art

Picture Book Illustration
Working With Narrative

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SWEET SCULPTURES

Every year, the online clothing company Threadless sponsors a cake design contest. Contestants bake cakes based on an image in the company's gallery of whimsical designs. It takes days to bake, carve, and decorate the intricate confections, which are made with unforgiving materials like fondant and buttercream icing. The artists who created these three award-winning cakes used sculptural techniques and edible materials, including food-based spray paints and powdered food colorings. They captured even the smallest details, from the delicate texture of a cat's fur (left) to the owl's shining eyes (center). These cakes look like they belong behind glass in a museum, rather than on a baker's counter.

Repurposed books become an artist's canvas.

Mike Stilkey, *The Fantastic Five*, 2011, acrylic on discarded books.

By the Book

American artist Mike Stilkey uses books discarded by libraries to create his unusual artworks. He stacks the hardcover books and paints directly on their spines. Working with ink, paint, colored pencil, and lacquer, he creates lighthearted paintings of humans and animals alike. Stilkey invents most of the characters in his paintings, like the horse and bear—both musicians—in the two works above. The artist recognizes that by painting directly on used books, he introduces multiple layers to his work. Stilkey explains, "I'm putting my story on someone else's story, and the book itself has a story—where it's been, who's read it."

These award-winning cakes are entirely edible.

Cranky Creature

How did the artist incorporate this sculpture into the landscape of a city square?

Ervin Hervé-Lóránth, *Feltépve*. Photograph by Balkányi László.

What happens when you wake a sleeping giant? It probably looks as friendly as this colossal sculpture by Hungarian artist Ervin Hervé-Lóránth (UR-vin ER-vai lor-ANTH). Titled *Feltépve*, meaning "ripped up," the larger-than-life figure appears to be emerging from deep within the earth. Hervé-Lóránth created this monumental art installation, displayed in a public square, for a citywide art fair in Hungary's capital, Budapest.

Made of polystyrene, a strong, lightweight plastic, the outdoor sculpture fits right into the landscape. Grass extends across the grimacing giant's arms and shoulders, and the gray surface of the sculpture echoes the color of the historic stone building in the background.
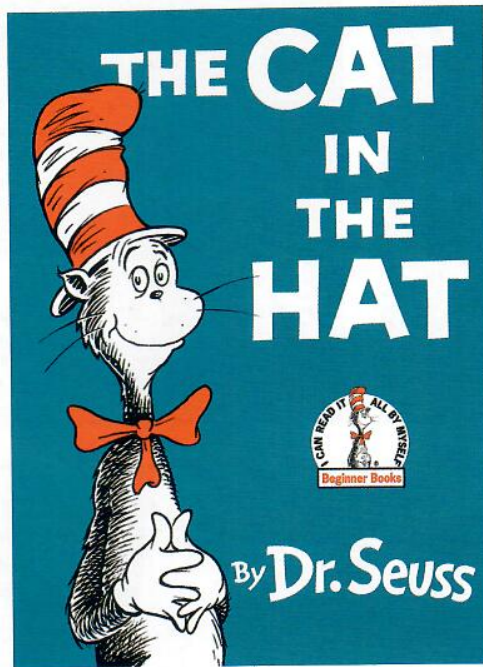
"My goal was to show people that pieces of contemporary art can be integral parts of a city," the artist explained.

The Art of Illustration

Children's book illustrators use vivid images to bring stories to life

How does Dr. Seuss use line to show the cat's personality?

TM & copyright © by Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P. 2015.

What technique does Keats use to make this scene look familiar?

© Ezra Jack Keats

How often did you read Dr. Seuss's *The Cat in the Hat* when you were growing up? Can you describe all of the cat's crazy antics? Or do you remember the pictures more clearly than the story? Whether you read books like Seuss's classic with a family member, a teacher, or under the covers with a flashlight, books from your childhood probably hold a special place in your heart.

Picture books are an important part of growing up. Images help young children learn letters, colors, shapes, and animals. As we get older, stories and illustrations teach us important lessons about morals and values while opening up our imaginations.

What Is an Illustration?

An **illustration** is an image that "illustrates," or supports, an idea or event. Illustrators work in many different types of **media**, from drawing, painting, and pastels to collage, photography, and digital art. Different artistic styles also aid in telling stories.

Maurice Sendak takes a traditional approach to illustrate the fantasy adventure of a boy named Max, who visits an island inhabited by wild creatures. The images in Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*, right, are graphic **line drawings** accented with rich colors.

Ezra Jack Keats's *The Snowy Day*, left, tells the story of a young boy named Peter who explores his neighborhood on a winter day. To show the snowy weather, Keats uses a **collage** technique. By layering cut paper, Keats creates a **simplified** yet recognizable cityscape that feels familiar from the first page.

Telling Stories With Pictures

The illustrations in picture books usually contain the same visual elements as art that hangs on museum walls, such as line, shape, and color. But there are three narrative elements that turn a group of images into a clear, cohesive story: **character**, **setting**, and **mood**.

Characters drive the story. **Details** help an artist show a character's personality. Dr. Seuss demonstrates that his Cat in the Hat isn't your everyday feline by **exaggerating** his features. The cat's eyebrows arch high above his wide, round eyes, practically touching his tall, goofy hat. A thin line stretching across the cat's face represents a mischievous smile. One glance shows readers that this cat is friendly but not very trustworthy.

A story's setting provides the reader with a glimpse into the character's world. Sendak uses a choppy sea and a vast sky to show readers that *Wild Things* takes place in an unknown land far away, and the snowy street and traffic light in Keats's illustration form a scene that takes place much closer to home.

A story's mood might be playful, scary, or funny. The bright colors and **mixed media** of *The Snowy Day* demonstrate that the story is lighthearted and playful, whereas the heavy lines and muted colors of *Wild Things* create an ominous, scary mood.

Seuss, Keats, and Sendak use different media and techniques. But their individual styles allow them to share their stories in ways that ignite children's imaginations and remain meaningful for adults.

How does Sendak set the mood for this story?

Max's expression and large size compared with the boat make him more intimidating than the monsters he faces.

The night sky, dark sea, and grassy shore establish the setting of the story.

Sendak uses dark shadows and heavy lines to set the mood.

Despite their large claws and horns, the wild things' smiles make them seem more friendly than fierce.

Eric Carle poses with one of his most famous characters, the very hungry caterpillar.

Q&A With Eric Carle

The author/illustrator of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* spoke with *Scholastic Art*

How did Eric Carle create the caterpillar?

The Very Hungry Caterpillar, by Eric Carle. ©1969 and 1987 by Eric Carle. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

SCHOLASTIC ART: Where did you get the idea for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*?
ERIC CARLE: It all started innocently, with a hole puncher. I was punching holes into a stack of paper, and I thought of a bookworm, so I created a story called, "A Week With Willi the Worm." Then, later, my editor, who didn't like the idea of a worm, suggested a caterpillar, and I said, "Butterfly!" And the rest is history.

**SA: What is the message of the book? What do kids take away from it?**
EC: Well, I think it is a story of hope. The story says you too, little caterpillar, can grow up and spread your wings and fly into the wide world. And I think this is what has struck a chord with so many readers. If there's a sense of hope that readers take away from my book, I am very happy.

SA: When you were a kid, did your teachers encourage your art?
EC: There have been many "door openers" in my life, including one of the most influential and important people, my first-grade teacher in Syracuse, New York—Miss Frickey. Miss Frickey encouraged my creative interests at that early age and impressed upon my parents that they must nurture and encourage my talents as a visual person, which they did. Later [in high school in Nazi Germany], my teacher Herr Krauss, at great personal risk, secretly showed me reproductions of paintings of modern and expressionistic art. It was art unlike anything I had been exposed to before. This experience at first shocked me, and I found it unsettling. But in the end, this experience changed my view of art, though I didn't know it at the time.

**SA: How does your work as a graphic designer influence your illustrations?**
EC: I still think of myself as a designer, and the training I had in design still influences my work today. One of my first jobs out of art school was designing posters for the Amerika Haus in Germany. I am still proud of the designs for posters I created back then.
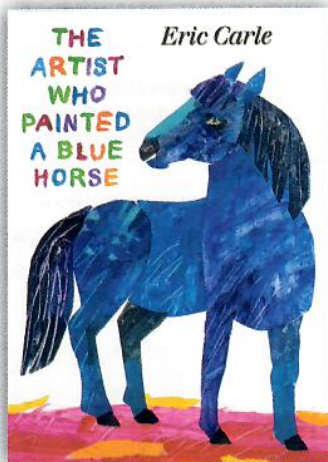
Why does Eric Carle think of his book covers as miniature posters?

To this day, I think of my illustrations, especially my book covers, as little posters that capture the reader's attention with big, bold shapes. My aim with my illustrations, as it was when I was doing design work, is to simplify and refine, be logical and harmonious. And I tend to use simple shapes, bright colors, and a lot of white space. I am always thinking about how to make each book unique, pushing the limits of paper. What will be the detail that will make it special, that will add an element of surprise to the book? It may be lights or sound or die-cut pages that will capture the imagination of the readers.
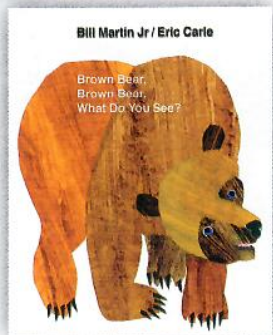
SA: What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?

EC: Professor Schneidler, under whom I studied graphic design in Germany, instilled in me the principles of design that remain true for my work today. Simplify and refine, be logical and harmonious.

SA: What's next for you?

EC: After every book is finished and I've sent it off to the publisher, I have this empty feeling and I think I am done. But then I get another idea. Even though I am retired, there is often a project that I am thinking about.

Eric Carle Creates Collages

1. Paint To make his collage illustrations, Eric Carle begins by painting tissue paper with watered-down acrylics. He paints a solid color, then adds layers of other colors, which creates interesting textures.

2. Sketch and Cut The artist draws the outlines of a character on tracing paper. He places the tracing paper on top of a sheet of painted tissue paper. Using a blade, he cuts through both papers, following the outlines.

3. Glue Then Eric Carle glues the painted shape onto a sheet of white illustration board. He repeats this process, selecting different-colored sheets of painted tissue paper for each of the shapes in the scene.

4. Finish Once all of the shapes are glued into place, Eric Carle uses crayons or colored pencils to add details like the tiny hairs on the caterpillar's back.

The Moody Artist

Learn how illustrations set the tone in children's books

Before you begin reading a book, the images help you understand the story's mood. The artist carefully uses the colors, the setting, and the characters' **gestures** to develop the mood. The visual style provides clues about the characters. And each detail in the illustrations helps you, the reader, immerse yourself in the world of the story.

A Majestic Duet ▶

Flora and the Flamingo, by Molly Idle, is a tale of unlikely dance partners: a little girl and a flamingo. Idle sets the mood by **juxtaposing**, or placing side-by-side, very different characters in similar poses. By showing the two figures mirroring each other, the artist develops a relationship between them. "I tried to combine the natural poses of a flamingo, with a little girl's body language, and a bit of ballet," Idle tells *Scholastic Art*. The book's limited color scheme against the white background adds visual lightness. "I love to work with limited color palettes," Idle explains. "So I chose to limit my colors to a plethora of pinks and just a smidgen of yellow." Idle's elegant, sweeping lines show the figures' serious execution of each movement.

SKETCHBOOK STARTER

Make a drawing of your favorite animal. Use color, line, and point of view to make the scene elegant, playful, or surreal.

What is surreal about this illustration?

How does Idle juxtapose these two characters?

A Pup With Personality ▼

David Shannon creates a silly mood in his book *Good Boy, Fergus!* by giving an unruly pet human characteristics. Based on the artist's real dog, Fergus has a loveable grin and expressive eyebrows that would seem more fitting for a human than a dog. This **personification** shows readers that the story has a playful mood. Shannon uses a simplified style to render Fergus. The loose, sketchy **outlines** and bright-yellow background emphasize the idea that this story is light and fun.

How does the personification of Fergus help readers understand the mood in this story?

From *Good Boy, Fergus!* by David Shannon. Scholastic Inc./ The Blue Sky Press. © 2006 by David Shannon. Reproduced by permission.


◀ Airborne Amphibians

At first, the frogs in David Wiesner's book *Tuesday* look ordinary. But closer inspection shows that the artist places them in extraordinary situations. Wiesner bends reality by showing **hyperrealistic**—extremely lifelike—illustrations of frogs defying the laws of gravity on flying lily pads. This juxtaposition of realism and fantasy creates a dreamy mood. In the scene shown here, Wiesner places the reader in the air alongside the floating frogs, as if he or she is also a passenger on an aerial lily pad. Wiesner uses the unusual **point of view** to emphasize the **surreal**, or strange and irrational, plot of the story.

5 Things to Know About Creating Kids' Books

Hi, I'm William Wegman. I'm a photographer, painter, and video artist, but I'm perhaps best known for my photographs of my dogs. I've published more than 20 books for kids featuring my dogs, including my latest series, Flo & Wendell. These are my top-five tips for illustrating children's books.
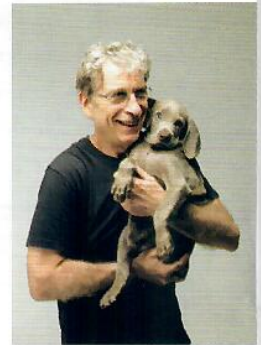
Watch a Video!
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1 DEVELOP A CHARACTER

In my current style of working, I use photographs of my dogs Flo and Topper taken when they were 8-week-old puppies. I paint around the photos to create the characters' costumes and environment. Flo always wears a pink blouse, a turquoise skirt, striped socks, and black shoes. This scheme defines her character as bold and confident. Wendell's garb is a mustard yellow sweater and purple-brown cutoff pants, and was designed to create the younger brother look. I could see that even as a young puppy, Flo was bossy and thoughtful. Wendell is more deadpan. These two contrasting characters anchor the story.

2 ESTABLISH A PLACE

After I develop the characters, I begin to wonder what their environment would be like. Where do these characters live? What is Flo's room like? How about their family's car? I add details to the background that give you clues about who the characters are and what their lives are like. If you carefully study the illustration to the right, you can discover where Flo and Wendell went on their last family vacation.

Photographs by William Wegman.

3 THINK UP A STORY ▶

Stories are fun to play around with. The variations are endless. If you can't think of a story, ask your uncle, if you have one. I'm sure he will help you. Or get your hair cut. Barbers always have stories. The point is to just get started. Once you start, keep going. Sometimes I wander very far from the original plan. I like to pin all of my illustrations on the wall and add Post-its for narrative text. That way I can move things around and change them until I've got the story exactly how I want it.

4 ASK FOR HELP

Since I am mostly a visual artist, not a writer, I tend to wander all over the place with my story. That's where my friends and relatives and editors come in. They help me map out my ideas when I'm feeling stuck.

5 DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE MISTAKES ▶

A lot of my ideas come from silly mistakes. Sometimes the boat wanders off course and capsizes. That can be a good thing. Sudden changes of direction can be thrilling.

Monkey See, Monkey Do

## Why did this monkey's smiling "selfie" spark a copyright controversy?

Meet a real-life Curious George. In 2011, British nature photographer David Slater went to Indonesia to photograph crested black macaques, a species of endangered primates. During the photo shoot, Slater allowed the monkeys to play with his camera. They snapped hundreds of photos. Most of the shots were blurry, but one of the mischievous monkeys snapped the smiling self-portrait on the right.

Photographers like Slater usually have the copyright for their photos. This means that magazines, newspapers, and websites must pay for the right to use them. But Wikimedia Commons, a website where people can download images and videos for free, added the monkey's selfie to its collection.

Slater asked Wikimedia to remove the photo, arguing that he owns the image and should be paid if it's published. Wikimedia replied that since the monkey triggered the shutter, the copyright doesn't belong to Slater. It is in the public domain, or free for anyone to use.

The U.S. Copyright Office seems to side with Wikimedia. It revised its guidelines to state that the office will issue a copyright only if "the work was created by a human being." The new guidelines continue: "The Office will not register works produced by nature, animals, or plants."

Slater believes that these guidelines don't apply in his case. "A monkey pressed the button, but I did all the setting up," Slater told a British newspaper. Slater
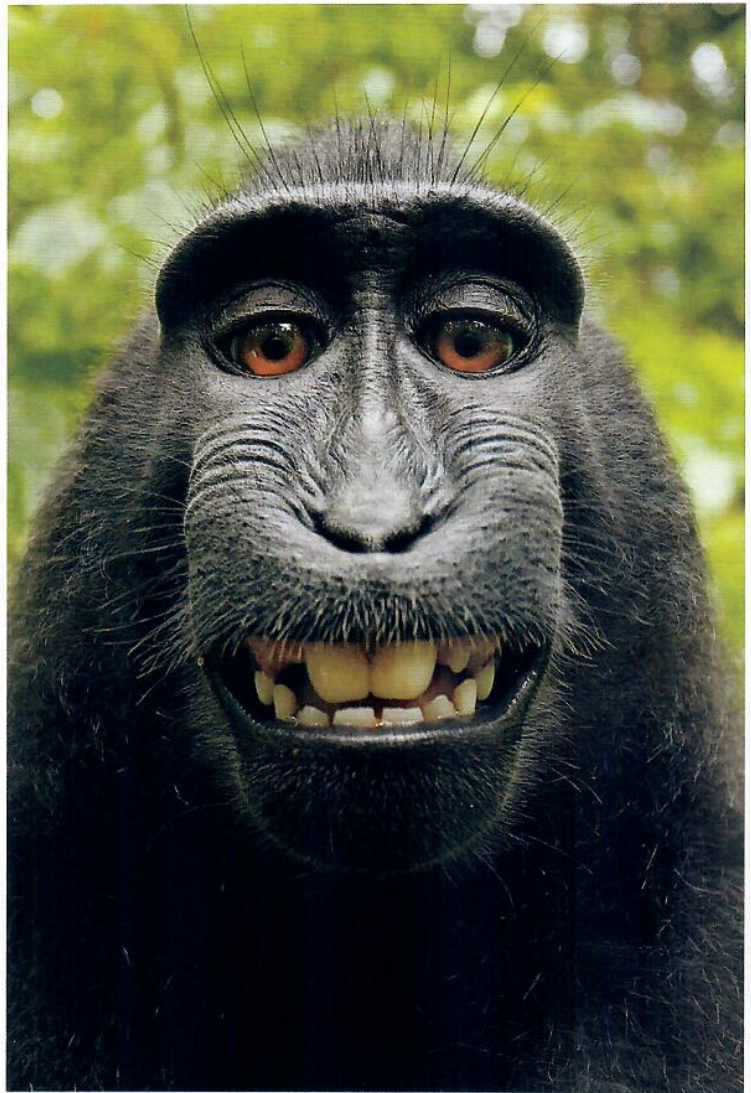
brought the equipment into the jungle and edited the photo after it was taken. Besides, he says, wildlife photographers often use motion-sensor cameras. When an animal moves into the frame, the camera takes a picture, even if the photographer isn't nearby. In these cases, the photographer does have a legal claim to the copyright.

What do you think? Should the copyright for the image belong to Slater?

When a monkey snaps a selfie, who owns the copyright?

Tell us what you think! scholastic.com/art

Self-portrait by the depicted *Macaca nigra* female.

CRAFT AN ARGUMENT

1. Why does Slater believe he should own the copyright to the image?
2. Why does Wikimedia say that the image should be available for free?
3. Do you think the copyright for the image should belong to Slater? Why or why not?

Snow Story

This artist reimagines his life through his art

For Louis McCorgi Lee, art is an outlet. "Not only is it a way to tell the stories I've imagined," says Louis, 17, "it's also a way to work through my feelings when they become overwhelming." His works, including this award-winning digital painting, tell intensely personal stories. A senior at Cypress Ranch High School in Cypress, Texas, Louis hopes to one day work in film or TV animation.

When did you first get serious about art? I've always loved watching cartoons. I'd draw SpongeBob and the Powerpuff Girls as a child. By eighth grade, I was sketching constantly. That's when I realized I wanted to make a living creating art.

What inspired this award-winning work? It just evolved. I drew two figures: an older person and a younger one. I wanted to show that they felt safe together, so I added the shared scarf. I'm the oldest child in my family and have missed not having an older sibling to lean on. Eventually, I realized I had drawn myself as the younger child.

Is this work part of a larger story? Yes, it's like a journal or diary entry. It's a visual picture of my journey, growing up and trying to navigate my way through maturity.

How did you create this piece? First, I did a rough pencil sketch of the composition and scanned it into my computer. Next, I picked out a color scheme. In Photoshop, I started to paint over the pencil sketch, filling in the shapes. After everything was colored, I scanned in a separate piece of paper with lots of crinkles and folds in it. I made that image transparent and then laid the crinkled texture over the painting to add dimension.

Why are the colors in this image important? Colors can set the mood and enhance the story. Despite the snow, I wanted to show the warmth the two figures feel for each other, so I chose warm cream, tan, and orange tones.

Do you have advice for aspiring artists like yourself? Force yourself to step outside your comfort zone. You'll grow as an artist and reach your potential.

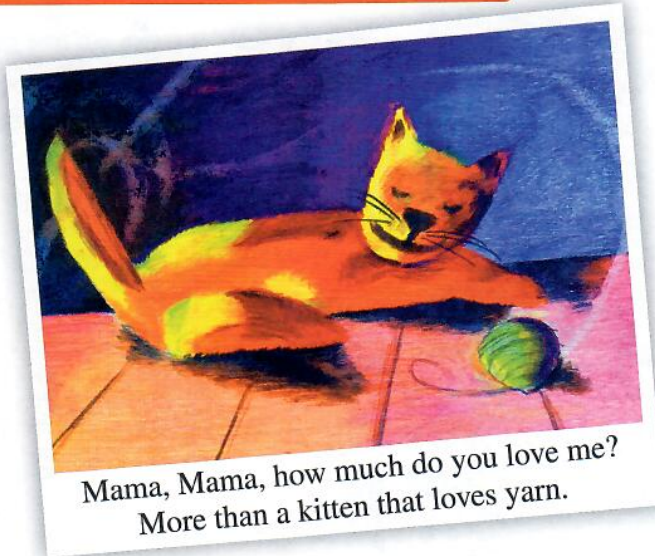How did Louis develop the characters in this illustration?

↘ **Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**

Louis won a Gold Medal in digital art in the 2014 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. To find out more about this program, visit artandwriting.org.

Louis McCorgi Lee

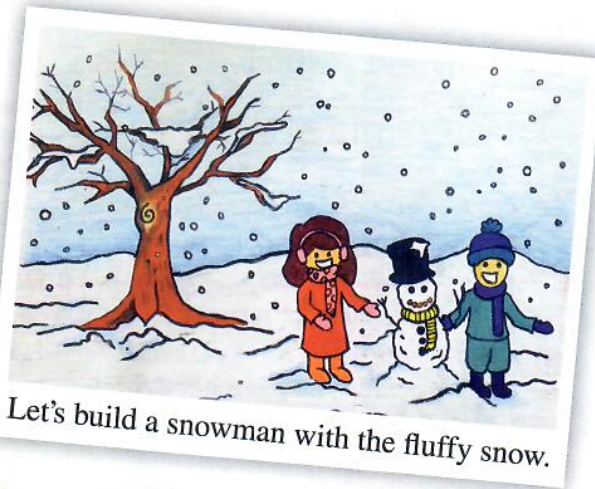The student who made this illustration blended the colors to set the mood.
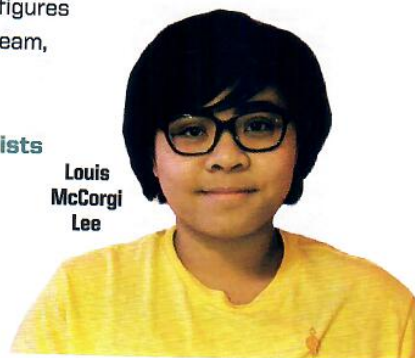
Mama, Mama, how much do you love me?
More than a kitten that loves yarn.

Write your story and sketch the three most important scenes.

The student who made this image began with a line drawing.

Let's build a snowman with the fluffy snow.

Watch a Video!
scholastic.com/art

Illustrate a Story

Use what you've learned to develop and illustrate your own narrative

You've seen how artists like Eric Carle and Maurice Sendak develop children's books. Now it's your turn to write a story, create characters, and use pictures to bring three key scenes to life.

MATERIALS
- lined notebook paper
- graphite pencils
- sketch paper
- colored pencils
- heavyweight drawing paper
- kneaded eraser
- digital camera
- computer
- Adobe Photoshop
- printer
- heavyweight printer paper

STEP 1 **Develop Your Story**

Begin by writing your story. Remember to keep your audience in mind. Are the children who will read your book just learning to read? If so, the story should be simple, with short sentences. If your story is for older children, the story and sentences can be more complex. Identify the three most important events in the narrative. Using graphite pencils, make thumbnail sketches of these three scenes. As you arrange your compositions, remember to think about the story's setting and mood. Show the character's emotions by exaggerating his or her facial features or gestures. When you are happy with your black-and-white pencil sketches, add color using colored pencils.

TIP: Don't rely too heavily on the text. Show, don't tell!
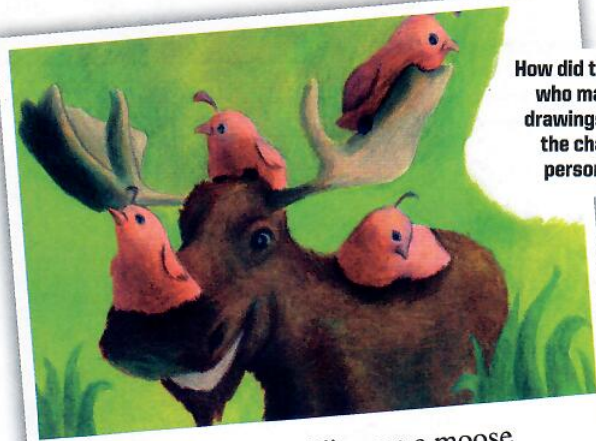
4 pink quails riding on a moose

How did the students who made these drawings illustrate the characters' personalities?

Bucket went over to his favorite well and watched the new colors appear!

Create more-detailed final drawings using colored pencils.

STEP 2 — Draw Three Key Events

When your sketches are complete, begin your final drawings on heavyweight paper. Lightly sketch your compositions, re-creating each preliminary sketch with greater detail. The illustration style should be appropriate for both the story and the reader. The illustrations for a serious story shouldn't look silly, and vice versa. Ask yourself whether your drawings should be smooth and controlled or loose and energetic. Once you've loosely sketched your compositions, begin working with colored pencils. Select a color scheme that supports your story's mood. Are the scenes you are illustrating scary, happy, or sad? Use a kneaded eraser to eliminate any smudges or unwanted lines.

TIP: The setting, characters, and mood should all support one another.

Edit your drawings and add text using *Photoshop* or another photo-editing program.

STEP 3 — Edit Your Work

When your drawings are finished, work with your classmates to photograph your drawings with a digital camera. Then import your photos into a computer. Use Adobe Photoshop or another photo-editing program to edit your work. Use the clone tool to correct imperfections and the color balance tool to adjust any color/value abnormalities. Using the type tool, add text to accompany each of your drawings. Experiment with several different typefaces before deciding which is most appropriate for your story. You can also try different font sizes and colors. Lastly, print your drawings on heavy card stock. Make sure the print settings are set to "fine" or "advanced" to get the highest-quality print possible.

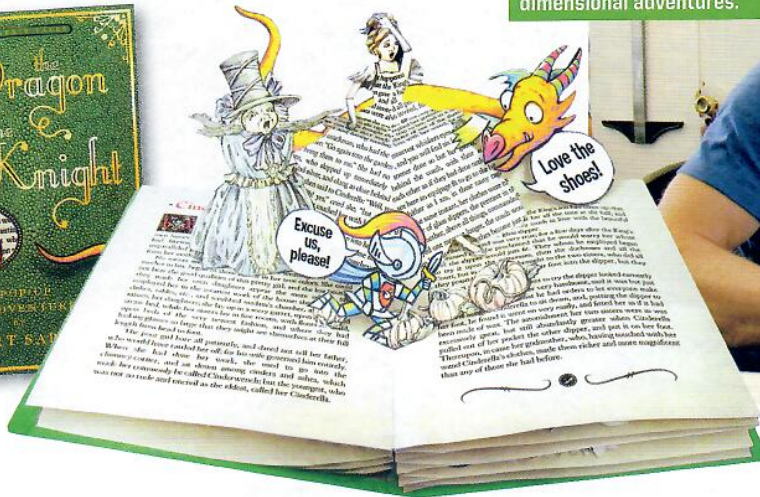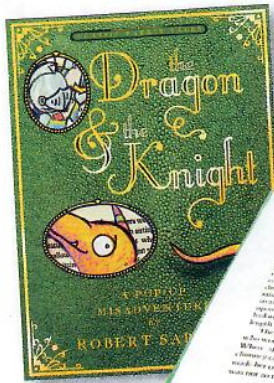**TIP:** If you're having fun, don't stop. Illustrate the rest of your story!

A great champion deserves a good night's sleep. It helps you build up your energy and concentration every day.

What is the relationship between the image and the text in this illustration?

Robert Sabuda transforms white paper into three-dimensional adventures.

Excuse us, please!

Love the shoes!

Pop-Up Perfectionist

Robert Sabuda talks about creating pop-up books

SCHOLASTIC ART: What is your job?
ROBERT SABUDA: I am a children's book illustrator and pop-up book designer.

SA: How do you make a pop-up book?
RS: I always write the story first. Then I think about the book visually—almost like I'm watching a movie. I visualize what will happen with each turn of the page. Will it be a big moment—like a car chase in a movie—or a quiet moment? After planning the book, I start making the pop-ups.

SA: How do you make the pop-ups?
RS: I cut hard stock paper and fold and glue the pieces, building the scenes so that they will pop up when the page is turned. I start with a rough version of it to get the mechanics down. Then I make a more finished version.

SA: Then do you illustrate them?
RS: Not yet! After all the pop-ups are refined and working properly, I take them apart and flatten them. They look like pop-up roadkill! I scan all the pieces into the computer to make patterns so

the manufacturer can make hundreds of thousands of copies of the book. Then I print out new copies of the pieces and illustrate them all by hand. These are also scanned and sent to the manufacturer.

SA: How did you first learn to make pop-up books?
RS: I taught myself by taking apart a few pop-up books. I felt guilty about it, but I wanted to understand how the different bends and angles made things move. Then I started experimenting. There was a lot of trial and error.

SA: What is most challenging about making a pop-up book?
RS: When someone is working on a traditional 2-D book, they can illustrate anything they want. But I have limitations because my pop-ups have to flatten when the book is closed. Sometimes, I'll try something that doesn't work, and I have to keep reworking it to get it to fold and open the right way. But the most challenging scenes to design end up being my favorites.

CAREER PROFILE
ILLUSTRATOR

SALARY: Children's book illustrators earn between $46,000 and $100,000 per year, depending on location and experience.

EDUCATION: Many illustrators have a bachelor of arts degree (B.A.) or a bachelor of fine arts degree (B.F.A.).

GETTING STARTED:
▶ Read a lot of children's books. Think about what the illustrator emphasizes, why, and how.

▶ Jot down story ideas. Think about what elements of your story should pop up.

▶ Draw in your sketchbook every day to develop your own style as an illustrator.

From left: Courtesy of Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, from *The Dragon and the Knight* by Robert Sabuda; Robert Sabuda Studio.