



★
imagination
★
WORKSHOP



THANK YOU



Thank you so much for having us in your world, presenting the creative and inspiring workshop presentation

‘Where DO ideas come from? Imagine it...

We are thrilled to be sharing this with you, empowering the precious children in your sphere of influence and giving you a taste of the exciting, frustrating, amazing journey that is Child Writes.

There are a number of elements fundamental to a children’s picture book. These include an engaging character who evokes a response or connection; a setting which is in a sense familiar and which provides opportunities for the character to successfully navigate through; and a problem which the character needs to address (preferably with three failed attempts) in order to arrive at an outcome or solution, with the character becoming stronger for the experience.

Now of course, having made mention of such a prescriptive description of what is a children’s picture book, it is important to note that on many, many occasions these ‘rules’ are broken – only to receive critical acclaim! So apply the fundamentals as they are presented in this manual, yes. But don’t be afraid to follow your intuition or that of your students. The program is intended to be thorough, yet simple. Structured, yet flexible.

The Child Writes program is about empowerment, inspiration, discipline, determination, belief, encouragement and contribution. It is unique, stunning and powerful! As each child completes the program, we are able to anecdotally register improvements in their self esteem, an increase in their self efficacy and notice the sense of achievement which comes from finishing something that is unique and challenging.. It is our hope that this workshop inspires you to continue with the Child Writes program in some way and form!

For, the most important outcome is that Child Writes gives children a voice. Why is this important, you may ask? *“A community which allows its children to speak and to be heard is a community which protects its children.”* This was a lesson learnt as NAPCAN (National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) delivered its long awaited paper *Towards a Better Future*, in 2006. How better to give them that voice, than to make them authors and illustrators? It is on this foundation that the Child Writes program was created and today operates. We ensure that the voices of children are heard within their immediate families and their communities, through the gifting of books to local libraries, hospitals and charities. Children are also inspired by not only creating something tangible from an intangible idea, but by making a difference in the lives of other children. This aspect of the program is pivotal.

By way of introduction to Child Writes, Imagine it... is by no means the end of the process. Any ideas generated in this workshop can be carried back to the classroom, hopefully giving the children some skills they can practice independently. Hopefully too, they understand ideas come from within, they just need to tap a little deeper sometimes!

We welcome feedback. The exciting element of Child Writes is how dynamic it has been and how it has evolved. There is a feedback form at the back of the folder.

Thank you so much in advance for your enthusiasm, participation and encouragement.

Emma and Ainsley

GET INTO THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

Activity 1: Contour Drawing

Aim:

- Continue the relaxation process.
- Identify any aversions to drawing.
- Make the connection between right brained activities and left brained activities.
- Establish drawing as a means of communication.
- Understand the maxim of 'draw what you see'.
- Establish a starting point in the development of drawing skills, which can be compared to skill acquired as the program progresses.

Materials and Preparation:

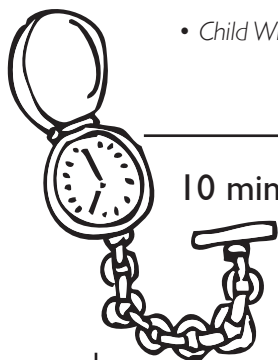
- White A4 paper
- Soft drawing pencil – 2b plus
- A bag with a collection of inanimate objects.
- Student Worksheet Activity 1: Contour Drawing

How to do it:

1. Ask the students to choose an inanimate object to draw. It is ideal to ask them to choose without looking!
2. Ask the children to pick up the pencil with the OPPOSITE hand than they usually use.
3. Have them make marks on the paper, showing the contours (the lines which make the object identifiable).
4. Encourage them to try to make each mark that which their eye 'sees' – that is, as their eye moves around the edge of the object, up, along and down, the student should pretend that the pencil tip is attached to their eyes and makes these same movements in the same direction.
5. Make a note of how long the student concentrated for.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 6



10 minutes

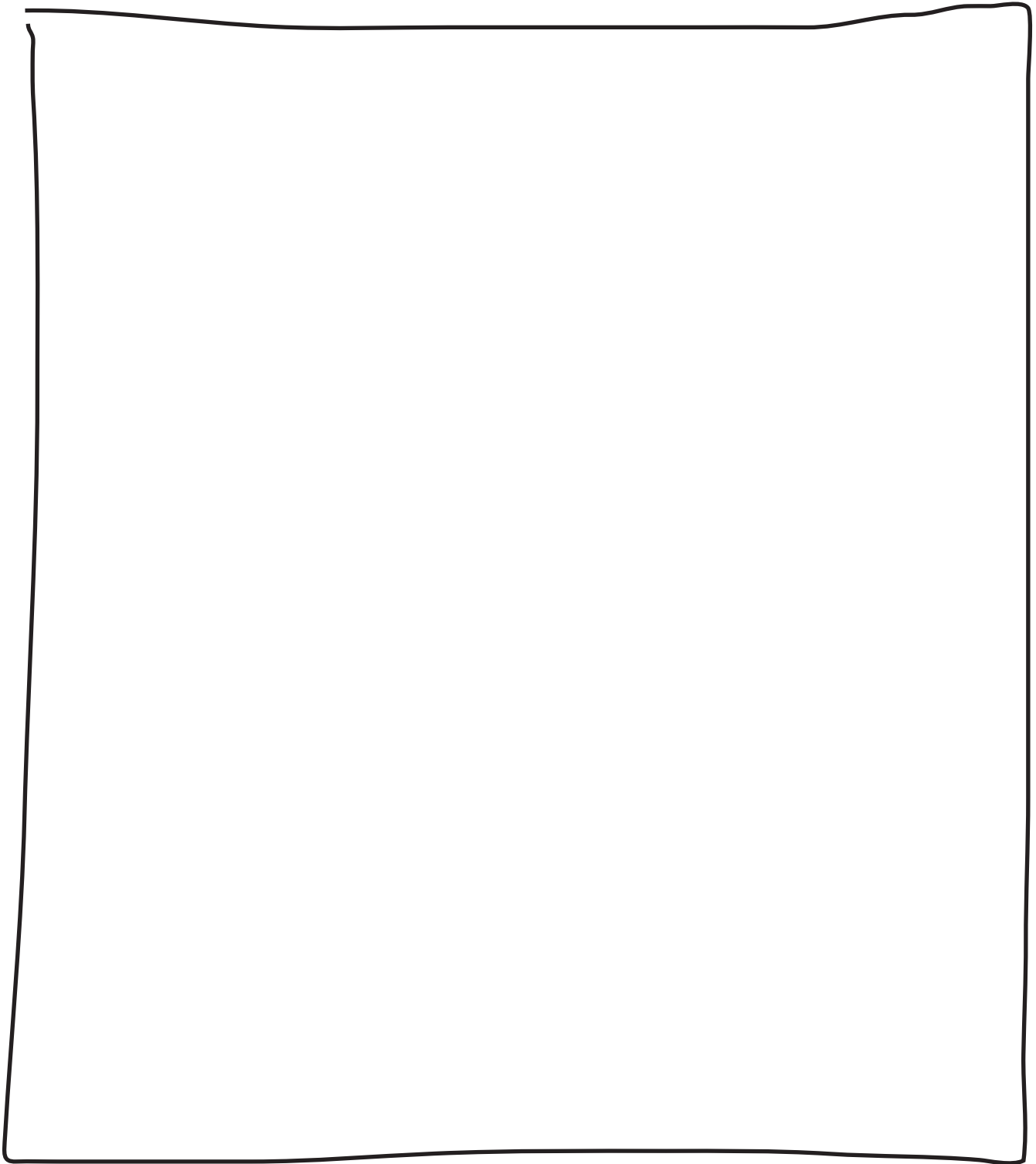
Tip: On the back of all drawings, make note of the date, the time of day and how long it took to complete the task. This will give the child a developmental history as they work through their student workbook. It is particularly encouraging seeing how much a person can improve their drawing skills and lengthen the period they can concentrate for.

WORKSHEET

Activity 1: Contour Drawing

It is time to get your brain working creatively, using contour drawing. This is drawing the contours, or lines which make an image identifiable.

1. What are you going to draw? _____
2. Draw the object



3. How long did you concentrate for? _____

GET INTO THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

Activity 2: *Blind Contour Drawing of Their Hand*

Aim:

- As per Contour Drawing aims.
- Increase length of attention span.

Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet Activity 2: Blind Contour Drawing
- Soft drawing pencil – 2b plus

How to do it:

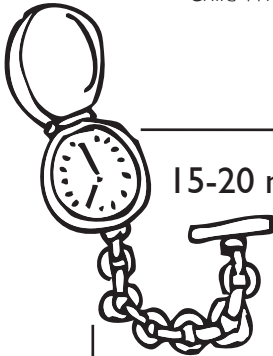
1. Blind Contour drawing is exactly the same as Contour drawing, except that this time, the students have to draw **WITHOUT** looking at the paper at all! Rather they are going to look at the object 100 per cent of the time. They are 'blind' to the paper and can only 'see' the object.

Vary the Task:

1. Now repeat the same activity, this time with the students using their other hand as the object.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 7 - 8



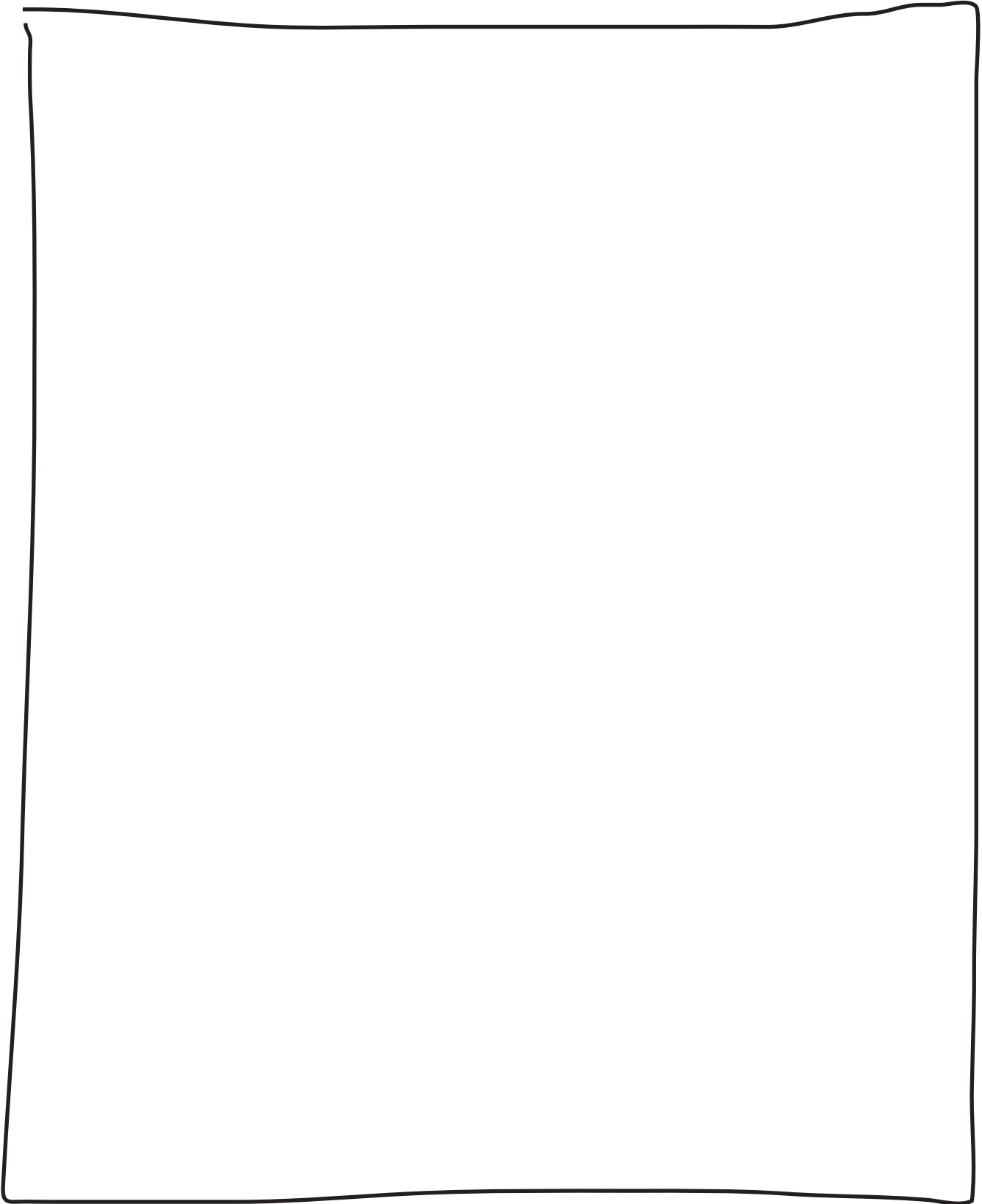
15-20 minutes

Tip: Remind your child to keep their pencil on the paper for a continuous line when doing blind contour drawing. If they hold their model hand into a normal hand position, it will be easier to cheat – that is, they will simply make a drawing that expresses the general outline of the hand. The more random the pose of their hand, the more random the outcome, the more successful the exercise!

WORKSHEET

Activity 2: *Blind Contour Drawing*

This time, you are going to draw your hand, WITHOUT looking at your page. Remember to keep the tip of your pencil on the page, so it is a continuous line drawing!



3. How long did you concentrate for? _____

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 3: Idea Source: Doodle Drawing

Aim:

- To possibly create a character and its setting, which may spark a story idea.
- Encourage drawing to be seen as a legitimate and accessible means of communication.
- Encourage right brain thinking.

Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet Activity 3: Ideas Source: Doodle Drawing
- Soft drawing pencil – 2b plus

How to do it:

1. Ask the students to quickly make a few random marks on their paper.
2. Pass the 'sqwiggle' to the student beside them (or have pairs swap)
3. Encourage the students to pick up the paper, turn it clockwise / anti-clockwise if necessary and ask them to 'see what they can see', to discover what can be seen within the lines.
4. Using the pencil, make more marks which further describes what they 'see' in their minds eye.
5. Ignore or rub out the lines not needed.
6. Use shading to define the dimensions of the character or the setting.
7. If time permits, continue adding more and more information like the setting the character may be in. If a setting (or a scene) is discovered in the first instance, continue by adding a likely character to the environment.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 8 - 9



15-20 minutes

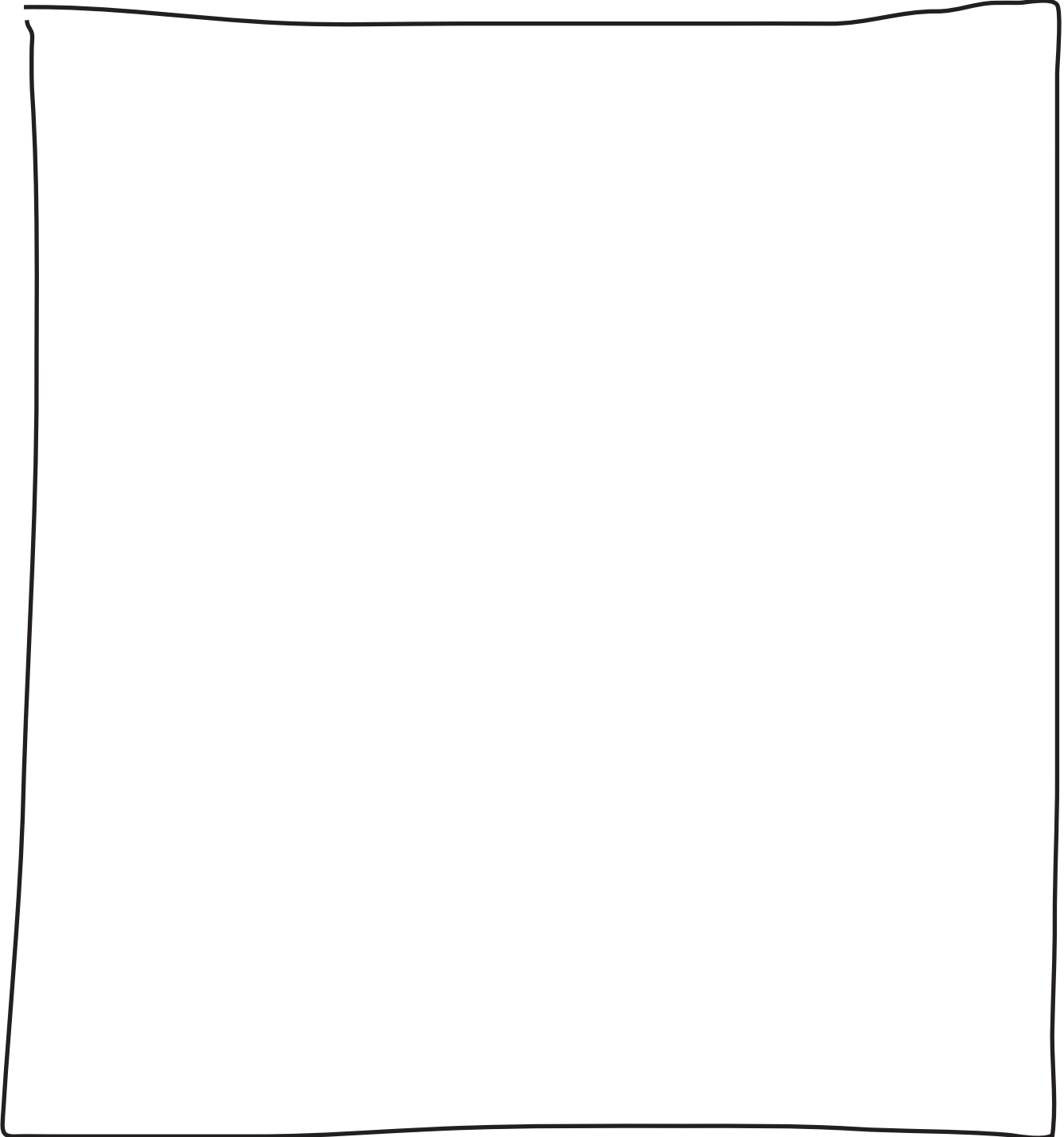
Tip: Practicing doodle drawing is just like practicing any other skill – the more you do the better you get at it. Actually, the hardest thing to break through is 'seeing' anything at all in the first instance. Building upon that is the easy bit!

WORKSHEET

Activity 3: Idea Source - Doodle Drawing

Allowing yourself just a second or two, make a few, random marks on your paper and see what you can see. You may just discover a character, or a setting for a story.

1. Make the initial marks on the paper



2. What do you see? _____
3. Now go back to the lines above and fill in more detail
4. Add details (foreground / mid-ground / background)
5. How long did you concentrate for: _____

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 4: Idea Source: Frankenstein

Aim:

- Use words to build or construct an original character.
- Experience first hand, how prejudices and previous experience and exposure can influence answers.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet open to Activity 4: Idea Source: Frankenstein
- Pen or pencil.

How to do it:

1. Read out, one at a time, the descriptive labels which are the physical attributes of a human.

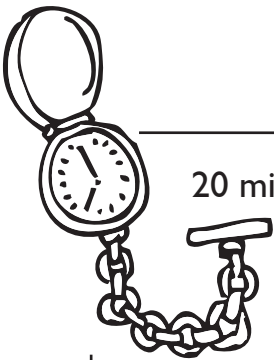
Hair / Face / Eyes / Nose / Mouth / Arms / Hands / Torso / Legs / Feet

2. Ask the students to write their first response to these ques in their workbook, in the corresponding space, when you call out the attribute. It is to be an instinctive response, only a couple of seconds lapsing between each attribute being announced.
3. Ask the students to draw their character once they have the full list in front of them.
4. Then ask the students to think about:

Does he or she have a name? If so, what is it?
Where do you think this character might live?
What problems would they have, just based on how they look?

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, pages 9 - 10



20 minutes

Tip: In preparation for any variation the Frankenstein exercise, create as many lists of descriptive labels as you like. It might be for a car (colour / shape / wheels / exhaust pipe) it might be for a building (front door, material, windows). The key is the auto reponse to the descriptive words. The less thought the more impulsively creative the response!

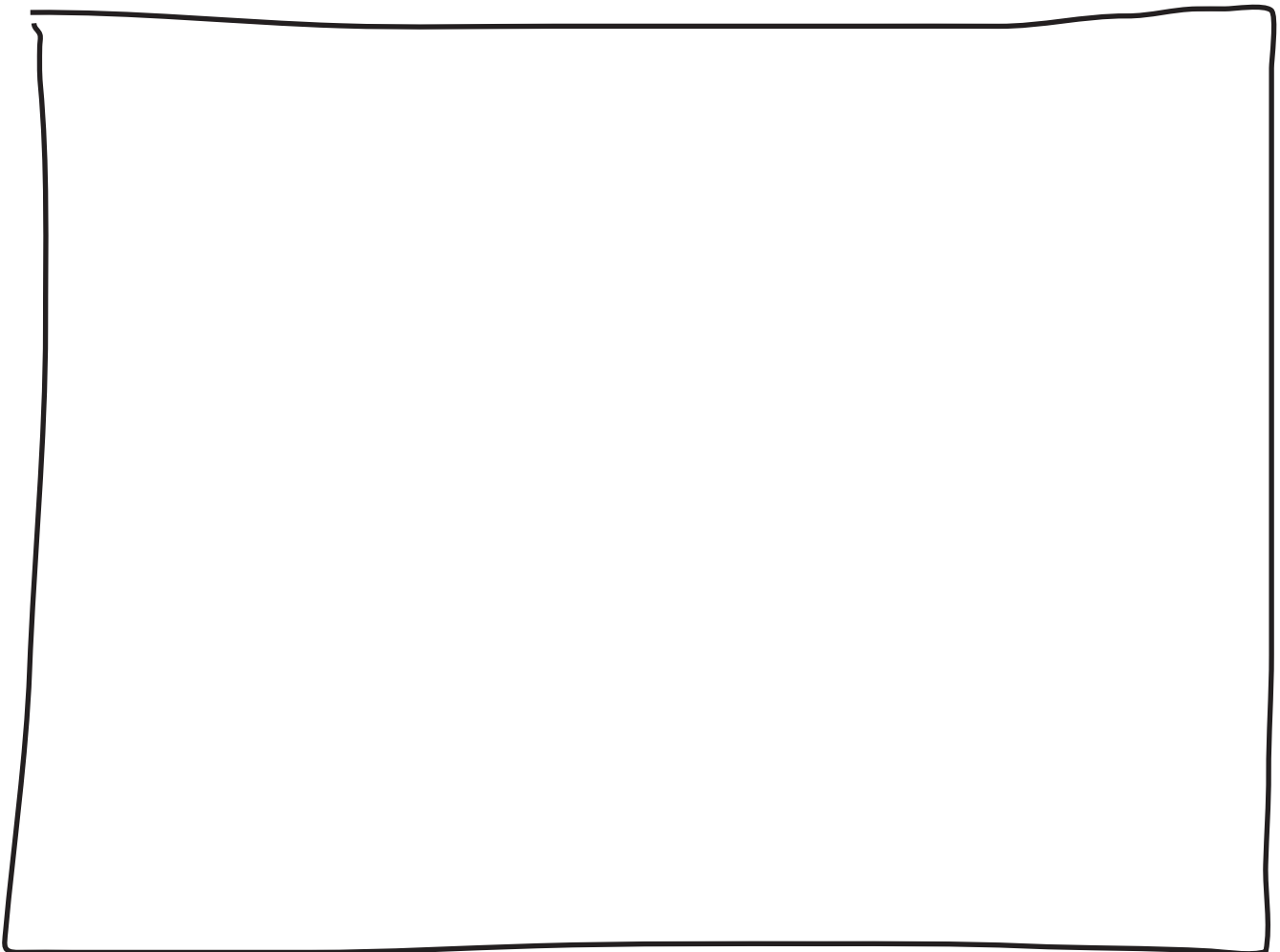
WORKSHEET

Activity 4: Idea Source - Frankenstein (Human)

!Try not to think or rather, overthink this. Just write down the first word that pops into your head!
For example: HAIR = frizzy.)

1. _____ (Hair)
2. _____ (Face)
3. _____ (Eyes)
4. _____ (Nose)
5. _____ (Mouth)
6. _____ (Arms)
7. _____ (Hands)
8. _____ (Torso)
9. _____ (Legs)
10. _____ (Feet)

Now draw the character with these features.



THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 5: Idea Source: Brainstorming

Aim:

- Experience a technique that easily generate a flow of quick and creative ideas.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

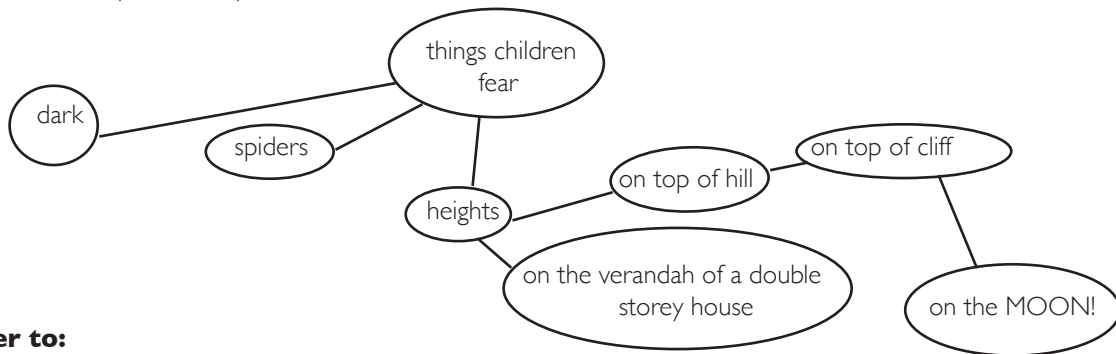
Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet Activity 5: Idea Source: Brainstorming
- Paper for yourself
- Pen or pencil

How to do it:

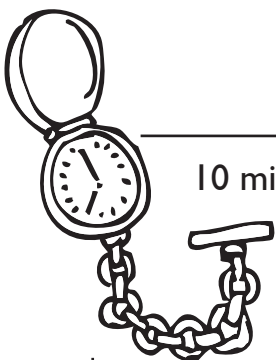
1. Choose a topic, such as things affecting children (children are, after all, the target market for children's picture books).
2. Discuss this with the students - and together, generate possible answers which are added to a brainstorming list / map.
3. Leave the list / map where it can be seen.
4. The generated list / map can now be used as stimuli for more 'drilled down' lists – breaking down answers into smaller groupings.

An example of a map



Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, pages 10 - 11



10 minutes

Tip: Brainstorming is the equivalent of play time for child! It is using their imagination and lets their personality shine through, whilst at the same time, generating 'working capital' – the lists of stimuli for exercises in the future!

WORKSHEET

Activity 5: Ideas Source – Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a fantastic tool for finding story ideas. It is a simple, five step process, completed by yourself, or even better, with a group of people:

Step One:

It begins with writing a list of possible topics which relate to children (who will be the readers of your book). Topics can be anything broad...

For example: Animals, Things children love to do, Things children fear, Birthdays.

Step Two:

Choose a topic. You don't even have to know why you are making the choice – just pick one! There are no right or wrong answers.

For example: Things children fear.

Step Three:

Now break down your chosen topic into different categories. In our example of 'Things Children Fear', think of all the different fears a child could have.

For example: Fear of the dark, fear of spiders and fear of heights.

Step Four:

Choose one of these responses. Once again, there are no right or wrong answers, just pick one.

For example: Fear of heights.

Step Five:

Break down your chosen response further. In the example of a fear of heights, you can brainstorm different times or places in which this fear may appear.

For example: On the top of a hill, on the verandah of a double storey house, on the top of the slippery slide.

At any time, if you are inspired by a story idea, write it down!

For example: Eventually, you may end up with a story idea about a girl who overcomes her fear of heights with the help of her friends who encourage her to go on the jumbo slippery slide at school.

1. Possible topic ideas:

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 6: *Idea Source: Use a Problem*

Aim:

- Draw upon the most valuable resource for any writer – their own world and their own experiences.
- Create a story idea which, chances are, will find an audience wishing for answers to the same problem.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet Activity 6: Idea Source: Use a Problem
- Pen or pencil

How to do it:

1. Ask the children to list the things they worry about now, or worried about when they were younger – what problems or issues they have experienced. They are to list everything that comes to mind.
2. Go back through the list and ask them how they tried to solve the problem, or ideas on how it might be able to be solved now.
3. Ask the children what problems their friends have experienced.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 11



5 minutes (each problem)

Tip: If the student cannot think of a problem in general terms, ask him or her if they have felt frustrated at all today. Frustration is usually a good indicator of a problem. They just need to remember what they were frustrated about!

WORKSHEET

Activity 6: Idea Source - Use a Problem

Stories are often really about solving problems – how you could possibly solve a problem or the way someone else has solved the problem in the past. Think of all the problems and issues you have experienced. What are the things you worry about now or have worried about when you were younger? List everything that comes to mind? This can also include problems your friends have experienced. List them below. Then think of possible solutions, or solutions you or others have used in the past, which have worked!

PROBLEM: _____

Solution: _____

Story Ideas: _____

PROBLEM: _____

Solution: _____

Story Ideas: _____

PROBLEM: _____

Solution: _____

Story Ideas: _____

PROBLEM: _____

Solution: _____

Story Ideas: _____

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 7: Idea Source - Own Experience

Aim:

- Use a different set of stimuli and strategy for story idea generation, expanding the students repertoire of tools.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:

- Student Worksheet Activity 7: Own Experience
- Pen or pencil

How to do it:

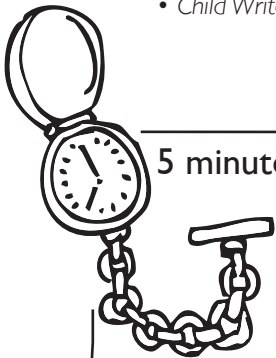
1. Create a list of topics and thoughts, or use the list below (also found in the Student Workbook).
2. Read through the list, allowing time for the students to instinctively respond to the stimuli and write their responses.
3. Emphasise that there are no wrong answers and all thoughts should be recorded.
4. Review the answers afterwards and see if any story ideas can be gleaned. Use the brainstorming technique already practised.

List of Stimuli: Own Experience

- What made you laugh today?
- What did you think of while you ate your lunch?
- Where have you been today?
- What is the earliest memory you recall?
- If you weren't you, who would you be and what would you be doing?
- What was the happiest moment of your life?
- What was the saddest moment of your life?
- What are you most proud of doing?

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, pages 11 - 12



5 minutes (each experience)

Tip: The more honest the telling of our experience, the more unique the story!

WORKSHEET

Activity 7: Idea Source - Own Experience

Sometimes, our own experiences (the things we have seen or done in our lives), provide the best story ideas.

1. Create a list of possible topics about your own experiences, or use the list below.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

a) What made you laugh today?

b) What did you think of while you ate your lunch?

c) What is the earliest memory you recall?

2. Read the list out one at a time and record what your first thoughts are, as a response to each. There are no right or wrong answers and you should write everything down that you think of.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

3. Think about all of the answers you have given. Can you see any possible story ideas? You may want to use the brainstorming technique that you have just learned.

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 8: Idea Source – Reference Files

Aim:

- Use images to provoke story ideas.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:

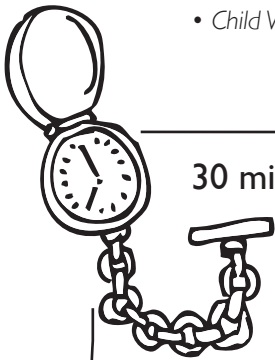
- Student Worksheet Activity 8: Reference Files
- Pen or pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Magazines or other sources of images

How to do it:

1. Ask the students to peruse magazines or other sources of images and cut out those images which appeal to them. Images can include words. There is no need for them to ask themselves ‘Why?’ when they choose an image, they are simply to respond to them instinctively.
2. Have them glue images into the appropriate pages of their Student Workbook, to build their reference file.
3. Review the answers afterwards and see if any story ideas can be gleaned. Use the brainstorming technique already practised.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, pages 11



30 minutes

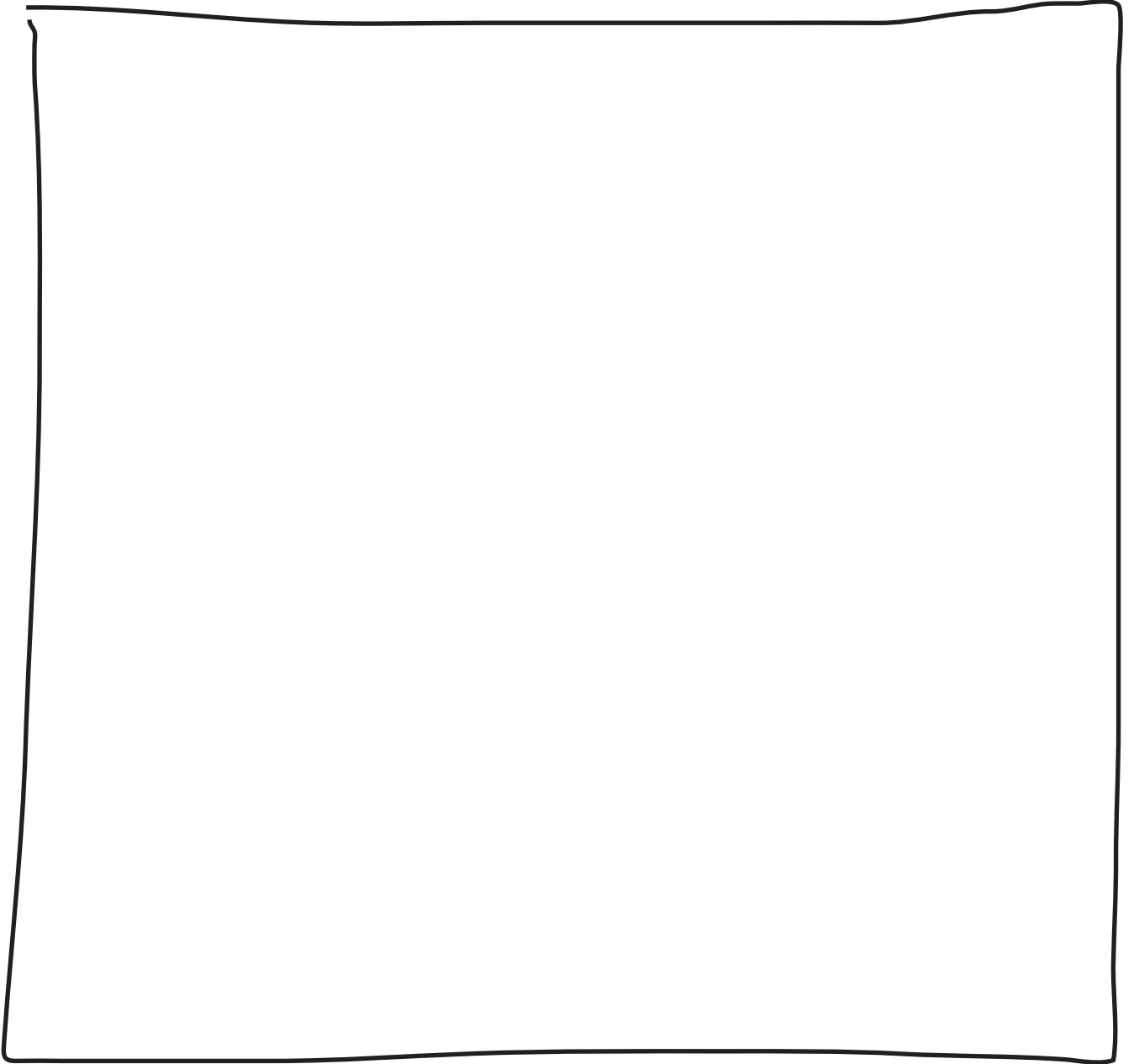
Tip: This is also a useful tool for finding images when it comes to illustrating. The more diverse the collection of images, of characters, settings, scenes, objects, animals, and so on, the more diverse the possible story outcomes.

WORKSHEET

Activity 9: Idea Source - Reference Files

A reference file is something you can look at to inspire you to think of new story ideas!

1. Look through magazines, brochures, or online. Cut out or print any pictures you like.
2. Glue them into the boxes over the next few pages.
3. Look at the pictures and see if they make you think of any story ideas. You can also use the brainstorming technique to help you to find ideas.



Can you think of any possible story ideas?

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 9: Ideas Source – Sound (including Music)

Aim:

- Expose the students to a completely different way of generating an idea. This will appeal to all types of learners – kinaesthetic, auditory or visual.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:

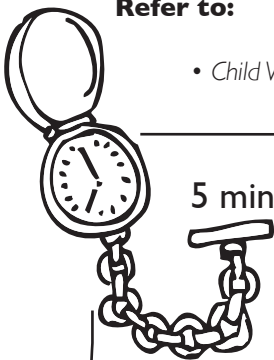
- Student Worksheet Activity 9: Sound
- Pen or pencil

How to do it:

1. Have the student do a breathing exercise and then practice 'listening' by closing their eyes. Ask them to keep a mental note of the sounds they hear. Alternatively, you can play music and get them to write a response to the music.
2. These sounds can then be listed in the Student Workbook, as well as any emotional responses or immediate thoughts.
3. Review the list afterwards and see if any story ideas can be gleaned. Use the brainstorming technique already practised.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 13



5 minutes

Tip: It is useful to listen to sounds when you have done the breathing exercises if you are looking for inspiration from the immediate surroundings. Alternatively, you can introduce a medley of sounds, played aloud to the student, like different music.

THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Activity 10: Ideas Source – Previously Written Stories

Aim:

- Encourage learning the craft of writing children's books by absorbing children's books!
- 'Learn' the common themes used in literature, by exploring previously written books.
- Gain firsthand experience at describing what a child likes or doesn't like, and what they think works and doesn't work, in a children's picture book. This also assists with appraising their own work.
- Add to the reference file, for immediate or future story and character ideas.

Materials and Preparation:


- Student Worksheet Activity 10: Previously Written Stories
- Pen or pencil
- Collection of children's picture books – chosen by the student because they provoke a response – either loving the book or hating it!

How to do it:

1. Ask the students to use the book review pro forma in the Student Workbook.
2. Have the students read the book and then record their thoughts.
3. Review these thoughts afterwards and see if any story ideas can be gleaned. Use the brainstorming technique already practised.
4. Discuss similarities in plots and story book formatting.

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, pages 13 - 14



10 minutes (each book)

Tip: We get so stuck sometimes with the choices we often make safe ones with which we have had some experience. Even the process of finding books to read together allows for different stories to be introduced. Who is to say that the boy who has only read sport stories before won't appreciate the messages in a fairy story? Additionally, if there is not a sufficient choice of children's picture books at home, it allows for conversation as to where books can be found – and a trip to the local library!

WORKSHEET

Activity 10: Idea Source – Previously Written Stories

After spending some time in the library or looking through your bookcase at home, write a list of your favourite picture books, which you enjoyed when you were even younger or which you really enjoy now:

Title: _____ Author: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Title: _____ Author: _____

Do the following for each book:

- Read the books and write down your initial thoughts about each of them. Consider the plot or style of the book.
- What do you like about the book? What do you not like about the book? Write everything down.
- Review your answers afterward and see if they inspire any possible story ideas.
- Is there more of the story to be told (can you use the story as a departure point?)
- What if the character had made a different decision at a critical point?
- What if the story was located in a different setting, in a different time?

BOOKTITLE: _____

Author: _____ Illustrator: _____

Initial Thoughts: _____

Like/Dislikes: _____

Possible Story Ideas: _____

A FINAL NOTE: THE IDEAS TOOLBOX

Ideas Source - The Lightning Bolt

Aim:

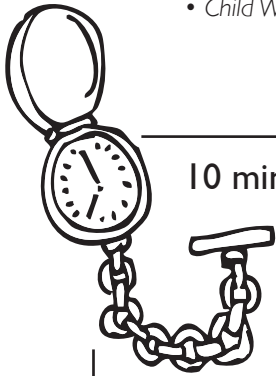
- To have a discussion about where and when 'lightning bolts' of ideas can occur.
- To discuss ways to capture the idea and,
- To understand you can create an environment conducive to lightning bolts

How to do it:

1. Brainstorm with the students about possibilities to quickly and easily capture lightning bolts of story ideas, at any time of the day or night.
2. Help the students to decide which means of capturing ideas would work best for them. Plus, help the students to prepare to use this strategy (for example, to purchase a notebook and pen to have on hand at all times).
3. Practice the breathing exercise and the blind contour drawing exercise to promote a great 'headspace' for lightning bolts!

Refer to:

- *Child Writes* book Chapter 1, page 14



10 minutes

Tip: The lightning bolt strikes randomly. For some people (like me!) it will be at two o'clock in the morning! The only thing you can guarantee is that it **WON'T STRIKE** if you are trying to make it do so. It is about relaxing and trusting that you are capable of generating great ideas... and you are!

