

# SUSIE AND THE STORY SHREDDER

Classroom Activity Pack



## **Introduction**

*Susie and the Story Shredder* is a new play for children by Bombinate Theatre. Bombinate means to make a humming or a buzzing sound. The company aims to encourage children to make noise, to ask big questions and to stay on their own *buzz*.

*Susie and the Story Shredder* is set in The Kingdom of Levitas. Levitas is ruled by a selfish king named Levi. One day, Levi sits down to write a story but can't think of anything to write. Levi is embarrassed by this. He does not want anyone to find out his secret, so he decides to spread a rumour that stories are dangerous, and bans them from the kingdom.

Susie works for the king as a Story Destroyer. She spends her days shredding all kinds of stories. Susie has built a robot, Shredder, to help her with this job. Susie can't help being creative - she makes figurines out of shredded paper, and creates new inventions every day!

At the beginning of the play, Susie thinks that stories are dangerous. She believes that by destroying stories, she is protecting children. But when Susie reads a story for the first time, she discovers how wonderful stories are and decides to save them.

The play is a celebration of creativity.

## **About the Classroom Pack**

This pack has been designed to support teachers in the delivery of the Drama and English curricula in the classroom, with reference to the themes explored in *Susie and the Story Shredder*.

It is intended that this pack will extend and deepen the impact of pupils' understanding of *Susie and the Story Shredder*, and of drama in general. Pupils will be encouraged to respond to the play through drama exercises as well as creative writing.

The activities address the principal strand of the Drama curriculum, 'drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding,' in addition to the strand in the English curriculum, 'Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write.'

The pack is laid out in 4 sections:

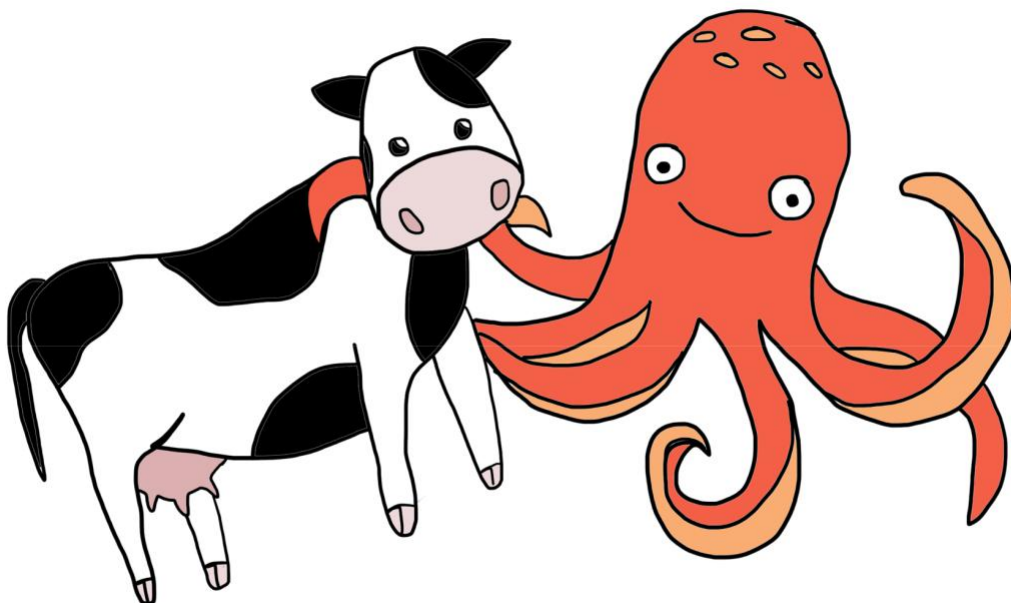
- Section 1: Drama Activities
- Section 2: English Activities
- Section 3: Bonus Science Activity
- Section 4: Appendix

Section 1 focuses on the Drama curriculum in particular, while Section 2 focuses on English. However, activities in both sections are cross-curricular and contain elements of both subjects as well as other subjects.

Section 3 contains a bonus activity inspired by the Science curriculum.

Section 4 contains an appendix and worksheets related to activities in Section 2.

Pupils will have the opportunity to personally engage with *Susie and the Story Shredder* through the various activities. Teachers might choose to focus on one section, or incorporate activities from a number of sections. While it is helpful to have seen *Susie and the Story Shredder*, many of the activities in the pack can be used even without seeing the play.



## Section 1: Drama Activities

This section of the Classroom Pack has a strong focus on activities which address the Drama curriculum. Many of the activities focus on storytelling and therefore address creative writing in the English curriculum, in addition to Drama. (Relevant English strands and strand units addressed in Section 2).

Activity 1 is best suited to groups who have recently seen *Susie and the Story Shredder*. Activities 2-5 can be used whether you attend a performance of *Susie and the Story Shredder* or not.

Activity 1 can be used in the classroom. Activities 2- 5 are better suited to larger open spaces such as a school hall. However, these can also be adapted to a classroom setting. For best results, clear any tables and chairs to the sides of the room to make an open space.

The following strands and strand units are found in the Drama curriculum for 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Class.

SUBJECT	STRAND	STRAND UNIT	The child should be enabled to...
DRAMA	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	Exploring and making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in drama</li> <li>use his/her emerging awareness of the differences in people in order to begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between role and character</li> <li>experience how context is built and a drama reality created through the use of space and objects</li> <li>discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying dramatic themes (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> only)</li> </ul>
DRAMA	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to	Reflecting on drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>share insights while experiencing the drama or insights that arise out of the drama</li> </ul>



	understanding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> </ul>
DRAMA	Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	Co-operating and communicating in making drama.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop, out of role/in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama</li> <li>develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made</li> <li>enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work. (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> only)</li> </ul>

This section also incorporates elements of the SPHE curriculum.

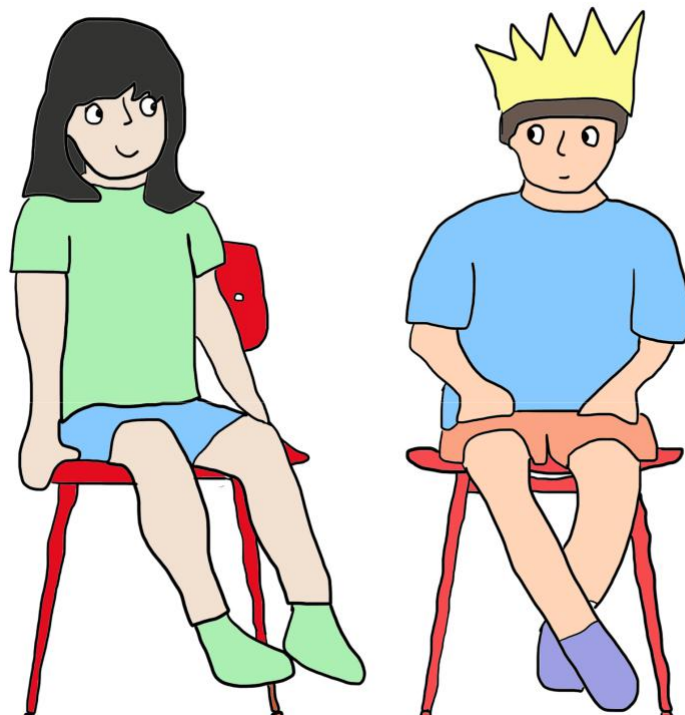
SUBJECT	STRAND	STRAND UNIT	The child should be enabled to...
SPHE	Myself	Growing and Changing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>name and identify a wide range of feelings and talk about and explore feelings in different situations</li> <li>explore how feelings can influence one's life (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> only)</li> </ul>
SPHE	Myself and Others	Relating to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listen carefully and reflectively to others (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> only)</li> </ul>

## Activity 1: Hot Seat

In the following exercise, two volunteers sit in front of the class and act as Susie and King Levi.

Instructions:

1. Tell the class you are going to find out more about Susie and Levi.
2. Ask for 2 volunteers.
3. Put out 2 chairs in front of the class, and ask the volunteers to sit.
4. These pupils will perform 'in role' as Susie and Levi. This is a make believe exercise. There are no right or wrong answers!
5. You can begin by asking Susie and Levi questions. After a few examples, open this up to the class so that they can ask Susie and Levi questions. The teacher and the other pupils in the class must ask questions as themselves (not in role).
6. Here are some examples of questions you/the students might ask:
  - How did you feel about stories at the beginning of the play?
  - How do you feel about them now?
  - What was Levitas like before? What is it like now?
  - Levi, why did you spread rumours about stories?
  - Susie, how did you feel when your new invention did not work at the Story Destroyer meeting?
  - Susie, how did you feel when you read a story for the first time?
  - Levi, how did you feel when Susie said that she had read a story?
  - Susie, how did you feel when the everyone helped you write a story?
  - What would you like to do now that stories are back in the Kingdom?
7. Thank the volunteers and give them a round of applause.
8. You can repeat this with other pupils volunteering as Susie and Levi, or you could introduce Simon and Shredder for the next round.



## Activity 2: Catch a Story

In the following exercise, the class comes up with a new story together. You will need a soft ball for this activity.

Instructions:

1. Ask the group to get in a circle.
2. Ask them to come up with an animal, a colour and a location e.g. The yellow elephant at the cinema.
3. Hold the ball. Say the first line of the story e.g. 'There once was a yellow elephant who went to the cinema.'
4. Explain that each person will give one line of the story and then throw the ball.
5. Throw the ball to a student. Ask the person who has the ball to say the next line of the story. Ask them to throw the ball.
6. Make sure everyone gets a chance to say a line
7. After a minute or two, ask the group to find an ending to their story.
8. Ask someone else in the group to begin a new story.

This activity is best suited to an open space where students can stand/sit in a circle. If this is not possible, the exercise can be adapted with students sitting in their chairs, and the teacher can call someone's name to ask for the next line in the story.



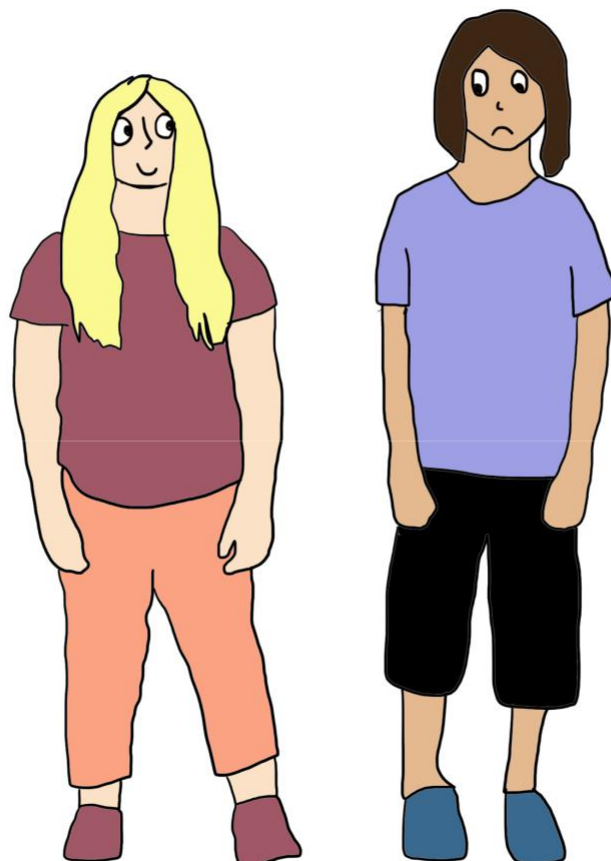
### Activity 3: Fortunately, Unfortunately

In the exercise below, students come up with a new story. The first line in each sentence must begin with 'fortunately' or 'unfortunately' alternating each time.

Instructions:

1. Ask the group to stand in a circle. Say the first line of the story. (e.g. *There once lived a princess who had a heart made of glass... There once was an old man who was obsessed with shoes*).
2. Tell the group the next line must begin 'Fortunately...' Ask the person next to you in the circle to give the next line of the story.
3. Tell the group that the next line of the story must begin 'Unfortunately...'  
Ask the next person in the circle to give the next line of the story.
4. Tell the group that each line of the story will alternate between 'Fortunately...', 'Unfortunately...' and so forth.
5. Allow the story to continue around the circle.
6. After a couple of minutes, ask the group to find an ending.
7. Ask the group to recount the story.

For a variation in this exercise, you could add the rule that students have to perform a certain facial expression as they say 'fortunately'/'unfortunately.' You should practice both facial expressions as a group before beginning the story.



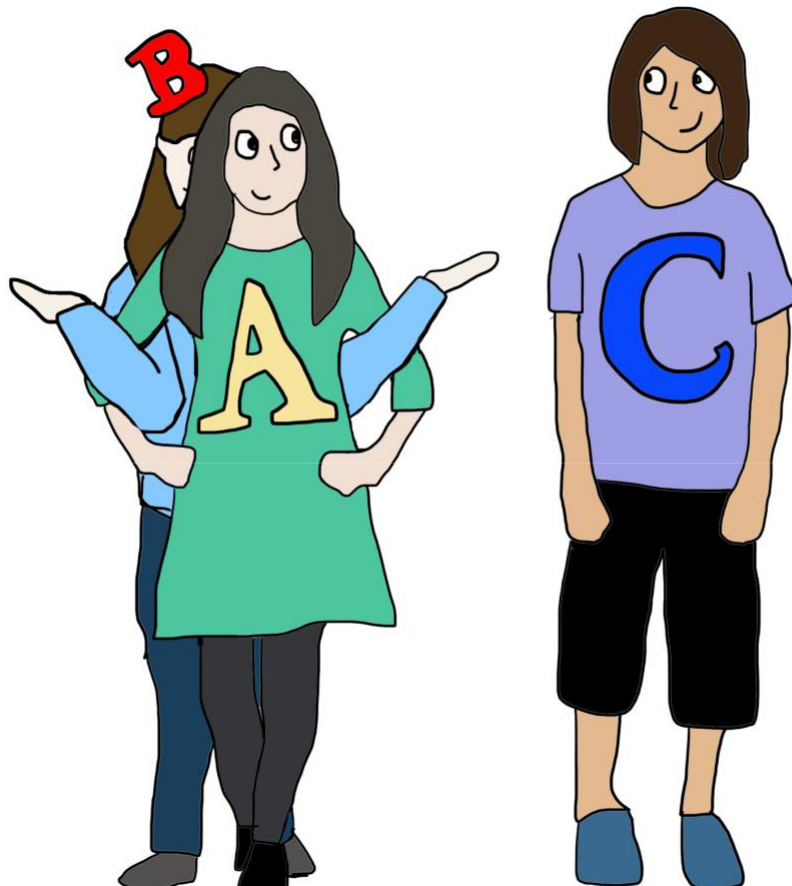


## Activity 4: Arms Through

This exercise introduces the idea of narration. It works well as a follow-on exercise from the two previous activities. In Activities 2 and 3, the class told a story together taking turns. This time each child will have a chance to come up with a new story on their own, inspired by the movement and facial expression of the other two people in their group.

Instructions:

1. If you have seen *Susie and the Story Shredder*, you could begin this exercise with a class discussion on narration and how this is used in plays/storytelling.
2. Next, ask the group to get into groups of 3.
3. Ask the members of each group to label themselves A, B and C.
4. Ask A to put their hands on their hips. Ask B to stand behind A and put their arms through A's arms (as seen in the picture below). Ask C to stand next to the pair.
5. As B begins to move arms for A, C narrates a story to suit these actions created. For example, 'I yawned and stretched my arms. I must have been very tired'.
6. After a few minutes, ask the group to swap over.
7. Make sure each person gets a turn at each role.
8. For advanced classes, ask for a group to volunteer to perform their story in front of the class.



## Activity 5: New Inventions

In *Susie and the Story Shredder*, Susie can't help but be creative! She makes new inventions and uses shredded paper to make animal figurines. Susie often recycles old materials to make something new. In this exercise students will make their very own new invention out of an ordinary everyday appliance.

Instructions:

1. Divide the class so that there are 3-4 people in each group.
2. Give each group the name of a different everyday appliance. For example a hairdryer, a washing machine, a toaster, a school bag, a diary, a kettle, a vacuum cleaner.
3. Each group has to come up with a new invention using this object. Encourage them to think big – a hairdryer that turns your hair new colours, a toaster that helps you time travel for example.
4. Once each group has come up with the new invention, tell them they have to come up with an advertisement for the invention.
5. Give the class time to rehearse.
6. Each group will perform their advertisement in front of the class.
7. Make sure to get the class to applaud each group.

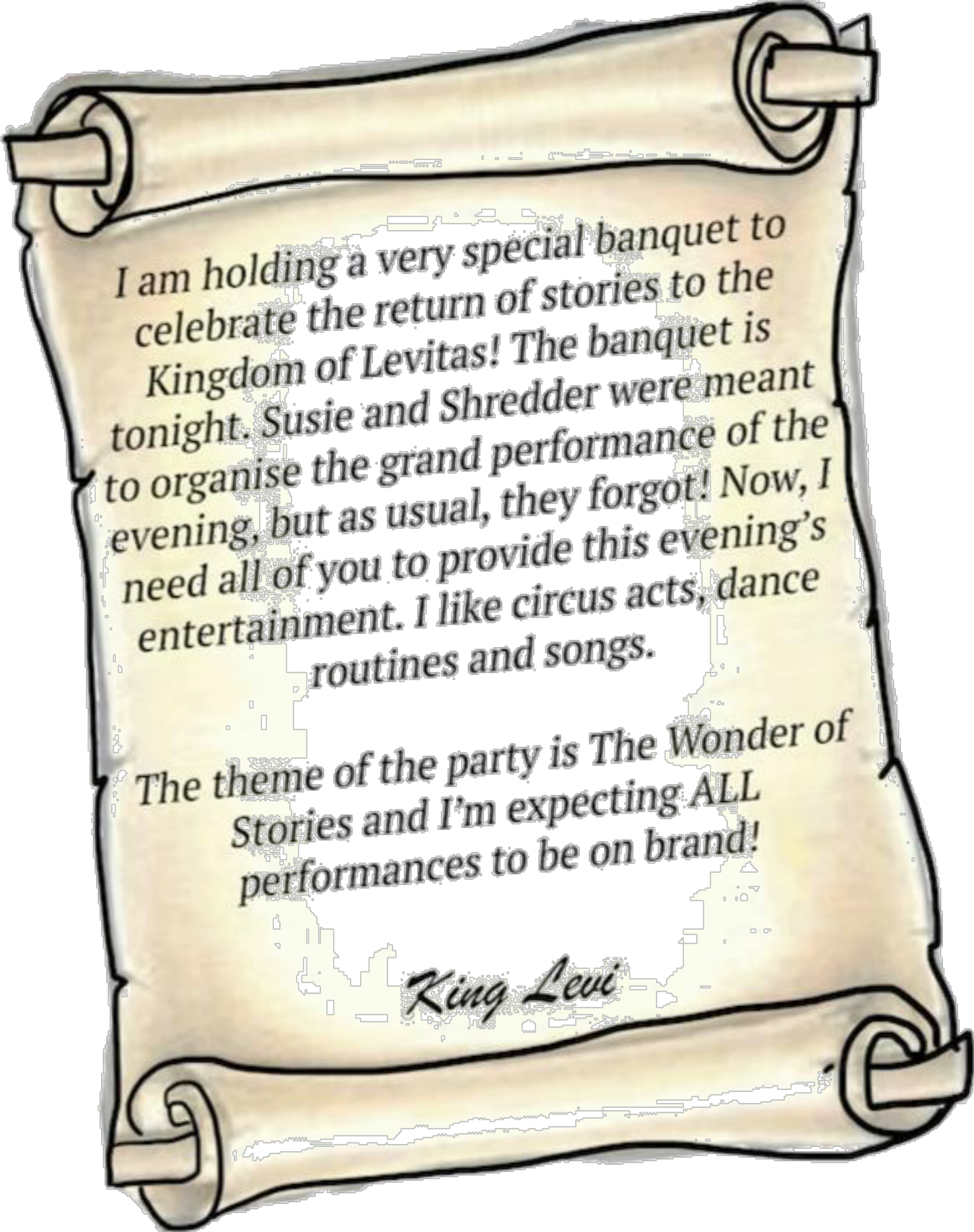


## Activity 6: A Performance for King Levi

You will need: A simple crown made out of card, or fabric to use as a cloak. You can use this to perform 'in role' as King Levi.

Instructions:

1. Tell the group that when you put on your crown/cloak you are performing as King Levi.
2. Put on your crown/cloak. There is an invite on the next page. Read this to the class.
3. Take off your crown/cloak to show that you are no longer performing 'in role' as King Levi.
4. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 people.
5. Tell them that each group is to come up with a performance for King Levi's banquet and that the theme is *The Wonder of Stories*.
6. Allow the class time to come up with their act. This should take 5-10 mins. It may take longer depending on the group.
7. Make sure to check in with each group as they are preparing their act (out of role).
8. When the class is ready, mark out the imaginary space of the banquet hall with them. Tell them where the audience will sit and where the stage is. You could also put out a throne for King Levi to sit in. Invite the first act on stage. Put on your crown/cloak and declare 'Let the grand performance begin.'
9. Give each act a round of applause. After all the acts have performed, you can take off your cloak/crown and discuss the performances with the class.
10. For advanced groups, you could use this exercise to talk about 'how context is built and a drama reality is created through the use of space and objects.' How did the class know when you were performing as Levi? How did they know the place/setting? What was the setting of the play *Susie and the Story Shredder*? What props and costumes did you see on stage? Did you see any changes or special effects with the lights? Did you hear any music, sound effects during the play?

A hand-drawn scroll with a light beige background and a black outline. The scroll is unrolled, showing text. The text is written in a simple, slightly irregular font. The scroll has four circular fasteners at the corners, two on the top and two on the bottom. The text is arranged in two paragraphs, with the second paragraph being shorter and more emphatic.

I am holding a very special banquet to celebrate the return of stories to the Kingdom of Levitas! The banquet is tonight. Susie and Shredder were meant to organise the grand performance of the evening, but as usual, they forgot! Now, I need all of you to provide this evening's entertainment. I like circus acts, dance routines and songs.

The theme of the party is The Wonder of Stories and I'm expecting ALL performances to be on brand!

*King Levi*



## Section 2: English Activities

This section of the Classroom Pack has a strong focus on activities which address the English curriculum.

The activities in this section are best suited to groups who have recently seen *Susie and the Story Shredder*. However, many of these exercises can be adapted to suit a class who has not seen the play.

These activities focus primarily on the 'Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write' strand of the English curriculum.

The following strands and strand units are found in the English curriculum for 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Class.

SUBJECT	STRAND	STRAND UNIT	The Child Should be Enabled to...
English	Receptiveness to Language	Oral language: developing receptiveness to oral language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listen to stories, descriptions, instructions and directions and respond to them</li> </ul>
English	Receptiveness to Language	Writing: creating and fostering the impulse to write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>experience a classroom environment that encourages writing</li> <li>seek help from the teacher as he/she explores writing stories</li> <li>explore different genres – a story, a letter</li> <li>work with other children when writing</li> <li>have writing valued - hearing it praised, having it displayed, sharing it with others</li> </ul>
English	Competence and confidence in using language	Writing: developing competence, confidence and the ability to write independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have regular opportunities to write for himself/herself or for others</li> </ul>

### Activity 7: Creating Stories from Pictures

Please see exercise and accompanying images in the appendix of this Classroom Pack. Every child who attends *Susie and the Story Shredder* will be given one of these activity sheets (six pictures per sheet).

The exercise is included here so that you can photocopy activity sheets for other classes if you wish. This activity and illustrations are by Philip Kennedy ([www.philipkennedy.net](http://www.philipkennedy.net))

### Activity 8: Book Review

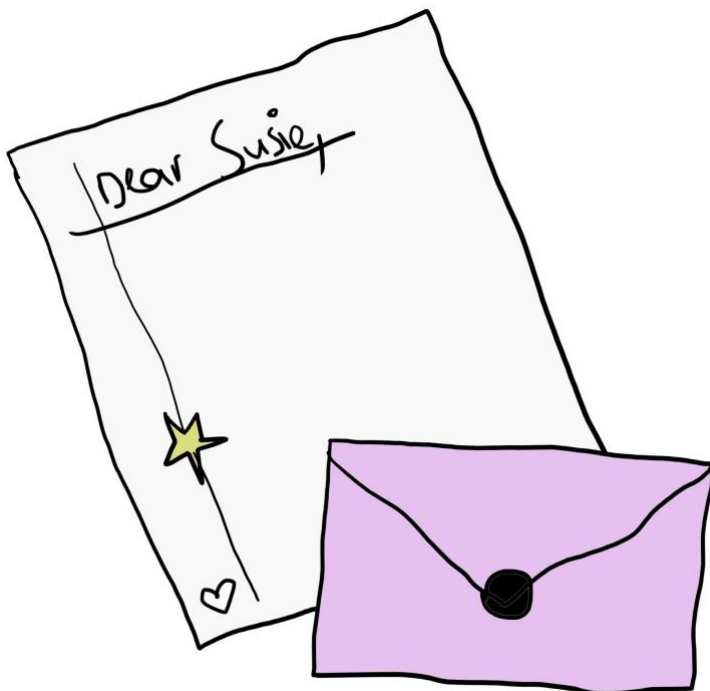
Susie and Shredder want to encourage children to read books and stories. Read a book and write a review on it! You will find a book review at the end of this pack which you can photocopy, or you can find your own.

### Activity 9: Short Stories

What do you think happened next? Write a short story about what you think happened after stories were restored to Levitas. You could write this from the point of view of Susie, Levi, Simon or Shredder.

Or

In *Susie and the Story Shredder*, Susie often refers to a story called 'The Cow and the Octopus,' but we never hear what happens. Write the story.



### Activity 10: Letters from Levitas

You are a child in the Kingdom of Levitas. Write a letter to Susie and Shredder thanking Susie for restoring stories back to the Kingdom. Explain how life in Levitas is different now.

## Bonus Activity: Make a Lava Lamp

In the play, Susie dreams of getting a lava lamp for her office. In this science experiment, you can make your very own lava lamp. Teachers can use the experiment as a springboard to talk about elements in the Science Curriculum below.

SUBJECT	STRAND	STRAND UNIT	The child should be enabled to...
Science	Energy and Forces	Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate floating and sinking with a wide range of materials and objects</li> <li>make and test predictions about objects that will sink or float</li> </ul>
Science	Materials	Materials and Change	Mixing and other changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>investigate how materials may be changed by mixing</li> <li>mixing and dissolving materials in water</li> </ul>
Science (3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Only)	Materials	Properties and characteristics of materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise that materials can be in solid, liquid or gas form</li> <li>become aware that air is composed of different gases including oxygen and carbon dioxide</li> <li>become aware of some of the practical applications of these gases in everyday life (use of carbon dioxide in fizzy drinks)</li> </ul>

### **You will need:**

- A clean plastic bottle – recycle a used bottle. Smooth sides work best.
- Water
- Vegetable Oil (roughly half of the volume of the water bottle i.e. if your water bottle is 500 ml, you should use 250 ml of vegetable oil)
- Food Colouring (colour of your choice!)
- Alka Seltzer fizzing tablets

### **Instructions:**

1. Fill one quarter of the bottle with water.
2. Tell the students you are about to add the vegetable oil. Ask them what they think will happen to the water and the oil?
3. Pour the vegetable oil into the bottle. Observe the results. Ask the students what happened?
4. Wait until the water and oil separate. Add a few drops of food colouring. Does the colour mix with the oil? Does it mix with the water?
5. Break your fizzy tablet in half. Tell the students you will drop this into the water. Ask them to predict what will happen. Drop half of the fizzy tablet into the water. Observe the results. Ask the students what they saw.
6. If you like, you can repeat the above in the dark. Turn off the lights and shine a torch on the lava lamp.

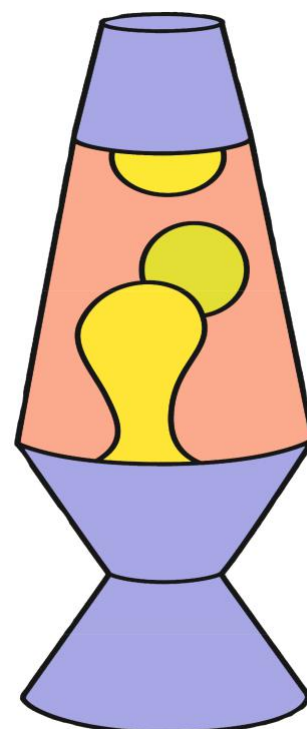
### **How does it work?**

The oil floats on top of the water because it is lighter (less dense) than water. The food colouring has the same density as water so it sinks through the oil and mixes with the water.

The tablet is denser than the oil. It sinks to the bottom and starts to dissolve. As it dissolves it makes a gas called carbon dioxide.

Gas is lighter than liquid. It floats up to the top. The air bubbles bring some coloured water with them. When the air comes out of this blob, the water will sink back down to the bottom.

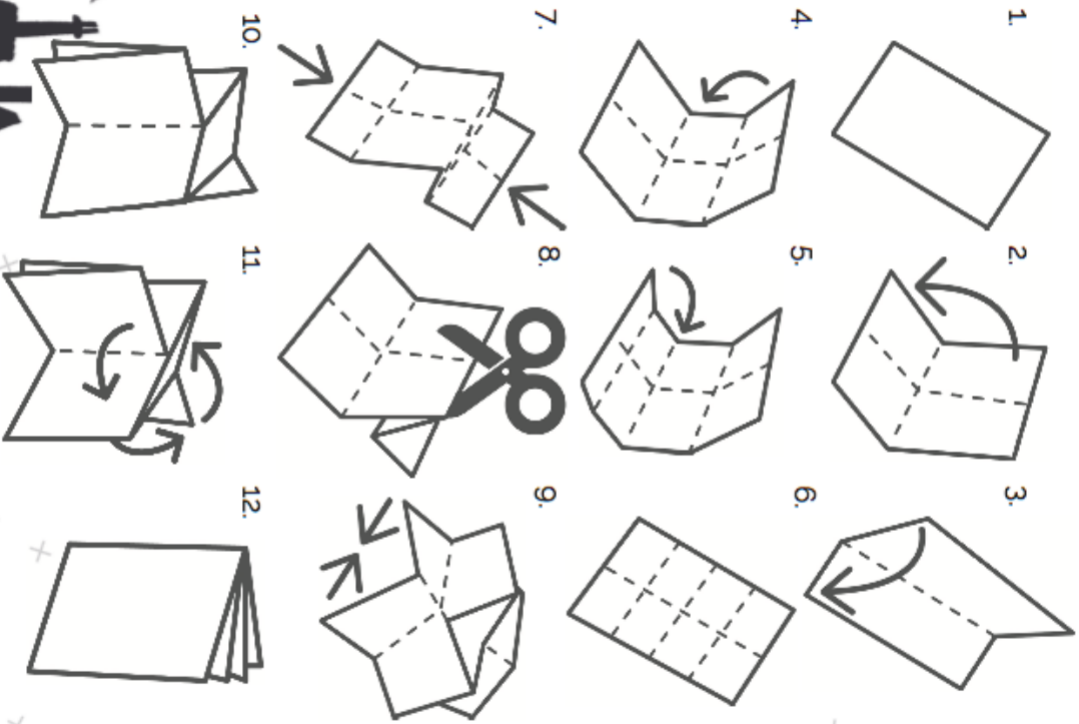
This happens over and over again until the tablet is completely dissolved.





## Section 4: Appendix

### Instructions

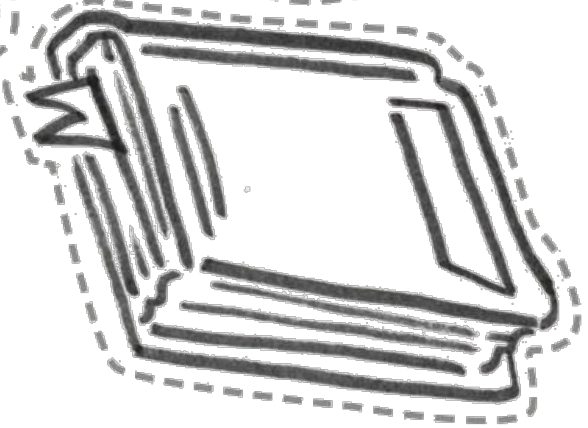
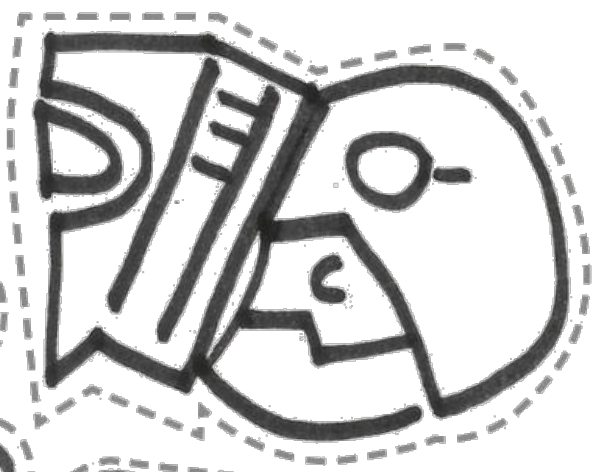
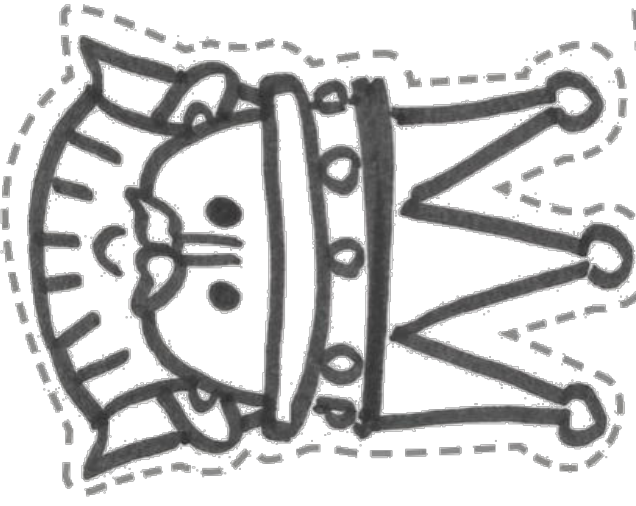


### BOMBINATE THEATRE

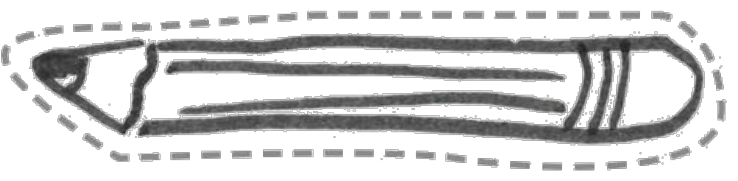
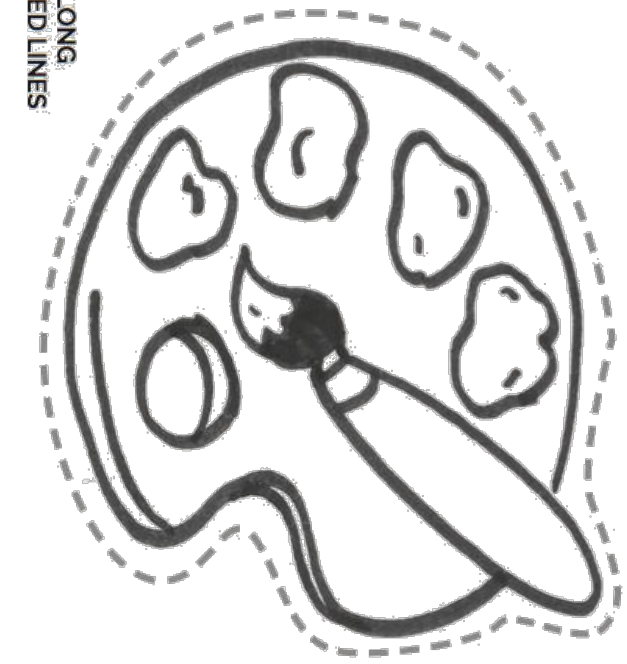
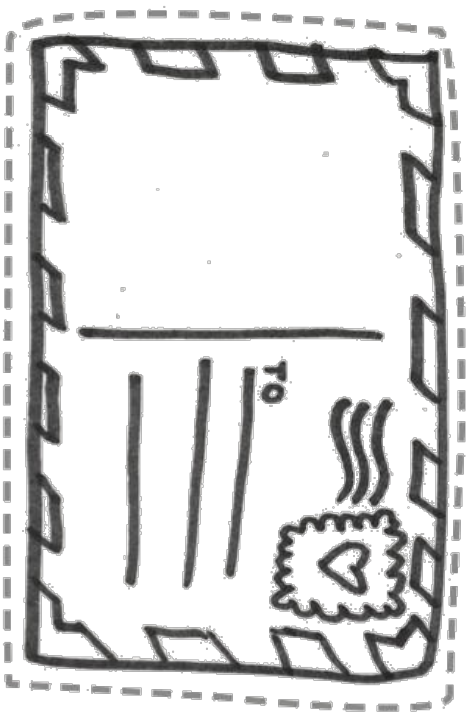
# SUSIE AND THE STORY SHREDDER

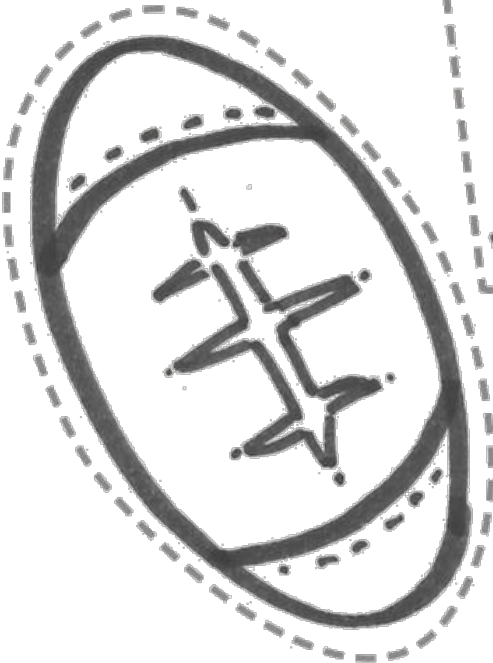
Susie and Shredder stuck all the shredded stories back together and returned them to the children of Levitas. But there were a few pictures left over. Susie and Shredder couldn't figure out who these belonged to...

Maybe you can help Susie and Shredder by creating new stories using some of the pictures. You will need one large sheet of paper. Make a book by following the instructions. After that, cut out the pictures and see if you can create your own amazing story!

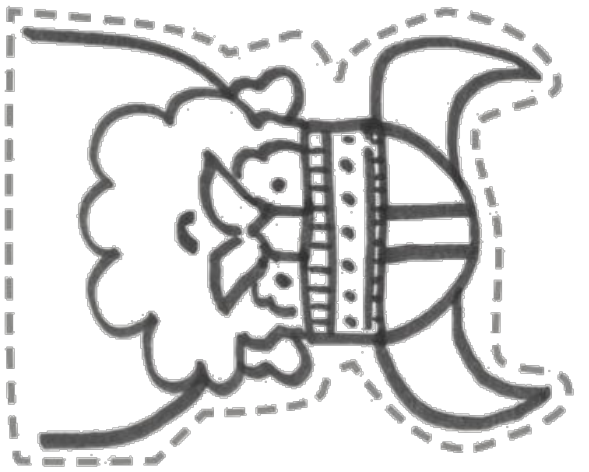


CUT ALONG  
THE DOTTED LINES

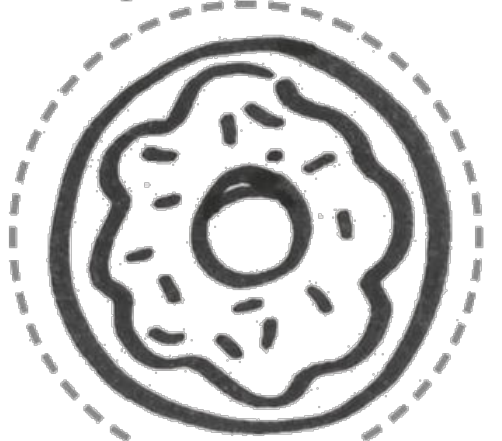
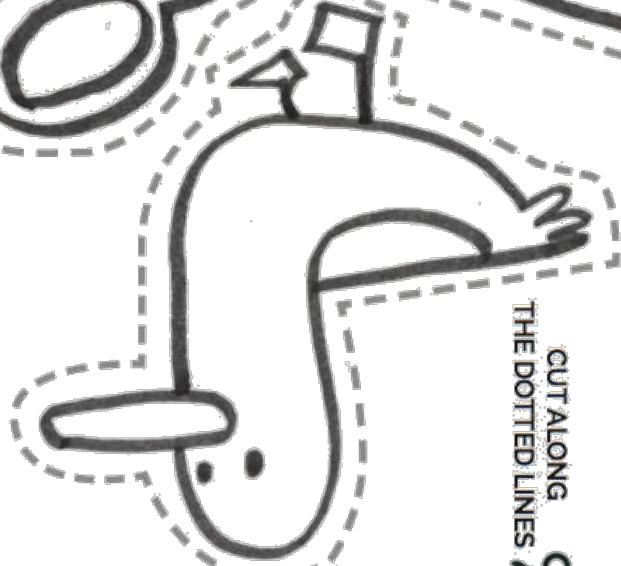
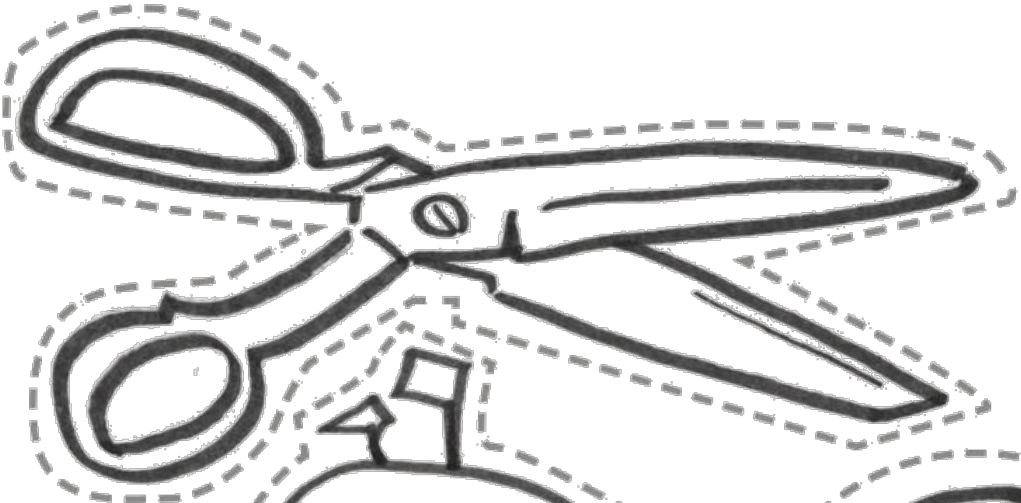




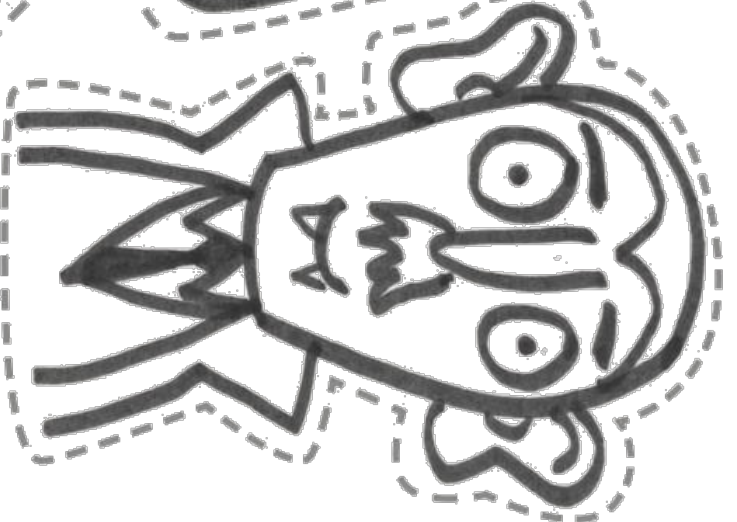
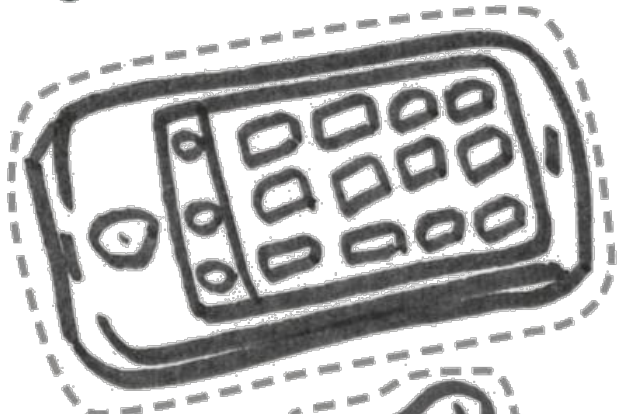
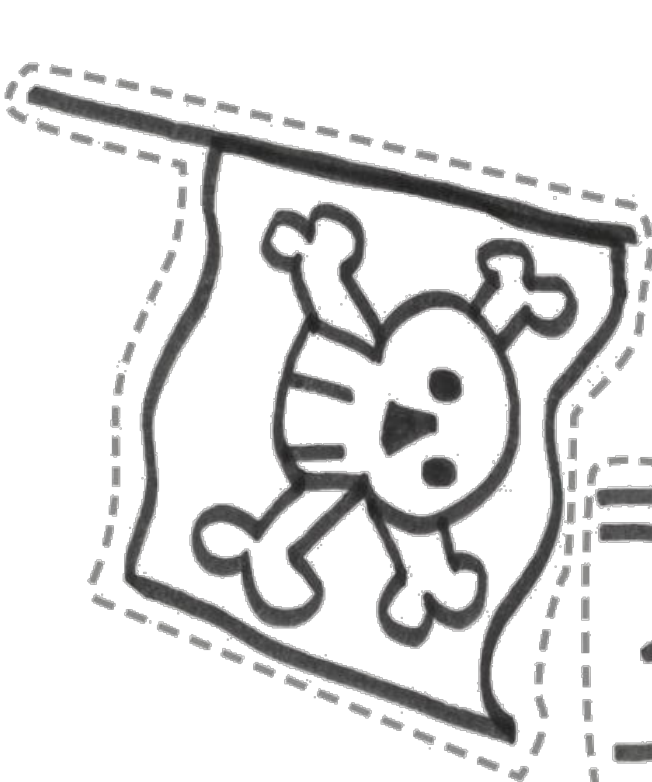
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THE DOTTED LINES

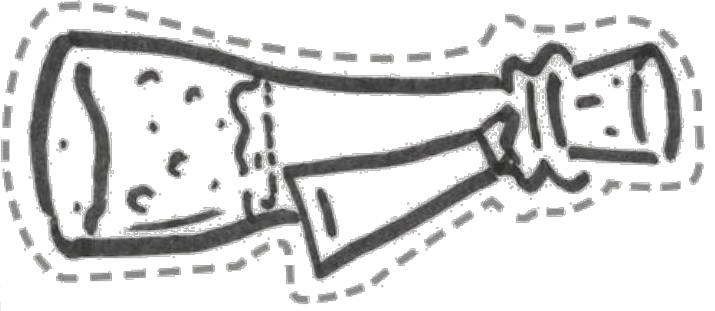
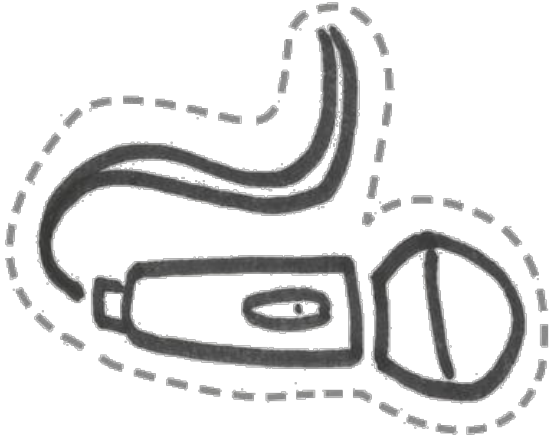
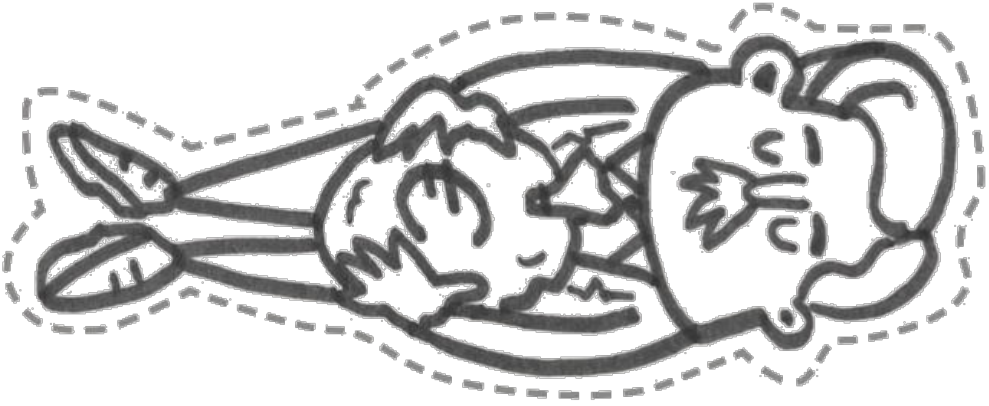




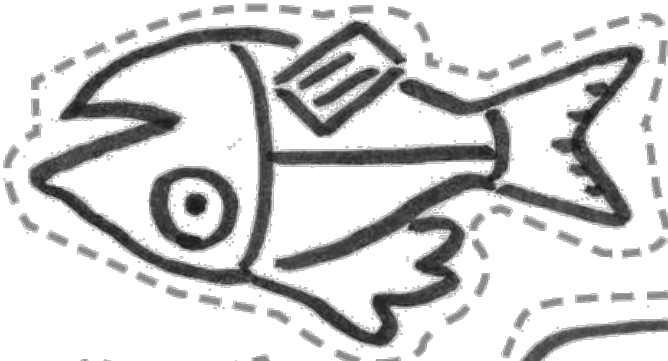


CUT ALONG  
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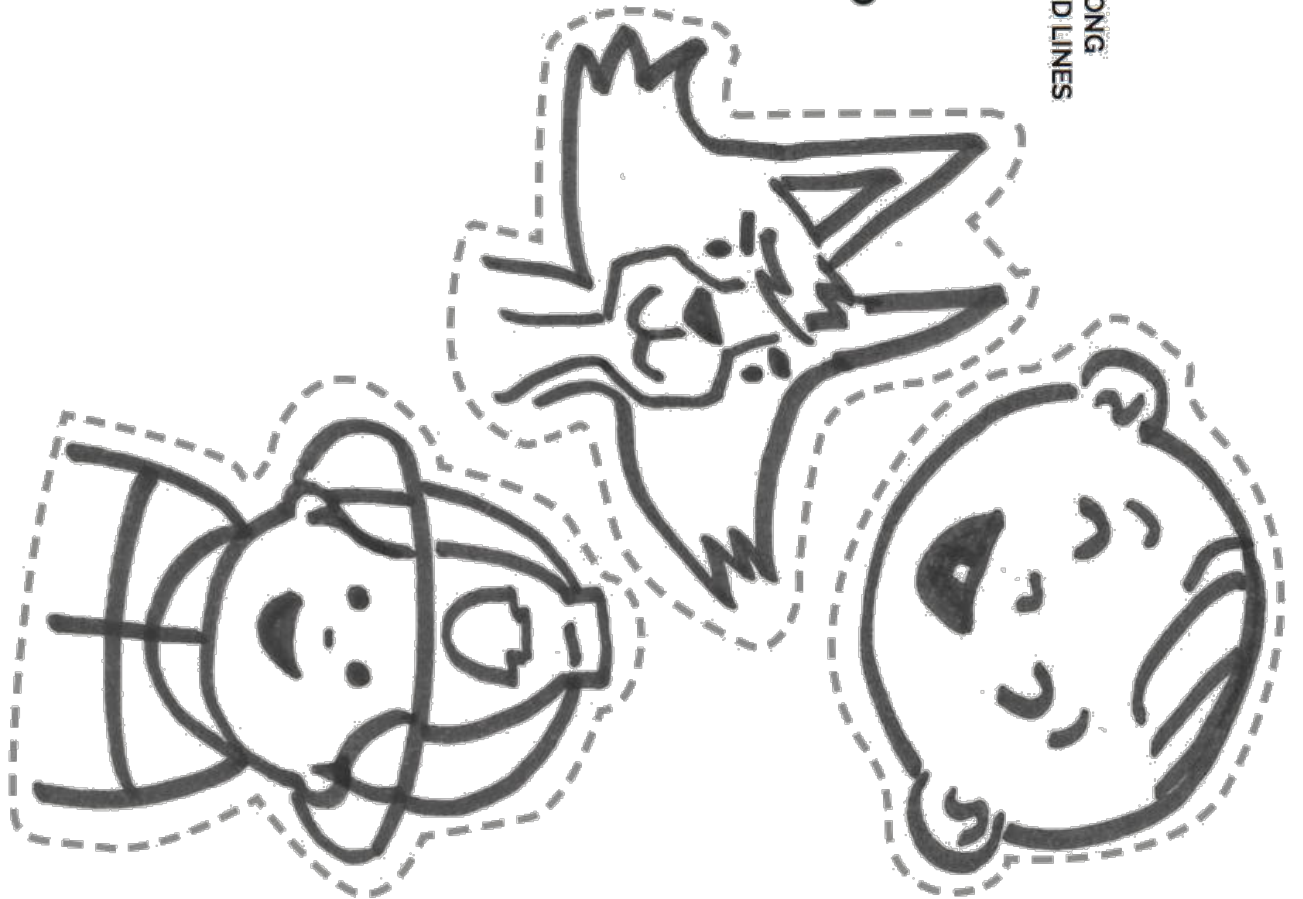




ILLUSTRATIONS  
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CUT ALONG  
THE DOTTED LINES



**Book Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Read:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rating:** ☆☆☆☆☆

**Plot**

Where did the story take place?  
What happened (in the beginning, middle and end)?

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**Characters**

Who were the main characters?  
Who was your favourite character and why?

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**Your Opinion**

Did you like the book?  
What was your favourite part and why?

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**Invent a new ending**

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# BOMBINATE THEATRE

**Activity Pack by Mollie Molumby**

**Cover image by Neil O'Driscoll**

**Illustrations by Áine O'Hara**

**Activity 7 and accompanying illustrations by Philip Kennedy (Appendix)**

**Bombinate Theatre would be delighted to receive photos of stories, pictures or crafts your students made after engaging with these activities.**

**We would be very happy to hear your feedback on the play and this activity pack.**

**You can email us at**

**[bombinatetheatre@gmail.com](mailto:bombinatetheatre@gmail.com) Thank you!**