



The *Wizards of ONCE* SERIES

Resources for KS2 Teachers & Librarians

Cressida Cowell's aim as [Waterstones Children's Laureate](#) is to encourage EVERY child to read for fun and get something out of books. Her latest series, *The Wizards of Once*, will certainly achieve that in your classroom! It is full of [magic](#) and [wonder](#), [adventure](#) and [danger](#), [friendship](#) and [family](#) ... and lots more!

Cressida has a passion for developing the creative intelligence of children and she believes that reading allows the reader to grow three superpowers:

- Creativity
- Empathy
- Intelligence

Cressida explains that the magic of books is partly about the words, but also, importantly, what happens in the reader's imagination.

These classroom ideas aim to focus on those three superpowers and to explore and enjoy the reader's own imagination.



The *Wizards of ONCE*
CRESSIDA COWELL

About The *Wizards of ONCE* Series

The Wizards of Once is an exciting high-adventure series set in an ancient, magical time, full of Wizards, Warriors, Giants and Sprites from the author of *How To Train Your Dragon*, Cressida Cowell.

The Wizards of Once (Book 1)



Once there was Magic, and the Magic lived in the dark forests. Until the Warriors came ...

Xar is a Wizard boy who has no Magic and will do anything to get it. Wish is a Warrior girl, but she owns a banned Magical Object, and she will do anything to conceal it.

In this whirlwind adventure, Xar and Wish must forget their differences if they're going to make it to the dungeons at Warrior Fort. Where something that has been sleeping for hundreds of years is stirring ...

The Wizards of Once: Twice Magic (Book 2)



Witches are creating havoc in the Wildwoods and danger lurks behind every tree trunk.

Wish is in possession of a powerful, Magic Spelling Book; Xar has a dangerous Witchstain on his hand. Together they can save the Wildwoods from the curse of the Witches but they are separated by the highest wall imaginable, and time is running out ...

It was unlikely that these heroes should meet in the first place. Is it possible they are destined to meet TWICE?

The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)



Wish and Xar are now outlaws on the run, hunted by Warriors, Wizards and worst of all, by WITCHES ...

Can they find the ingredients for the Spell to Get Rid of Witches before the Kingwitch gets his talons on Magic-that-Works-on-Iron?

Their next Quest is the most terrifying and treacherous of all ... And someone is going to betray them ...

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The Wizards of Once: Never and Forever (Book 4)



Xar and Wish are on the final leg of their journey – first stop: The Mines of Happiness. Here, starvation is never far away for the Magical creatures who toil in its horrible depths. Xar and Wish must escape and fast; Xar needs to take control of his ever-growing Witchstain, and Wish must achieve her Destiny. But the Tatzelwurm is in their way, a grotesque monster who threatens to block every entrance.

Time is not on their side, but the forests are calling them. Will their combined strength be enough for the BIGGEST quest so far; to defeat the Kingwitch once and for all?

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Creativity

Noun: the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness.

Creativity comes in many forms. These ideas will encourage children to be creative in a number of ways, such as drawing, acting and storytelling. They aim to complement *The Wizards of Once* series, building enthusiasm and eagerness to engage with the story.

Creativity does not come from a blank page; it comes from finding solutions to problems, from being innovative based on previous ideas and knowledge. Ideas exercise the skill of creativity.

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What Did He Do?

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once* (Book 1).

Extract – begin reading from Chapter 1 on page 21 up to ‘In the past week:’ on page 22.

Part 1: Based on this initial passage about Xar, give children a chance to jump into the world of wizards and suggest what he might have been up to. Establish what we know about Xar already from the text:

- He’s a wizard with no magic
- He’s a scruff of a boy
- He’s the most disobedient boy in the Wizard Kingdom for four generations and forbidding him from doing things only encourages him

Part 2: Focus on the word DISOBEDIENT. Split it into DIS and OBEDIENT. How many synonyms for obedient can you find? What does this tell us about Xar?

Part 3: Pose the question, ‘What might Xar have been up to to get him in trouble?’. Start off with a brief discussion about wizards and rules they may need to obey. Then, try paired talk to get children to come up with some funny antics for Xar.

Part 4: Compare children’s ideas with what Xar gets up to in the text.

Extract – continue from where you left off on page 22 up to ‘And yet none of these disobedient things was half as bad as what Xar was doing right now.’ on page 23.

Create a Companion

This activity is linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

Xar has a companion and minder in the very wonderful Caliburn, a talking raven, whose job is to keep Xar out of trouble.

Why not get your class to conjure up a talking creature as their companion to keep them out of trouble too?

Part 1: Consider the attributes associated with animals found in literature. Foxes are often seen as sly, lions as brave and proud, owls as wise etc. Children can then think about the attributes they'd like a companion to have and design an animal that suits them. To spark ideas, use the activity sheet on the next page, an example of which is below.



A great companion would be:	Name:
List attributes for your companion here ... <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••	Sketch your companion here ...

This activity can be done at any point while reading the series. Ideas for what makes a good companion will grow and develop as children see the interaction between Xar and Caliburn throughout the story. If you create companions at the beginning of reading *The Wizards of Once*, you may wish to revisit children's designs at regular points to see if they still think their animal has the right attributes.

Create A Companion

Activity Sheet

A great companion would be:	Name:
<p>List attributes for your companion here ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••••••••	<p>Sketch your companion here ...</p>

Brother's Dialogue

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once* (Book 1).

Extract – begin reading from Chapter 1 on page 29 'At that moment ...' up to '... the feather from his belt.' on page 32

Part 1: Xar has an older brother called Looter. Like many siblings, they are competitive and can be rather mean to each other. This activity is based on the first time the reader meets Looter in the story. Challenge children to create a playscript from the extract given using the activity sheet on the next page (an example is below). Adding director's notes is an opportunity to develop inference and deduction.

Speaker	What they say	Director's notes
Xar:		
Looter:		
Xar:		
Looter:		
Xar:		

Part 2: Give children time to practise and perform the short scene. Work in groups of three, where two children play Xar and Looter and the third is the director. Encourage children to mark their script with words they will emphasise, moments to pause, volume changes and emotions they will convey.

Part 3: Give each group a chance to perform to the rest of the class or to another group, receiving feedback to support the understanding of characters and their performance.

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Brother's Dialogue Activity Sheet (Part 1)

Speaker	What they say	Director's notes
Xar:		
Looter:		
Xar:		
Looter:		
Xar:		

Part 4: Now, task children with completing the scene. How will this conversation end? How do siblings normally talk to each other? Ensure that children's ideas stay within the same emotions and realm of possibility as the rest of the scene. You could give a constraint to support creativity, only allowing each character to speak a set number of times.

Children can plan ideas using the activity sheet on the next page, considering what each character is trying to achieve from the conversation:



Again, allow children to write, practise and perform in their groups of three.

Part 5: Read the rest of the chapter to compare children's duologues with the actual story.

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Brother's Dialogue Activity Sheet (Part 2)

How will this conversation end between Xar and Looter? How do siblings normally talk to each other? Write what they would say below.



Looter and Xar



A Wizard with No Magic?

This activity can be linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

Xar is a wizard, but his magic hasn't arrived yet. When you think of a wizard, magic is vital to their character. So, let's take the idea of removing a crucial quality from a character and use it to spark a short story.

Part 1: As a whole class, or in groups, gather lots of ideas of known characters and their crucial quality, for example: mermaids can swim, birds can fly ...

Part 2: Children can then select their favourite option. How might their character feel without their crucial quality? What could be done to fix it? Then, ask them to write a short story to show how their character finds their 'missing magic'.

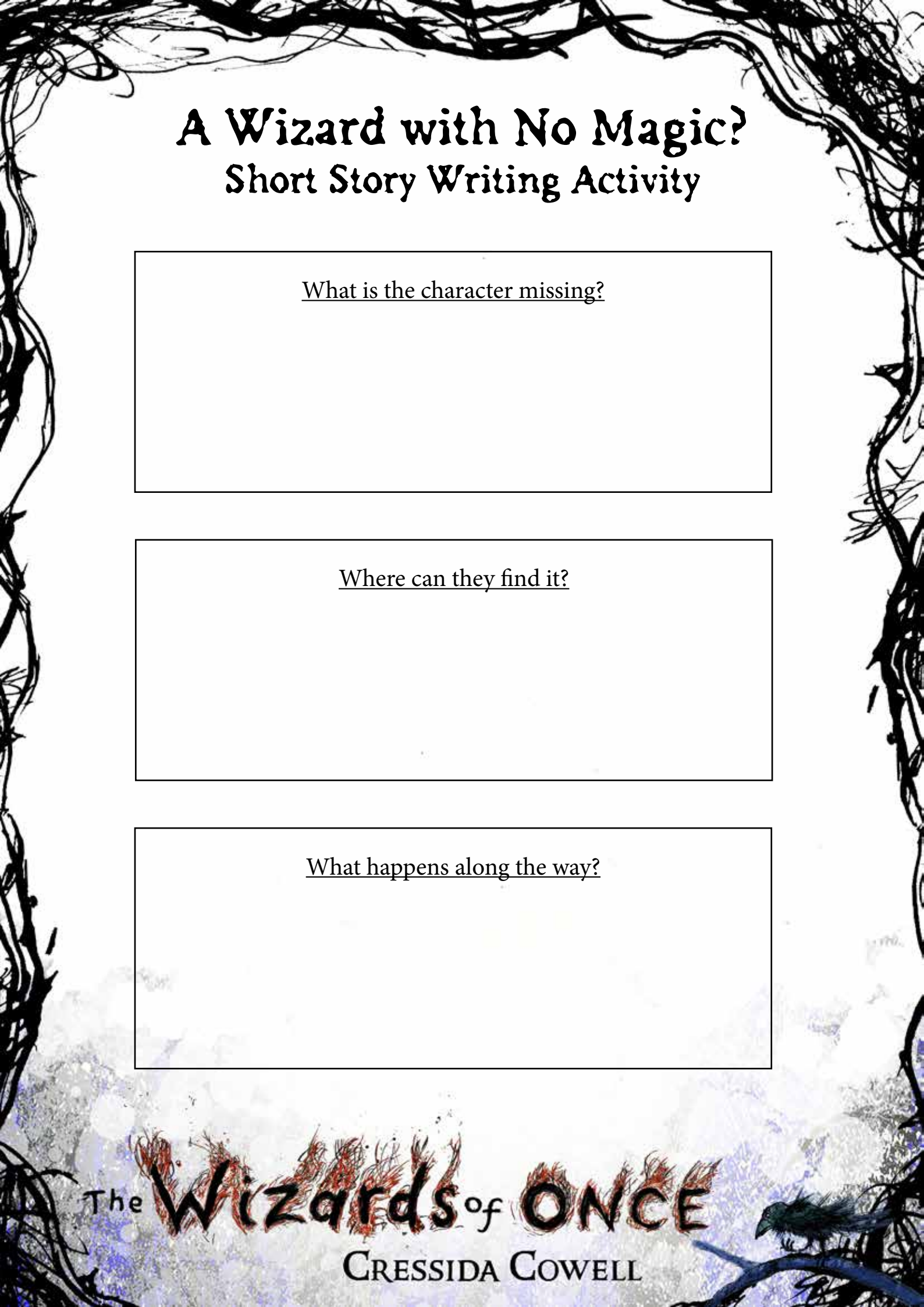
Short Story Writing

What is the character missing?

Where can they find it?

What happens along the way?

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A Wizard with No Magic?

Short Story Writing Activity

What is the character missing?

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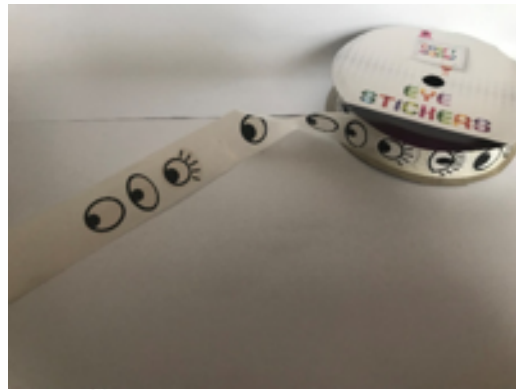
An Enchanted Pet

This activity can be linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

Wish has an enchanted friend who is her pet. It is in fact an iron spoon. What everyday object would children turn into a pet?

Part 1: Gather a collection of everyday items from home or school, ranging from cutlery to pens, socks to hairbrushes. Sit in a circle and ensure there is an item for every other person. As children take hold of an item, they should explain to their partner what it would be like if it came to life. Give 30-60 seconds before items are passed on to the next person. This quickfire game will generate many ideas and be less intimidating than being asked to create a character. You may wish to model first to give pupils an idea of what to talk about.

If you want to make this activity a bit more visual, get yourself a packet of googly eyes or a roll of stick-on eyes. These can be stuck on items for a bit of fun. Maybe stick them on items in the classroom before children enter and set them off on an enchanted item hunt before you start the activity.



Part 2: Having gathered lots of ideas, children can now create their own enchanted object pet.

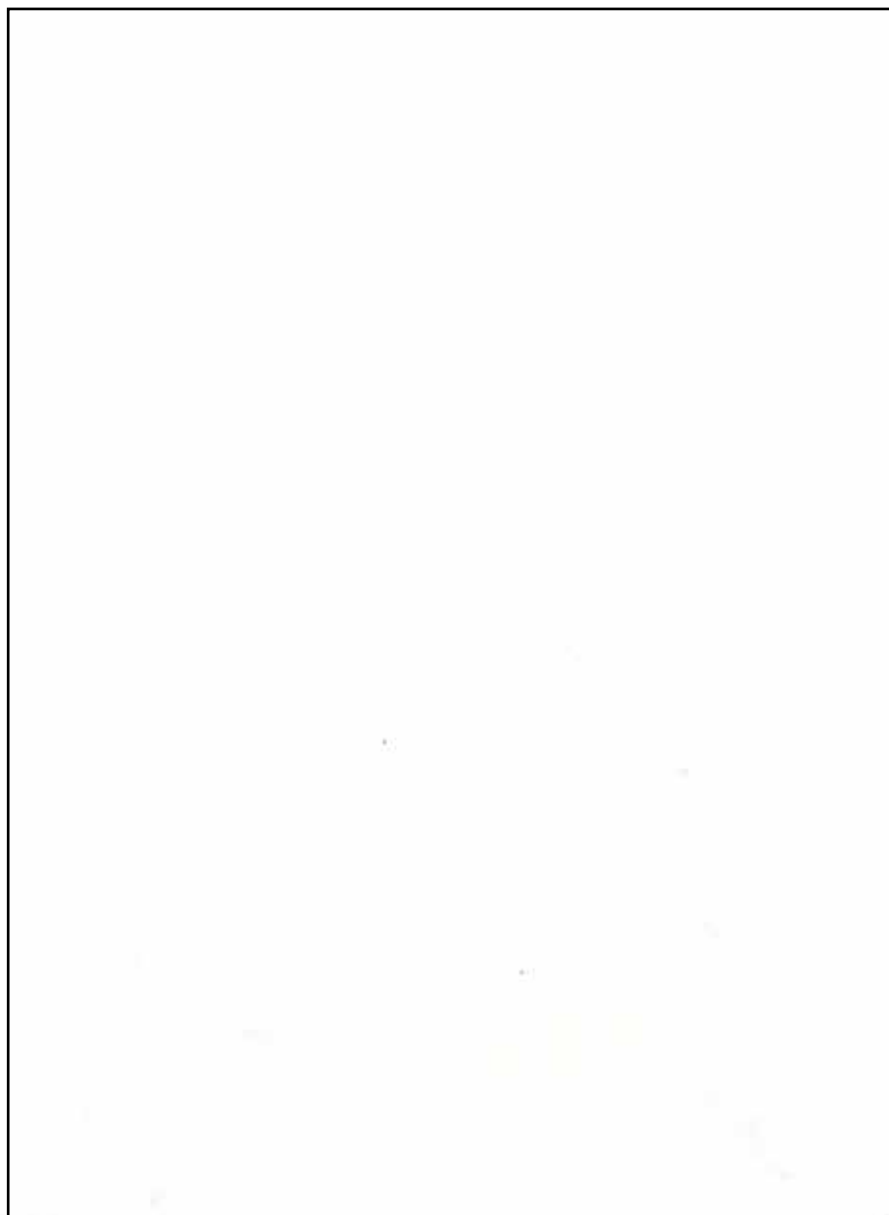
As an extension, children can create moods for their pet too.

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My Enchanted Object Pet Activity Sheet (Part 1)

Sketch your pet in the box, then add short descriptions around the outside.



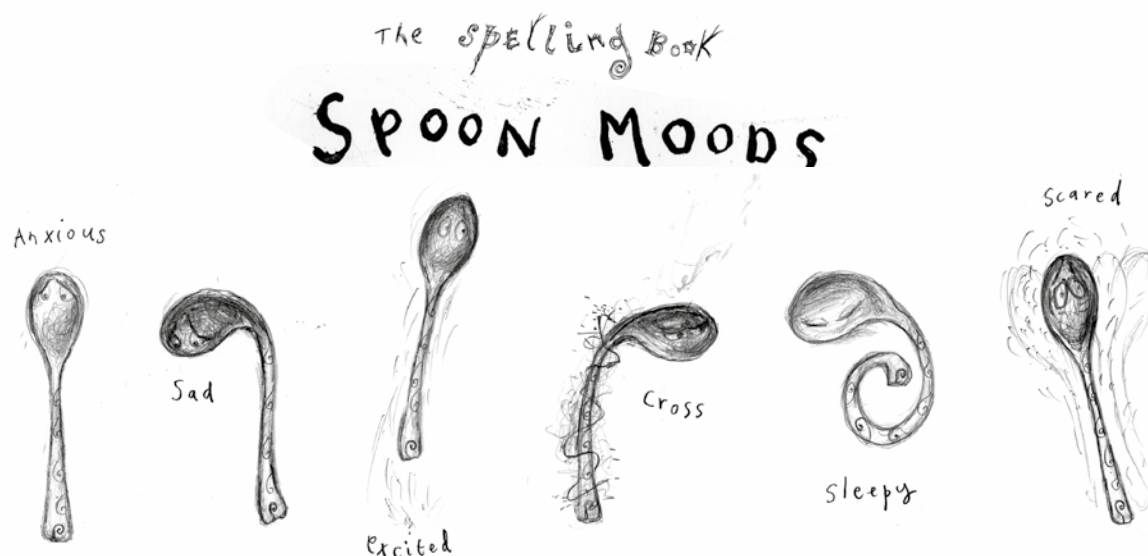
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My Enchanted Object Pet Activity Sheet (Part 2)

Create moods for your pet just like the Spoon Moods featured in The Spelling Book in *The Wizards of Once* (Book 1).



MY ENCHANTED OBJECT PET MOODS

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Fantastic Fonts

This activity can be linked to all three books in *The Wizards of Once* series.

Each chapter in *The Wizards of Once* series starts with a large capital letter, drawn to match the style of the illustrations. Can children create their own *Wizards of Once* alphabet? This can be used to start off their own writing pieces.



Children may like to create each letter differently or try to keep them all a similar style. It's up to them – get those creative juices going! Children may like to make their letters all look magical, all strong and warrior-like or come up with an idea of their own.

Allow children time to look at all the examples in the books for inspiration. The alphabet at the front of Xar's Spelling Book on page 157 of *The Wizards of Once* (Book 1) would be good to look at too. You could adapt this activity as the starter page for children's own Spelling Books.

My **Wizards of ONCE** Alphabet

A	B	C	D	E
F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O
P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X	Y
Z	!	?		

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How Would You fly?

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)*.

In the books, our dynamic duo, Wish and Xar, travel on a flying door. First a bedroom door, then a cupboard door. At first it seems like an odd thing to fly on (not being a carpet as we may expect!). So, what other odd objects could you fly on?



Part 1: Here are some questions children could consider in their design:

- What is your flying item?
- What does it look like?
- How is it controlled?
- How many people fit on it?

Part 2: Following this, children could imagine they are riding their enchanted object over one of the settings in the books: the wildwoods, warrior fort or Gormincrag. This could spark a descriptive piece of writing from a different perspective. You could support this writing by watching some drone videos, discussing how different things may look from a bird's eye view.

Part 3: If children create some fantastic pieces of writing, you may wish to use digital technology to publish the writing:

- Try using a green screen to get children 'aboard' their enchanted object by drawing in the object and using a gym horse under the green screen to 'climb aboard'.
- Children can create a drawing from above as an image to voice-record over in an app such as iMovie. The voice recording will consist of them reading aloud their own description.

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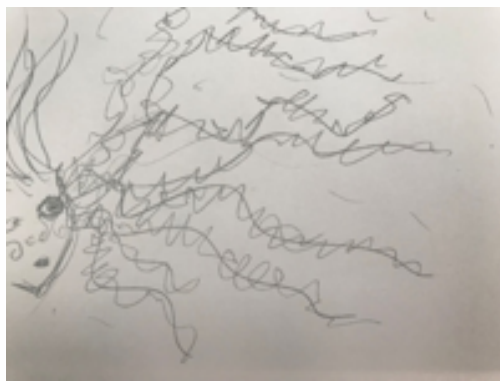
White on Black Artwork

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Twice Magic (Book 2)*.

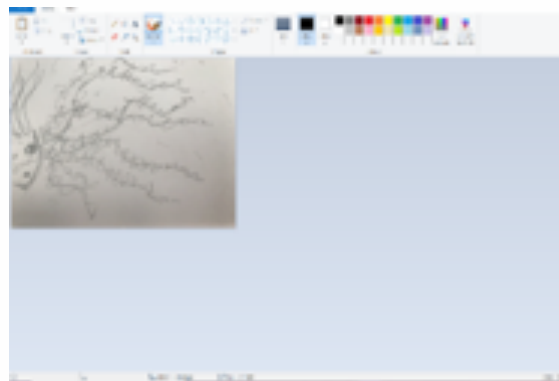
Extract – take a look at pages 374-375 and 378-379.

Part 1: At certain parts in the book, the black text and white page are reversed. Discuss what effect this creates. Does it make the scene scarier, darker, more imposing? Think about why these specific scenes were selected for this effect.

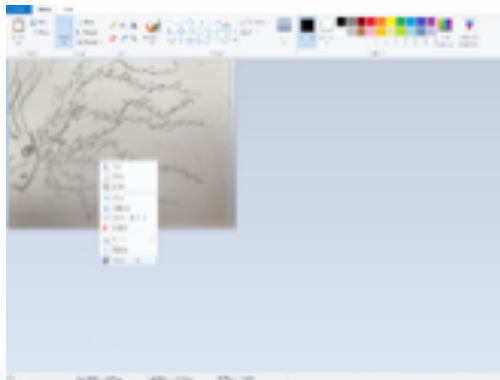
Part 2: Have a go at creating something similar. This is a brilliant way for children to publish their writing and artwork and will make great work for a classroom display.



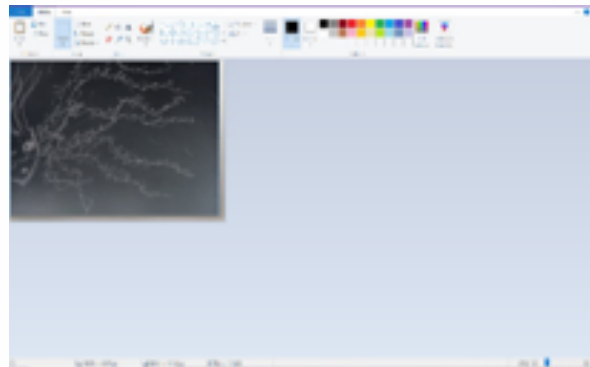
Step One: Children should type or write up their best draft of writing or create a drawing with pencil or black fine pen. This should be photographed, and the image file saved.



Step Two: Open this image file in MS Paint.



Step Three: Use the select tool to select the whole image in a rectangle. Use a right-hand click to show the dropdown menu.



Step Four: Click 'invert colour' to create your own negative image. Print and display.

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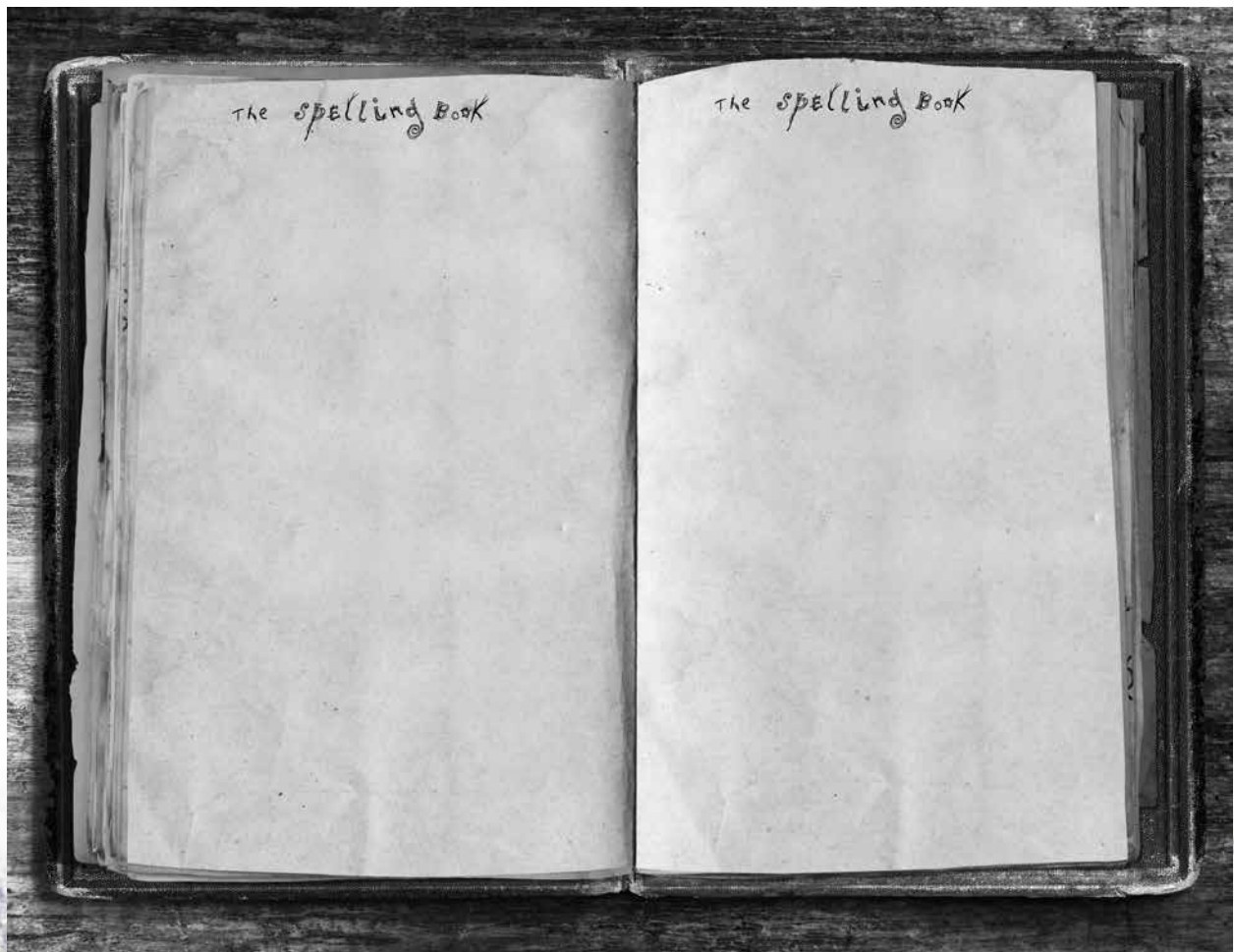
Spell Writing

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times (Book 3)*.

Extract – begin reading from page 125 ‘Why would a lovespell work ...’ up to ‘... is endurance.’ on the same page.

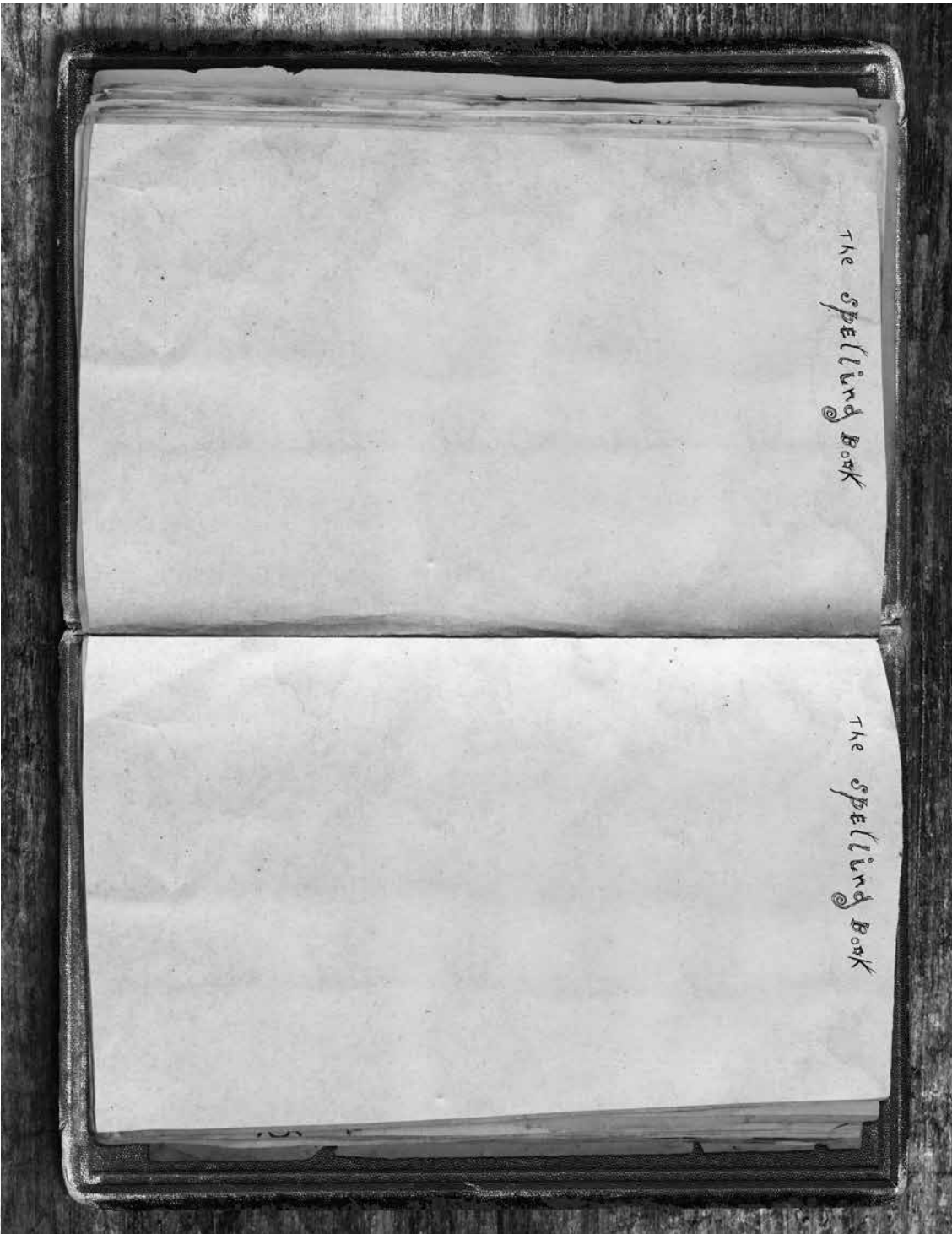
In *Knock Three Times*, Xar, Wish and Bodkin are on a quest to find the ingredients of a lovespell to get rid of witches. Challenge children to create their own lovespell. It must include five ingredients, and each must represent a value. You may like to discuss these as abstract nouns and/or link with discussions on your school values. Note that the values in this spell are all positive attributes.

Details can be added by including measures and amounts, then instructions on how to combine them.



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Spell Writing Activity Sheet



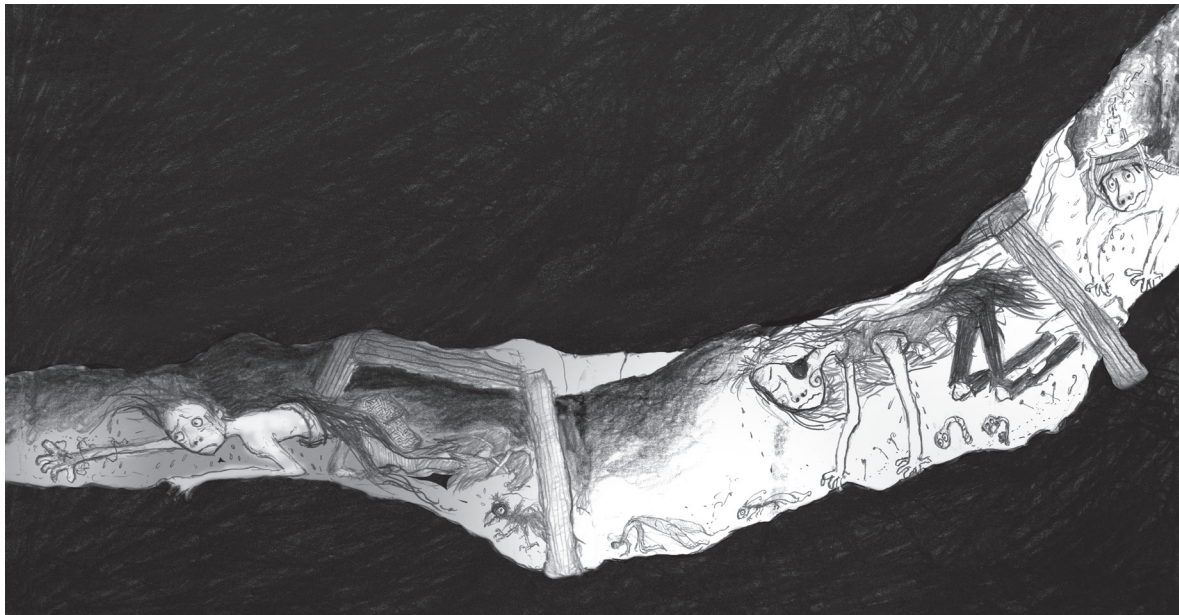
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Deep in the Mine

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Never and Forever* (Book 4)

Extract – chapter 1, page 9–11

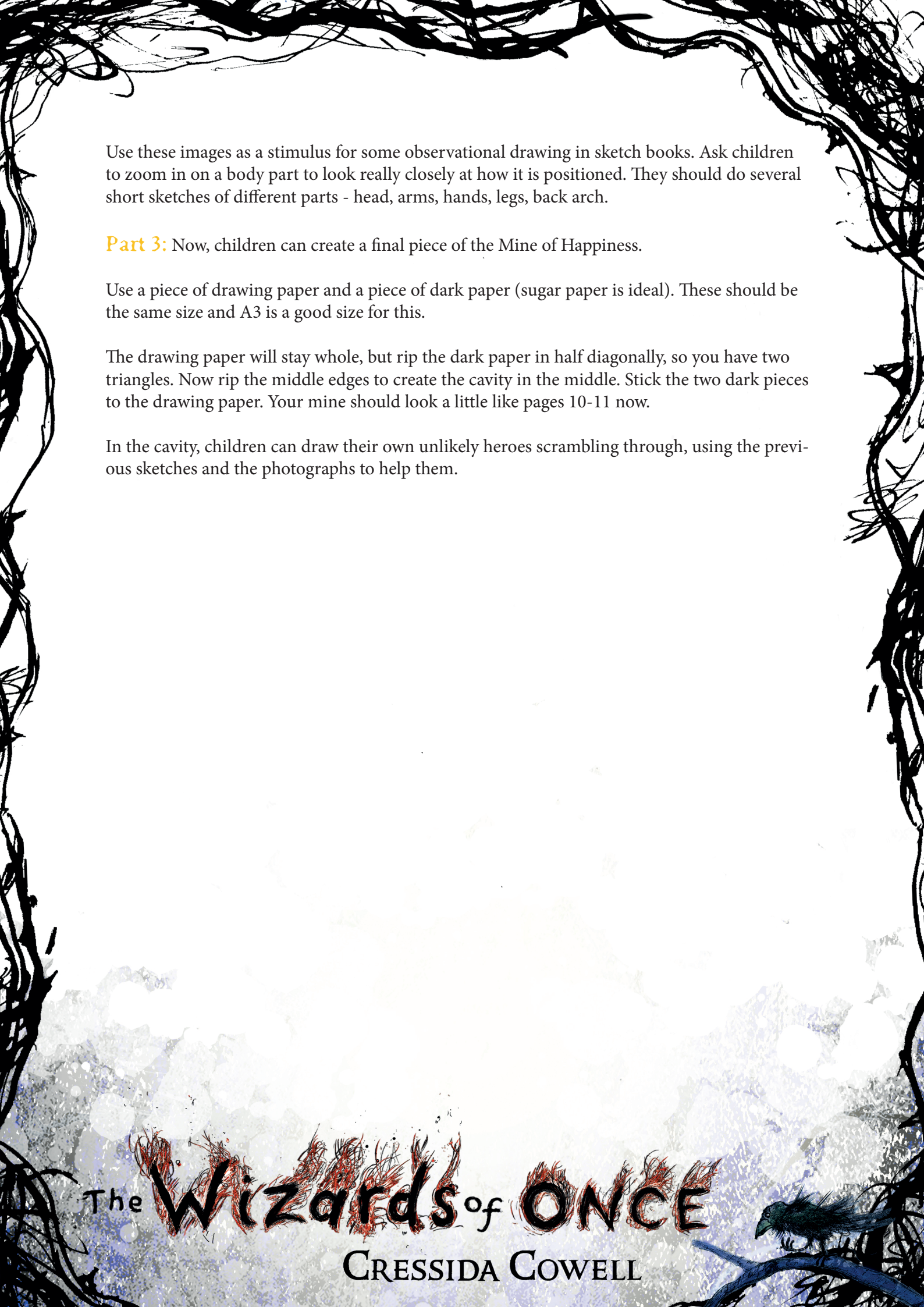
In the first chapter of *The Wizards of Once: Never and Forever* part one, we find our three unlikely heroes deep down in a Mine, called the Mine of Happiness. They are squashed up and it is dark and dreadful. Here, we will use this scene to inspire some art-work.



Part 1: Read the description of the Mine of Happiness on page 9. Collect key words that describe it, such as dark, dreadful. Children could note these in their sketchbook. Look at the illustration on pages 10–11 together. Ask children to talk about what it might be like to be under there. Add the emotion words and phrases to the collection of words about the setting.

Part 2: To really get a good idea of what bodies look like when in confined spaces, ask children to crawl under chairs, or between two benches. Photograph these poses so children can focus on the position of limbs and heads. Make the photographs even better by asking the models to show the correct emotions in their faces.

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Use these images as a stimulus for some observational drawing in sketch books. Ask children to zoom in on a body part to look really closely at how it is positioned. They should do several short sketches of different parts - head, arms, hands, legs, back arch.

Part 3: Now, children can create a final piece of the Mine of Happiness.

Use a piece of drawing paper and a piece of dark paper (sugar paper is ideal). These should be the same size and A3 is a good size for this.

The drawing paper will stay whole, but rip the dark paper in half diagonally, so you have two triangles. Now rip the middle edges to create the cavity in the middle. Stick the two dark pieces to the drawing paper. Your mine should look a little like pages 10-11 now.

In the cavity, children can draw their own unlikely heroes scrambling through, using the previous sketches and the photographs to help them.

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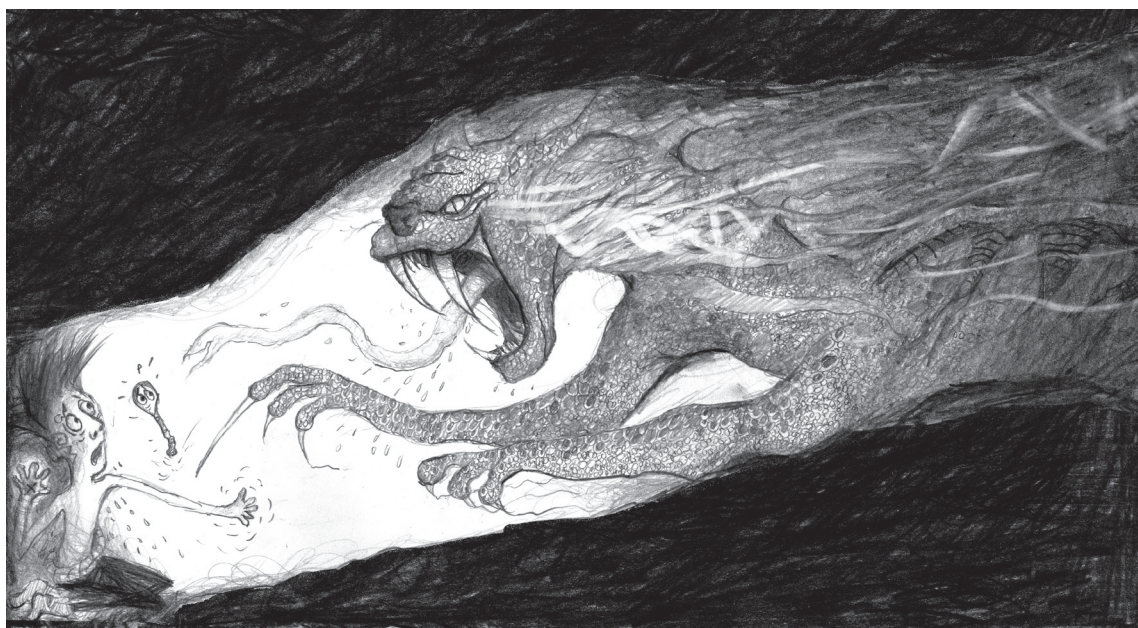


Beware of the Tatzelwurm

This activity is linked to *The Wizards of Once: Never and Forever* (Book 4)

Extract – Chapter 1, page 31 from ‘But there was no time...’ to ‘...through the passages.’

The thing you really do not want to bump into down in those dreadful mines is a Tatzelwurm. This creature is part cat, part dragon and the thing of nightmares! Use this character to create some creatures of your own. This activity is good for collaboration.



Part 1: Read all the descriptions of the Tatzelwurm. Ask children to jot down and collect key words and phrases using the activity sheet on the next page. It is a good idea to get children to think about the five senses to support finding descriptions.

Book extract:	Senses focus:	Description Notes:
Page 31		
Page 80		
Page 85		
Page 93		
Page 94		
Page 101		

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Beware of the Tatzelwurm

Activity Sheet

Write and collect key words and phrases used to describe the Tatzelwurm.

Helpful tip: think about the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell) to help find descriptions.

Book extract:	Senses focus:	Description Notes:
Page 31		
Page 80		
Page 85		
Page 93		
Page 94		
Page 101		

Part 2: Share with children the way authors and illustrators develop their writing and illustrations by doing research. For creatures, this could be finding out about real-life animals or looking at mythical creatures. You can create new creatures by putting together the best bits of different animals and mythical beasts.

Ask children to find out about dragons and cats and collect ideas, features, adaptations that excite them. This could be collected in a sketchbook or mood board.

(NB – if you are studying adaptations in science learning, this could be a great link)

Part 3: In this part, children should decide if they would like to do a dragon or cat part. They can decide if it is the front or back end. For their part, they will draw and create just half of the creature. The belly MUST connect at the two lines in the centre.



When complete, cut the image at the line.

Part 4: Here the fun begins. Ask children to pair up with children who have drawn a different part to see what Tatzulwurms have been created. They must make sure to create a part dragon, part cat creature. Photograph the different combinations. You may wish to display final creatures on a wall display, or why not create a mix and match book?

Extension: Children could write a description of their very own Tatzelwurm, using the five senses to give a great description.

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Draw Your Own Tatzelwurm Activity Sheet

Draw your very own Tatzelwurm from *The Wizards of Once: Never and Forever*
by Cressida Cowell.

Using the template below, draw and create just one half of a creature. Remember: its belly MUST connect at the two lines in the centre. Once you're done, cut along the dotted line and mix and match your creature with your friends to create a brilliant creature!

Please note: this activity works best when done with at least 2 people.



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