

# Drawing: Monochrome Illustration

## Linked to Hamlet

A project suitable for KS2 children



### Introduction

This Art and Design unit develops children's drawing with a focus on the skills needed to make effective monochromatic images. *Hamlet's* sinister plot, intriguing characters and atmospheric scenes have fascinated artists for centuries and are brilliantly inspiring for illustration. Over the course of this unit, children will experiment with using a range of media for drawing, including pencil, pen, charcoal and ink. They will learn how to create texture and tone, and have fun designing characters. Finally, they will create an illustrated artwork incorporating all these skills and techniques. To support their work, children will look at images made by illustrators working in a monochrome style to understand how they create their effects. They will also compare the different ways in which characters and scenes from *Hamlet* have been illustrated in the past.



## Drawing and Illustration



Drawing is an essential skill and should be a foundational part of the primary art curriculum, but it is often neglected in favour of more 'exciting' projects. In reality, most artists use drawing at some stage in their process. Drawing is a way to explore ideas – it helps you to think, plan, experiment, and even relax!

Giving children the opportunity to draw regularly from imagination, memory or observation is vital. This unit focusses on **illustration**, a type of drawing with a distinct purpose: to communicate. This might be an idea, a story, information, or a message. Children are sometimes more confident with this concept than adults – they are already familiar with illustration from children's books and are naturally drawn to explore narrative in their art.

### Structure of the Unit

This unit takes place over 6 sessions of approximately 1.5 hrs each. Every session contains a practical element and some also include contextual/art historical links. Earlier sessions are designed to be playful and concentrate on practising the skills needed to create the final outcome.

### National Curriculum Aims

During this unit, children will:

- Produce creative work, exploring ideas and recording experiences
- Become proficient in (...) drawing techniques
- Evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art and design
- Know about great illustrators, and understand the historical and cultural developments of their art form

### Key Skills

During this project, children will:

- Draw from memory, imagination and observation
- Build confidence with known drawing techniques (outline drawing, shading)
- Use a range of marks to create texture in a drawing
- Use a range of tonal values in their drawing
- Build confidence using drawing media including charcoal, pencil, pen and ink

## Materials



You will need:

- Paper for drawing – printer or cartridge paper for sketching, watercolour paper for final piece
  - Drawing media, including:
    - pencil, charcoal, thick and fine permanent markers
    - Black drawing ink (Indian ink)
    - Brushes, wooden skewers
    - White oil pastel/wax crayon or candle (for an optional resist technique)
- You might also like to print the Character Design Sheet and the Reference Image Sheets (found in the RESOURCES appendix).

## SESSION 1: DRAWING GAMES

The purpose of this session is to demystify drawing! How much drawing have your children already done? Can they draw confidently from memory, imagination, and observation?

These different types of drawing require different skills, all of which need practice. Many children also worry about making mistakes, leading to lots of rubbing out!

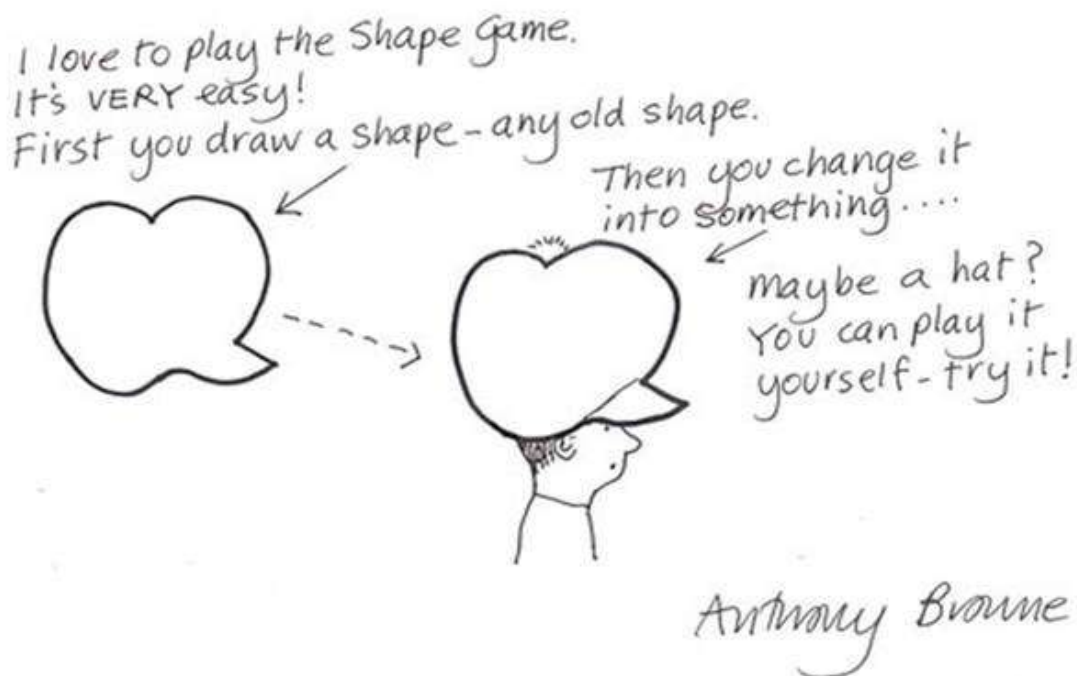
At the beginning of this project – depending on your class's needs – it can be fun to play a few drawing games to help children develop confidence more generally in their drawing and to explore a range of drawing tools.

### Games to try

- **Exquisite Corpse Drawing** develops imaginative drawing. See image above right. <https://austinkleon.com/2022/03/08/how-to-draw-an-exquisite-corpse/>



- **Anthony Browne's *The Shape Game*** develops drawing from memory, see below. <https://www.anthonybrownebooks.com/the-shape-game>

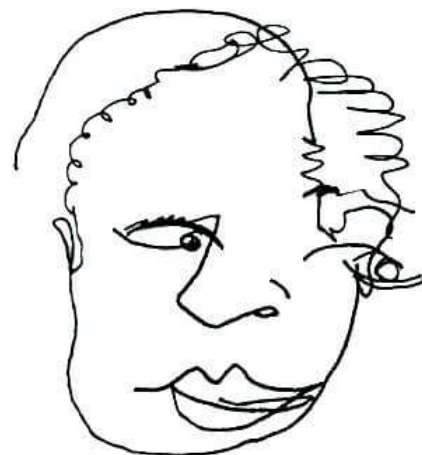


- **Blind Contour Drawing** (drawing without lifting the pencil/looking at the paper, see below right) develops observational drawing.

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2020/12/how-to-explore-the-magic-of-blind-contour-drawing/>

*"A line is a dot that went for a walk. A drawing is simply a line going for a walk"* Paul Klee

*"Think of the pencil like an ant, crawling around the contour of someone's shoulder, then falling down to the table... there's something about moving that slowly, that focussed, that makes you empty your brain of everything else."* Jackson Pollock



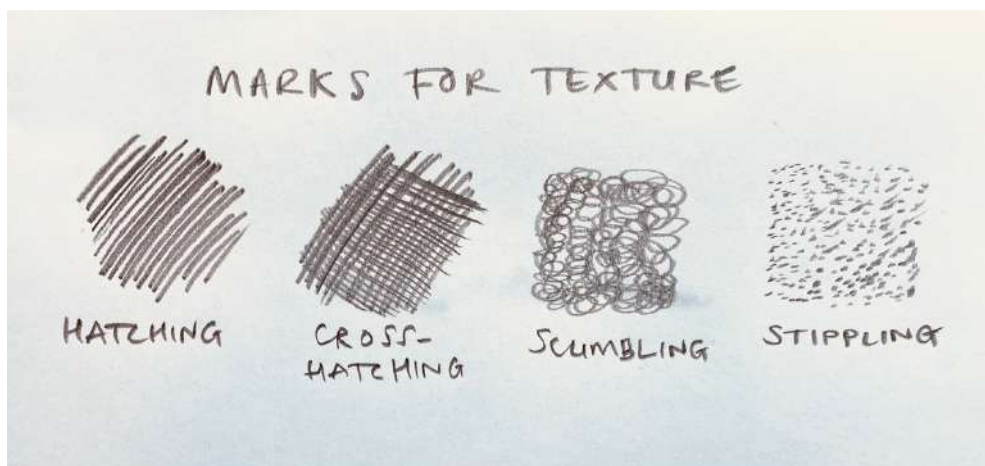
## ILLUSTRATING HAMLET

### SESSION 2: DRAWING WITH TEXTURE AND TONE

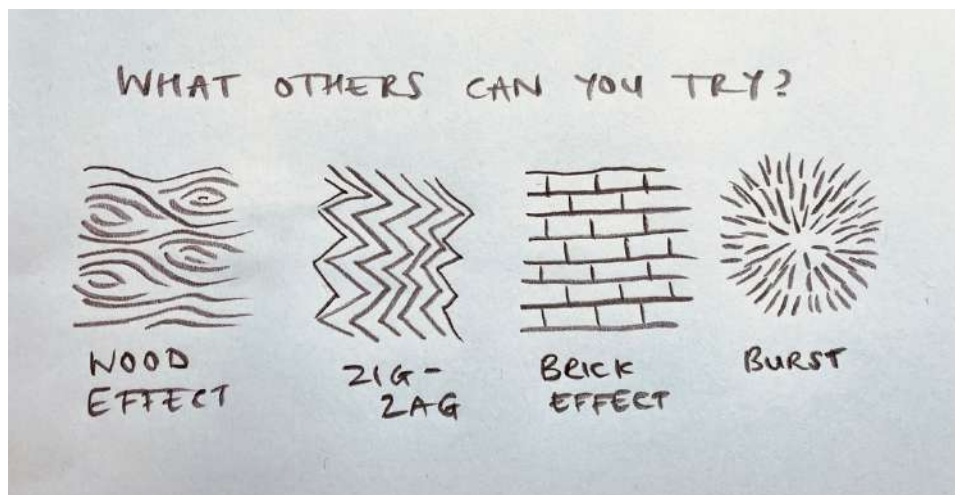
Before children are ready to illustrate a scene from Hamlet, it's worth practising some key drawing skills to make their illustrations more effective. Additionally, the idea of working with a *monochrome* palette might be new to children who are used to colouring in. 'Monochrome' simply means 'single colour' and for this project, children will work in black, using different marks to convey texture, and different tones to convey light, shadow and a sense of depth.

### CREATING TEXTURE

Offer children a choice of drawing materials, including pencil, pen and charcoal. Then let them spend time practising some marks that illustrators use to suggest texture. Below are some common marks and their official terms, from 'hatching' and 'cross hatching' through to 'scumbling' and 'stippling.'

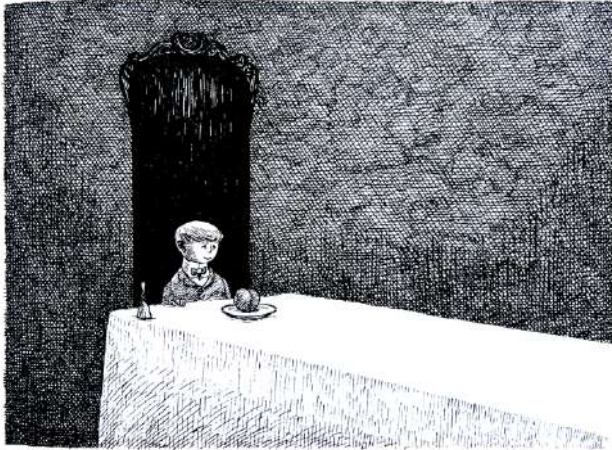


When children are confident with these, they might want to come up with some texture marks of their own.



## FOCUS ARTISTS – GOREY AND RIDDELL

Illustrators Edward Gorey and Chris Riddell are amazing at creating texture in their work. Gorey's book *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* is fun to share for its macabre humour, while Chris Riddell's monsters come to life through his expert choice of marks.



E is for ERNEST who choked on a peach



L-R *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, by Edward Gorey  
Chris Riddell, for *The Edge Chronicles* by Paul Stewart

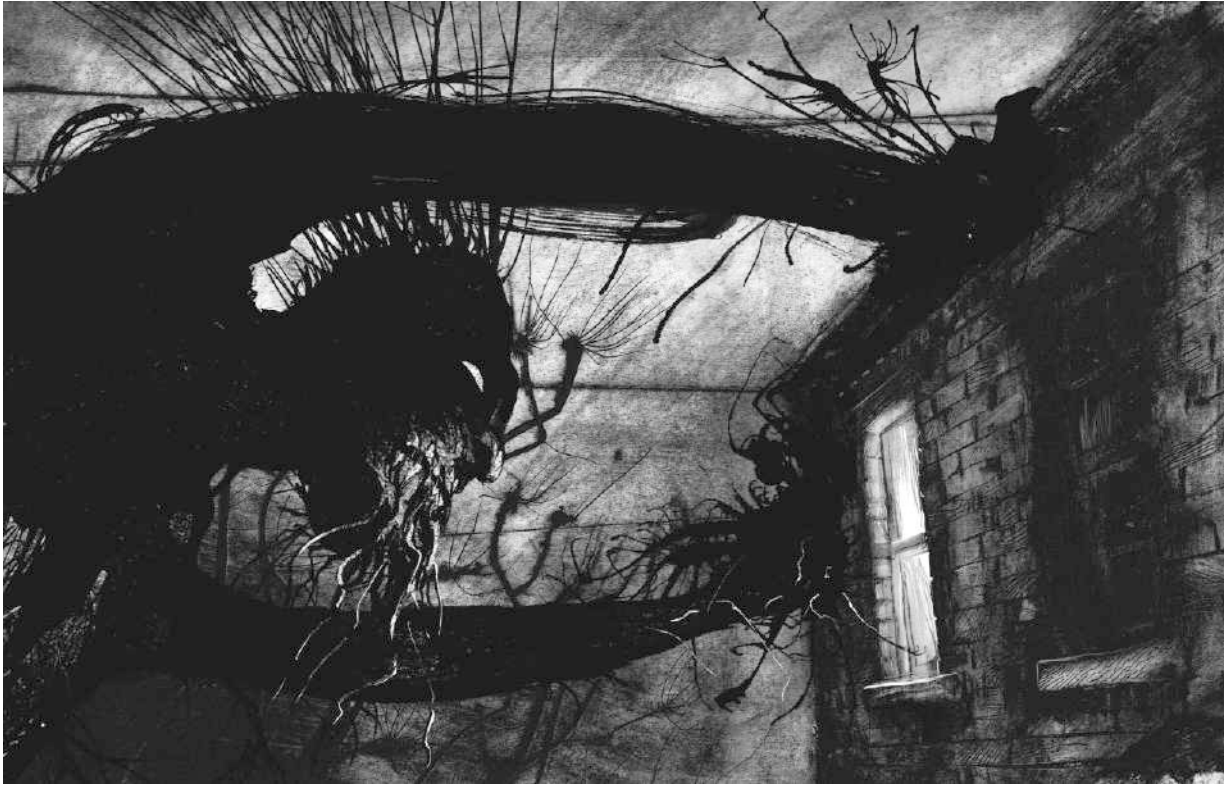
## CREATING TONE

The 'tonal values' in monochrome illustration refer to the way an illustrator conveys a sense of light and shadow. Including a range of tonal values can create fantastic atmosphere in an image – a great asset for illustrating *Hamlet!* For this activity, let your class experiment with drawing ink – they may not have tried this before. Show them how to dilute the ink with different amounts of water to create a range of tones from light to dark, then try to create a 'wash' with them. They can also experiment with using different tools, such as wooden skewers, to dip into undiluted ink and draw.



## FOCUS ARTISTS: KAY AND KEEPING

Two fantastic illustrators to study for tone are Jim Kay and Charles Keeping. Jim Kay's illustrations for *A Monster Calls* have incredible menace, created through his use of contrasting tones. Similarly atmospheric are Charles Keeping's illustrations for Alfred Noyes's famous poem, *The Highwayman*.



Jim Kay, for *A Monster Calls*, by Patrick Ness



Charles Keeping, for *The Highwayman*, by Alfred Noyes



### SESSION 3: CHOOSING A SCENE TO ILLUSTRATE + CHARACTER DESIGN

In this session, children choose the scene from *Hamlet* that they would like to illustrate. Remind them that an illustration communicates an idea – so they should try to choose a memorable and dramatic moment or action to illustrate, while also considering the importance of setting.

It may help to show children the many well-known artists who have been inspired to illustrate Hamlet. William Blake, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Henry Fuseli and Eugene Delacroix created fantastic monochromatic images that powerfully incorporate texture and tone. Additionally, they also chose to illustrate a key moment of the play within an atmospheric setting.



Clockwise from top left: William Blake, Henry Fuseli, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Henry Fuseli





L-R: Eugene Delacroix

## CHOOSING A SCENE

Help your class to brainstorm a list of the most dramatic scenes in the play. Some suggestions:

- The murder of King Hamlet by Claudius (not seen on stage)
- The ghost of King Hamlet appears on the castle walls (Act 1 Scene 5)
- The play of the murder is performed (Act 2 Scene 2/ Act 3 Scene 2)
- Hamlet is tempted to murder Claudius (Act 3 Scene 3)
- Hamlet stabs Polonius through the curtain (Act 3 Scene 4)
- Hamlet is banished to England by boat (Act 4 Scene 2)
- Ophelia becomes mad and drowns (not seen on stage)
- Laertes and Hamlet duel to their deaths (Act 5 Scene 2)

## CHARACTER DESIGN

Children are almost ready to make their initial sketches – however, drawing people can sometimes feel a little daunting. If this sounds like children in your class, have them practise drawing characters with a variety of postures and expressions. You can use the Character Design Sheet in the RESOURCES appendix as a starting point to build children's confidence here.

## SESSION 4: FIRST SKETCHES

Now that children have chosen the scene they would like to illustrate and practised the range of skills they will use, they are ready to make some first sketches! These can be done on any kind of paper, and can be quick and rough.

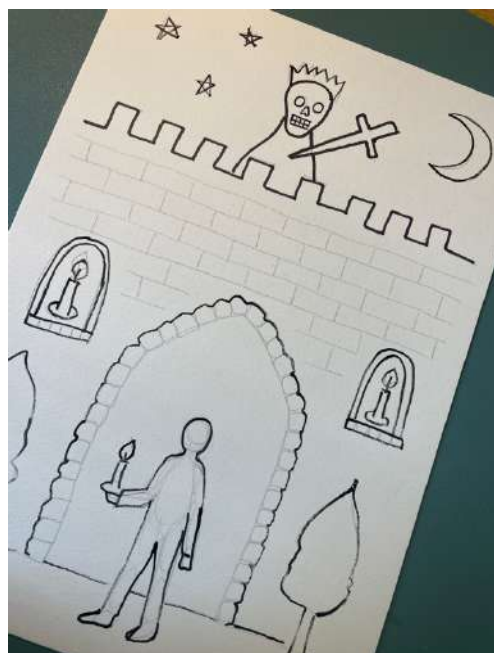
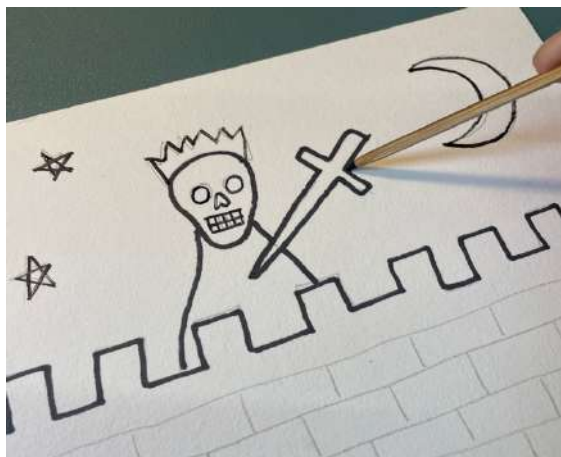
To support your class, you can give them a range of reference images to help them generate ideas (see the RESOURCES appendix for a selection of unlicensed images to print out or display).

Let children make as many first sketches as they like. When they are finally happy with their design, they should transfer it onto higher quality paper (A4 watercolour paper is ideal).



The next stage is for children to go over the outline of their drawing in ink. (Note: the main outlines are enough - they will bring out the details later).

**You must use permanent marker or permanent ink for this stage. Allow plenty of time to dry.**



## SESSION 5: DEVELOPING TONE (+ OPTIONAL WAX RESIST TECHNIQUE)

This is where the illustrations start to get really exciting! In this session, children start to build up the tonal values of their illustration using ink washes.

First though, there is the option to use a wax resist technique to bring out any desired highlights (for example, the moon). To do this, children can use a white wax crayon, white oil pastel (or even a simple white candle) to 'colour in' any areas that need to remain light. When a wash is applied, the wax will resist the ink and the highlighted areas will remain.



### ADDING WASHES FOR TONE

Once again, children should dilute drawing ink to create a range of tones (class teachers could prepare ink in advance to save time). Do keep a close eye on children here, as it's important they don't go too dark in tone too quickly!

Starting with the lightest tone, they should 'wash' over their entire illustration (see right).



After the first wash has dried, children can add more tones to their illustration, moving carefully from lighter to darker. Again, be vigilant to prevent them from going too black! Also remind them to use finer brushes for smaller details. Leave the work to dry thoroughly.



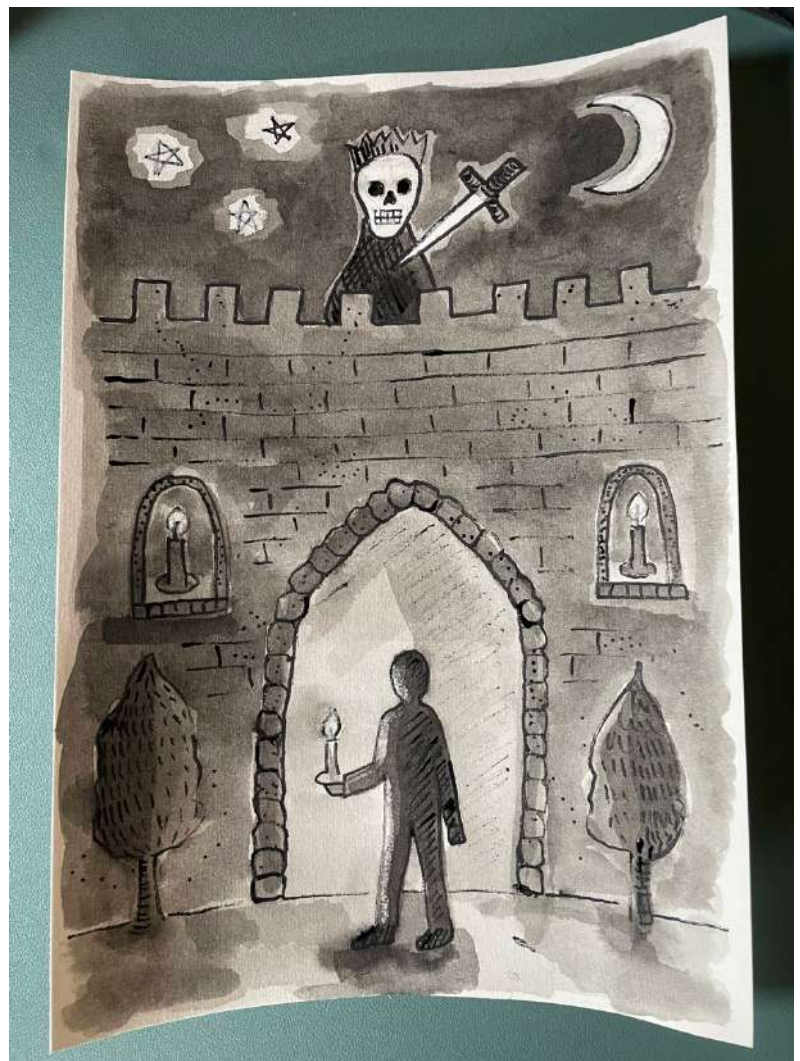
## SESSION 6: ADDING TEXTURE DETAIL

In this final session, children once again use a fine permanent marker pen (or draw in ink with skewer).

The aim here is to bring in some of the marks they practised during the second session to build up any interesting texture details.

### OPTIONAL: ADDING TEXT/COLLAGE

Illustrations often have captions, such as a line from the original text. If your children are keen, they could print out a quote to collage beneath their illustration.



## RESOURCES

### FOCUS ILLUSTRATORS:

#### **EDWARD GOREY**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Gorey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Gorey)

#### **CHRIS RIDDELL**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris\\_Riddell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Riddell)

#### **JIM KAY**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim\\_Kay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Kay)

<https://creepyscrawlers.com>

#### **CHARLES KEEPING**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Keeping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Keeping)

<https://www.thekeepinggallery.co.uk/>

### ILLUSTRATION: GENERAL INFORMATION

Association of Illustrators:

<https://theaoi.com>

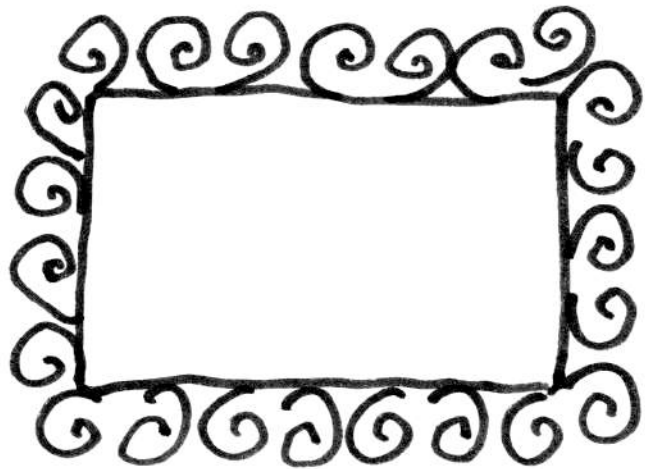
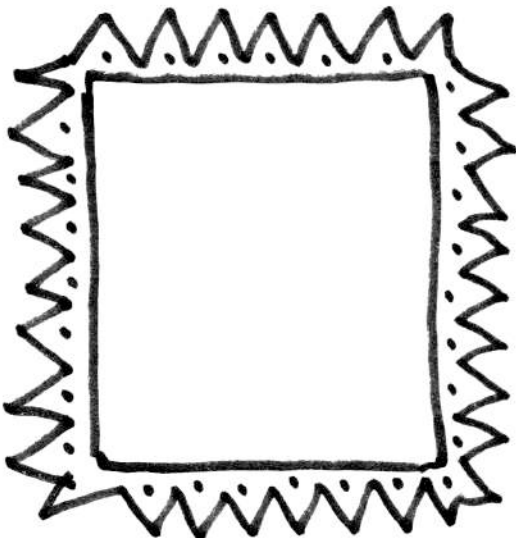
Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration (formerly House of Illustration):

<https://www.qbcentre.org.uk>

The next pages contain:

- 1 x CHARACTER DESIGN SHEET
- 7 x REFERENCE IMAGE SHEETS (Unlicensed images courtesy of unsplash.com)

ADD THE EXPRESSIONS:



FAMILY  
PORTRAITS

