

## Activity

## TALKING ANIMALS

Create your own animal character and find lots in books.

*What should I do?*

Watch Viviane Schwarz making storybook characters from shapes...

Have a look at this really simple way to create a character from squiggles!

<https://www.bl.uk/childrens-books/videos/viviane-schwarz-how-to-develop-a-character>

You are going to have a go at this - try and see what animals or monsters you could make from your squiggles.

Choose one or two and cut them out.

Bring your character to life

Bring your animal character to life by thinking more about your characters: try to make them really different.

To help you, you look at the British Library website where there are lots of ideas:

<https://www.bl.uk/childrens-books/activities/write-an-animal-tale>

Or if you can't get to the website, here are some of their questions to help you to bring your animal to life:

- Does it talk like a human or make other sorts of animal noises? What might it say? Practise doing your character's voice.
- Does your creature wear clothes?
- Where does your creature go? Who does it meet?
- Does your creature live in a forest, in a jungle, on a moor or in a zoo? Perhaps it has a job. Does it work in a school, a supermarket, an old grey office or a library? Maybe it plays music in an orchestra or writes stories for children?
- The Gruffalo has purple prickles, a poisonous wart and knobby knees. What kind of body does your creature have? How does its skin feel when you touch it? Does its physical characteristics reflect its personality?
- How does your creature make you feel? Is your creature terrifying, fascinating, revolting, boring or adorable? Perhaps it's a mixture of all these things.
- Does your creature have special powers? Can it see into the future or read people's minds? Is it a book worm, an extraordinary poet or a brilliant chef?
- What kind of personality does your creature have? Is it bubbly and bouncy, grumpy and scary, ridiculous and nonsensical, ridiculously knowledgeable or lonely and in need of a hug?
- Give your creature a name.

If you want to, you could now make up a story for one or both of your creatures. You could write it down, or act it out by making your characters into puppets (just stick them onto a lolly stick/straw/piece of card).

Share your work

Send your creations to [learning@bl.uk](mailto:learning@bl.uk) (British Library) and help them to create a magic zoo!

*You can also tweet what you've been up to using the Twitter handle @BabcockLDPEng and the hashtag #BabcockEnglishAtHome.*

**IMPORTANT: Just remember everything you have been taught about staying safe online, and do talk to the person who looks after you about this before making a decision about where and how to post or send your work.**

*Things that could help me*

Have a look at any other books you have at home with animal characters for ideas. You could also think of animals in films and cartoons you like to watch.

*Change it up!  
...Go further!*

- A) You could create a series of stories with your creature characters.
- B) Try animating your characters to make a short film, telling your story using a simple and free animation app like 'Animate it' from Aardman, available for both android and apple.

Notes for  
parents and  
teachers

The British Library Children's Book section is absolutely full of fascinating illustrations, author drawings/notes and ideas for other activities: well worth just browsing together.