise coloured pencils in this way. For example, put all of the shades of brown, black, red, green etc into containers. Have students practise selecting different shades of pencils for different objects.

You might ask:

- Which 'greens' would best represent the trees in our playground?
- What shades of brown or red might you use for a character's hair?
- What shades of grey or blue might you use for the sky?
- What shades of colour might you use to represent your skin tone?

Have them test their shades on the side of their drawing paper in the same way that Jane selects her colours.



EXPLORING CHARACTER

In the words of the illustrators:

Leigh Hobbs: 'A line here and there can make all the difference.'

Sally Rippin: 'You can tell a lot about someone's personality by the way that they stand.'

Andrew McLean: 'A very important aspect in illustration is emotion. This drawing is a sad Mr Biffy...so it is important to feel that emotion. I try to re-enact that pose or get that feeling.'

- Talk about the illustrations of Leigh Hobbs, Sally Rippin and Andrew McLean.
 - What sorts of lines can you see in their illustrations? Thick, thin, harsh, soft, clear, blurred, curved, straight, short, long?
 - What words did the illustrators use to describe their lines? Scribbly, loose, soft, big?

Discuss the way each illustrator used lines to reveal a character's emotions and personalities.

- What sorts of shapes and lines did Andrew McLean use to show the sadness Mr Biffy was feeling? What did his body gestures reveal about his attitude?
 - How did Sally reveal Millie's personality through her posture? Why did Sally Rippin use scribbly lines to colour in her drawing of Millie? What did they reveal about Millie's personality? How does her expression make you think that perhaps she isn't as innocent as she presents herself to be? What different ideas would you have about Millie if she were coloured in more precisely or if her hair sat neatly on her shoulder or if she were wearing a floral dress instead?
 - What lines did Leigh Hobbs use to show Old Tom's personality? What ideas about Old Tom do you have when you see his bandage or notice the flies flying around his head?
- Have the students look back at some stories they might have written. Have them choose one of the characters to illustrate. Have them think about the body shape, gestures, colours, lines and objects that they could use to help to reveal the personality or feelings and thoughts of their character.
 - Have students select Old Tom, Millie or Mr Biffy to re-illustrate with a different personality by changing a few lines in the drawings. For example:
 - Change Old Tom into a clean and tidy cat rather than his messy self
 - Change Horrible Harriet into a friendly, likeable student
 - Change Millie into a sweet, innocent, well-behaved girl.

Discuss with students the specific visual features that would need to be changed and the visual features that might be included to convey the characters 'new' personality



- Talk about the way Jane Tanner uses a photograph as reference for her drawing.
 - Why do you think Jane would use a photograph rather than draw from memory?
 - What other reference material do you think you could use to help you draw characters accurately—visit a museum, a statue or 3-dimensional models, pictures in books . . .?

Take photographs of the students. Have them use their photographs to draw self portraits

Provide students with images of people from magazines, newspapers etc. Have them use the images as reference material for drawing characters. Have them decide on a personality for their character.

- In what sort of story might your character appear?
- What visual clues would you need to add to your illustration to help convey your character's personality, likes and dislikes, and the time and place in which your character lives?
- How might you change the person's facial expressions, gestures or stance to reveal aspects of their personality or thoughts?

Students then draw a sketch of their character using the image as a reference tool.

EXPLORING PERSPECTIVE IN DRAWING

In the words of the illustrator:

John Nicholson: 'The most powerful tool that I have in my little tool kit so that I get things to look really real is . . . perspective. It allows you to fill the space with dimensional items that can jump out of the page at you.'

- After viewing John Nicholson, explain to the students that perspective adds depth to a picture by creating the illusion of three dimensions on a 2-dimensional flat surface. Perspective can make objects appear closer or as if they are moving away into the distance. We know that the parallel lines of a road or railway line remain parallel. However, visually we see them converge toward a point on the horizon. This point is the vanishing point.
- In drawings, the lines of objects in a picture such as roads, buildings or rivers are slanted inwards to the vanishing point on the horizon, making them appear as if they are heading away into the distance. Artists use the horizon line, vanishing point and converging lines to help them to create the illusion of depth in their pictures.

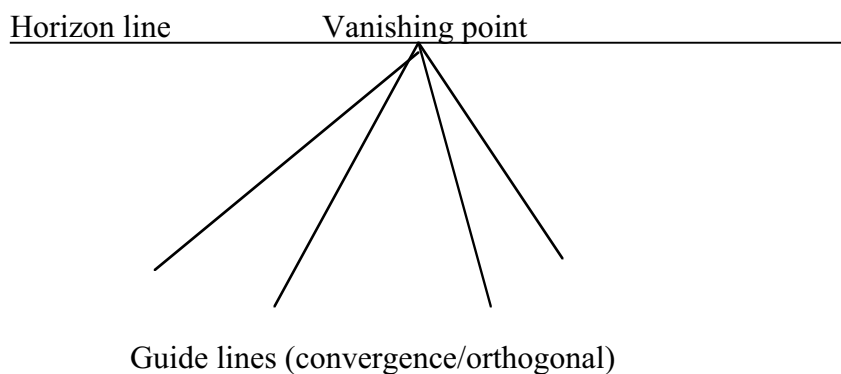


Students recall and define technical terms John used while drawing the rotunda. For example: vanishing point, guide lines (converging lines), angles, horizon line, perspective.

Collect some of John's books and ask students to find examples of drawings in which he has relied on perspective to create a 3-dimensional effect. Have them identify the horizon lines and vanishing points in the drawings. Ask them to visualise the guide lines he would have used to create the drawings.

To help students understand the basic principles of perspective, ask them to imagine they are standing in the middle of a very long road in the country, looking toward the horizon. The road appears to narrow to a point where the road meets the horizon (vanishing point). Have them visualise rows of telegraph poles bordering the side of the road. The telegraph poles also appear to narrow to the vanishing point.

Demonstrate how to set up the horizon lines, vanishing point and guide lines (converging lines) to create a drawing. For example:



Assist students to draw a long country road lined by telegraph poles using these principles of perspective.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Illustrated by Sally Rippin

Fang Fang's Chinese New Year An Omnibus Book from Scholastic Australia
Gezani and the Baboon Valenga Khoz (author) Allen & Unwin
Millie John Marsden (author) Pan Macmillan
Too Many Monkeys Margaret Wild (author) ABC
What a Mess, Fang Fang! An Omnibus Book from Scholastic Australia
When It Is Time Stacey McLeary (author)

Illustrated by Leigh Hobbs

Fiona the Pig Penguin
Horrible Harriet Allen & Unwin
Mr Knuckles Mike Dumbleton (author) Allen & Unwin
Old Tom (series) Penguin
Old Tom's Holiday ABC
Old Tom, Man of Mystery ABC

Illustrated by Andrew McLean

Hector and Maggie Janet McLean (author) Allen & Unwin
Highway Nadia Wheatley (author) An Omnibus Book from Scholastic Australia
Mr Biffy's Battle Richard Tulloch (author) Penguin
My Dog John Heffernan (author) A Margaret Hamilton Book from Scholastic Australia
Squeak Street Emily Rodda (author) Working Title Press
A Year on Our Farm Penny Matthews (author) An Omnibus Book from Scholastic Australia

Illustrated by John Nicholson

A Home Among the Gum Trees Allen & Unwin
Animal Architects Allen & Unwin
Building the Sydney Harbour Bridge Allen & Unwin
Explorers of Australia Allen & Unwin
The First Fleet Allen & Unwin
Fishing for Islands Allen & Unwin
Gold! Allen & Unwin
Homemade Houses Allen & Unwin
The Mighty Murray Allen & Unwin
The State of the Planet Allen & Unwin

Illustrated by Jane Tanner

Drac and the Gremlin Allan Baillie (author) Penguin
The Fisherman and the Theefyspray Paul Jennings (author) Penguin
Play Mates Penguin
There's a Sea in My Bedroom Margaret Wild (author) Thomas Nelson
The Wolf Margaret Wild (author) Penguin



Dromkeen Children's Literature Collection

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Further information about picture book illustrators, their artworks, and their choice and use of artistic media and tools can be found in *The Dromkeen Book of Australian Children's Illustrators*, published by Scholastic Australia.

For further information about the education and public programs at Dromkeen contact:

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