



## Creating a Children's Book

A Project for the National Library of Canada's *Page by Page: Creating a Children's Book* Website

Children are exposed to picture books from an early age. In school, they begin to learn the skills that go into the creation of these books, but rarely have the chance to exercise them in the creation of a complete work of their own. The National Library of Canada's *Page by Page: Creating a Children's Book* website gives children the opportunity to see how an individual book is created. This project allows children to create their own picture book, following the same steps in publishing used by celebrated Canadian children's author Tim Wynne-Jones and illustrator Eric Beddows in *Zoom Upstream*.

To see a different approach, visit the *School* portion of the website. Author Ginette Anfousse reverses the usual methods. She draws first, then writes.

**Subject/Age**

Language Arts and Art (visual)  
Ages 8-12

**Learning Outcomes (WCP)  
Objectives (QC)  
Learning Outcomes (APEF)  
Expectations (ON)**

**Art Outcomes for this project:**

In the completion of this project, students will:

- Produce two-dimensional works of art that communicate a range of ideas for specific purposes and to specific audiences, using a variety of familiar art tools, materials and techniques.

**Language Arts Outcomes for this project:**

**R (Reading):**

- Read a variety of fiction and non-fiction materials for different purposes.
- Read aloud, showing understanding of the material and awareness of the audience.

**W (Writing):**

- Produce pieces of writing using a variety of forms, techniques and resources appropriate to the form and purpose, and materials from other media (i.e. a picture book).
- Revise and edit their work in collaboration with others, seeking and evaluating feedback, and focussing on content, organization and appropriateness of vocabulary for audience.
- Proofread and correct their final drafts, focussing on grammar, punctuation, spelling and conventions of style.



### O/V (Oral and Visual Communication)

- Contribute and work constructively in groups.

#### These Language Arts Outcomes correspond to:

- WCP GO - **R**: 4.1, 4.4; **W**: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3; **O/V**: 5.1
- Quebec objectives - 2 (**Reading**); 1 (**Writing**); 1 (**Oral**)
- APEF GCO - **R**: 4/5, 2; **W**: 9.1, 9.3, 10; **O/V**: 2

### Student Demonstration of Learning

This project is intended to help children understand the process of creating a children's book, from inspiration to publication. The students will follow the same steps used by celebrated Canadian children's author Tim Wynne-Jones and illustrator Eric Beddows in *Zoom Upstream*, in order to publish and launch their own children's book.

### Materials/Resources Required

- Computer with access to the Internet
  - [Bookmaking Guide](#)
  - [Worksheet 1: The Idea](#)
  - [Worksheet 2: Story Map](#)
  - [Worksheet 3: Writing the Story](#)
  - [Worksheet 4: Revision and Editing](#)
  - [Worksheet 5: Storyboard and Research](#)
  - [Worksheet 6: Illustrating the Book](#)
  - [Worksheet 7: Book Design](#)
  - [Worksheet 8: Putting the Book Together](#)
  - [Worksheet 9: Book Review](#)
  - [Worksheet 10: Preparing the Book Launch](#)  
Includes an [Extension Worksheet](#) and a [Summary Sheet](#)
  - [Assessment Sheet](#)
- Various writing and reference materials (paper, pencils, dictionaries, encyclopedia).
- Samples of different picture books with different styles of illustrations, and written to different levels.
- Art Materials:
  - For basic construction of book (see [Bookmaking Guide](#)): construction paper or card of various colours, letter/A4 paper, pencils with soft and hard leads, erasers, colouring pencils, crayons or felt-tip pens, water-soluble glue, string or wool, hole punch, scissors, binders with paper covers, plastic slip-covers, trimming board, cardboard backdrop (optional).
  - For various illustration techniques: old magazines and newspapers, coloured tissue paper, coloured construction paper and other papers, coloured string or wool, cloth



scraps, tracing paper, paint, pencils with soft and hard leads, erasers, colouring pencils, crayons or felt-tip pens.

## Web Links

### The National Library of Canada's *Page by Page: Creating a Children's Book Website*:

URL: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/pagebypage/>

These are links to websites on handmade paper:

#### **Infostuff**

URL: <http://www.infostuff.com/kids/paper.htm>

#### **Handmade Paper Making by Patsy**

URL: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Pointe/2357/paper.htm>

#### **Recycling and Hand Paper Making**

URL: <http://hometown.aol.com/Ppreble2/paper.html>

## Instructional Procedures

### Introduction

This project is comprised of ten activities, each of which follows a section of the *Page by Page: Creating a Children's Book* website. These sections can guide students' work for each lesson, and allow them to view samples from *Zoom Upstream* for ideas and guidance.

Educators are invited to read the [Bookmaking Guide](#) before they begin in order to make decisions about format. Educators may also wish to combine this project with a papermaking activity. Suggested sites for papermaking activities are listed above in the Links section.

Students may work individually or in small groups. Pair work is recommended as it will allow an even division of work between partners (i.e. writer and illustrator) and minimize time off-task.

Educators may wish to take a session to read through the entire *Page by Page: Creating a Children's Book* website and discuss with students.

### Step 1

Read and view [The Idea](#) page on the *Zoom* section of the website.

See [Worksheet 1](#). Discuss some of the ways you can generate ideas. Some ideas:



- Look through a magazine with lots of pictures or photos. An image may suggest a story.
- Open the dictionary at random, read the words listed. One may spark an idea.
- Look in the newspaper. You might want to make up a story about something you read there.
- Look through an encyclopedia. A fact you find might spark an idea.
- If in a group, ask each person to contribute one word, and see if a story can be built around the suggested words.

Students should try to generate five different ideas for **fiction** stories. If you wish, discuss some student ideas as a class. Students debate weaknesses and strengths of the ideas and suggest avenues for story development. They should then decide which they prefer.

Demonstrate the story web (mind mapping) as a creative aid. Note that it is an experimental process, with no right or wrong method of doing it. For their stories, students should mind map the following elements: plot, characters and setting.

- If necessary, explain these elements.
- They should not spend too long on this step as they will be doing a fuller story mapping next.

Students should identify what age of child they think will read their book.

## **Step 2**

In the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view [The Idea](#) page.

Discuss what they have learned so far about getting an idea. What do they think is the next step?

See [Worksheet 2](#). Students should use the story web (mind map) from Step 1 to help guide them as they complete the story map on their work sheet.

## **Step 3**

In the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the [Writing](#) page.



See [Worksheet 3](#). Students should write a story that will take no more than eight pages, including illustrations, with about as much text as on a typical page in *Zoom Upstream* (about 60 words or less).

After the first draft, the students may move on to revision and editing (Step 4).

*(To see a different approach, visit the School portion of the site. Author Ginette Anfousse reverses the usual methods. She draws first, then writes.)*

#### Step 4

Students use the Revision Checklist on [Worksheet 4](#) to check the quality of their work, then edit the text using the Editing Checklist. They should find three different people (peer, teacher, other adult) to check their work using the editing checklist.

#### Step 5

On the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the [Research Characters](#) and [Backgrounds](#) pages. These can be found by clicking on [The Pictures](#) button.

To help them decide on a technique to use, students should consider:

- what **type** of illustration they will use (realistic, cartoon, collage)
- what **effect** they want their illustrations to have on the readers (make them laugh? cry? wonder?...)
- what their approach to **colour** (black and white? monochrome? multi-coloured?) will be
- how they will use **design elements** (line, texture, shape) to achieve the effect they want
- what **materials** will best achieve the effect they want (pen and ink? crayons? pastels? paint? felt pens? charcoal?).

After viewing the website together and discussing, students should be instructed in how to fill out the storyboard (read [Worksheet 5](#) with the class).



Once they have filled out the storyboard, decided what kinds of illustrations they will be creating and chosen a technique, they should research the backgrounds.

- This may involve a trip to the library. A short session on the Internet may be useful if students are familiar with Internet search engines.
- You may want to structure an activity around Internet search engines.

Help the students focus their searches by providing examples of sources for various types of information. Obtain various children's resource books before the activity.

When students have obtained the necessary information to help with their background, they should begin to make practice sketches of characters and backgrounds. Tracing paper may be useful at this time.

### **Step 6**

In the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the Characters and Backgrounds pages. These can be found by clicking on The Pictures button.

Discuss the illustrations viewed. Some suggestions to promote discussion:

#### **Mood and Emotion**

- How does the illustration make you feel?
- What is it about the illustration which makes you feel that way? (colour, shapes?)
- What can you hear in this illustration? (taste, smell, touch?)

#### **Line**

- What kinds of lines do you see? (straight, curved, angled, short, thick...?)
- Are the lines repeated? Do you see any patterns in the repetition of lines?
- Does the repetition of lines have any particular effect?

#### **Texture**

- If you could touch anything in the illustration, how would it feel? (texture)
- What is there that you would (not) like to touch?



- What do you notice about the lines used in different textures? (the way the surface might feel)

Reinforce the need for consistency in the pictures, and review some drawing tips:

- Rulers for straight lines
- Frosted Scotch tape for white lines (in pencil drawings)
- Using models and cutouts
- Using lines as guides for keeping characters the same size relative to each other
- Hard and soft pencils, where appropriate
- Smudging

Students should begin with practice sketches. When the sketches are ready, they can begin work on neat illustrations for their book.

- The neat illustrations should be done to a size that will fit the final page (i.e. less than letter-size paper).

When the illustrations have been completed for the text, students should start their front-cover illustration.

### **Step 7**

On the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the [Printing](#) pages.

Go over the steps of book design, as listed on [Worksheet 7](#).

- Type of lettering
- Front and back cover
- End papers
- Where the writing will go on the page

Show examples of various picture books with different placement of the text, different fonts, back-cover write-ups, etc.

- The storyboard completed in [Step 5](#) should serve as the guide for the design of the book.

Students will need to collect the materials required for putting their books together. Suggestions for classroom publishing are included in [Step 8](#).



### Step 8

Read through Worksheet 8 with the class.

Go over the bookmaking process as described in the Bookmaking Guide. You may choose to use other methods.

Review some of the design steps:

- Type of lettering
- Front and back cover
- End papers
- Where the writing will go on the page

### Step 9

In the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the Reviews and Awards pages (by clicking on the Afterwards button).

Read through Worksheet 9 with the class.

Method 1: Shuffle the books. Distribute them randomly to individuals or groups. Students should use Student Worksheet 9: Book Review to review the book.

Method 2: Students read their books to another group of age-appropriate readers (perhaps another class in the school). Students interview the listeners to obtain responses for Student Worksheet 9: Book Review.

### Step 10

In the *Zoom* section of the website, read and view the Selling the Book and Readers pages.

Read through Worksheet 10 with the class.

Discuss why promotion would be a very important step in book publishing, and for other products as well.

Students use the reviews that were done in the previous class. They will use the favourable comments to promote their books.

Students should use materials and styles that are similar to the styles they used in their books.





Students complete the Summary Sheet. Discuss what they learned.

**Possible Extension**

See the Extension Worksheet.

**Notes on Enriching This  
Activity**

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