

Teaching Guide

Introduction

Suitable for: Children aged 8+

Based on: The adventures of young artist Peanut Jones, her friend Rockwell, younger sister Little-Bit and the dog, Doodle who go on a mission to find Peanut's father.

Ideal for: Readers who enjoy funny and illustrated books, especially budding young artists!

Includes: 5x lessons that include children writing a portal story and creating a self-portrait

Themes: Creativity; Art; Magic; Friendship; STEM; Family; Adventure; Loss; Courage & Loyalty

About *Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City*

Superstar, author and illustrator Rob Biddulph dazzles in *Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City*, the first title in an adventure series for boys and girls of 8+.

Fizzing with magic, danger, friendship and art, this exciting, funny, middle-grade debut is from the bestselling creative genius behind #DrawWithRob.

Some legends are born, some are drawn . . .

Drawing feels like magic to Peanut Jones. But art can't fix her problems. Her dad has gone missing, and she's stuck in a boring new school. Until the day she finds a unique pencil turbo-charged with special powers. Suddenly she's pulled into a world packed with more colour, creativity, excitement and danger than she could ever have imagined. And maybe, just maybe, she might find out what happened to her dad.



About the author-illustrator — Rob Biddulph

Rob Biddulph is a bestselling and multi award-winning author/illustrator. He is also the official World Book Day Illustrator for 2019, 2020 and 2021. *Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City* is his fiction debut and the first title in a major new series. He is the author of many highly, acclaimed, award-winning picture books, including *Blown Away*, *GRRRRR!*, *Odd Dog Out*, *Sunk*, *Kevin*, *Show and Tell*, *Dog Gone* and the *Dinosaur Juniors* series.

In March 2020 he started #DrawWithRob, a series of twice-weekly draw-along videos designed to help parents whose children were forced to stay home from school due to the Covid 19 pandemic. #DrawWithRob became an internet sensation, garnering national and international media coverage, and has been used as a learning resource by thousands of families across the globe. On 21 May 2020 he broke the Guinness World Record for the largest ever online art class when 45,611 people tuned in to his live #DrawWithRob YouTube class.

Before he became a full-time author/illustrator Rob was the art director of the Observer Magazine, NME, Uncut, SKY and Just Seventeen. He lives in London with his wife and three daughters and hasn't given up hope that, maybe, one of them will go to an Arsenal match with him one day.

National Curriculum Objectives

English:

Reading: comprehension

- Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:
 - ii. discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination
- Understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:
 - drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher
- Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:
 - identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
 - drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

English:

Writing: composition

- Discuss writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
- Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:
 - writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

Art and design

- Pupils should be taught to develop their techniques, including their control and their use of materials, with creativity, experimentation and an increasing awareness of different kinds of art, craft and design.
- Use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination.
- Develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.
- Create sketch books to record their observations and use them to review and revisit ideas.
- Improve their mastery of art and design techniques, including drawing, painting and sculpture with a range of materials [for example, pencil, charcoal, paint, clay]
- Taught about great artists, architects and designers in history.

Computing

- Design, write and debug programs that accomplish specific goals, including controlling or simulating physical systems; solve problems by decomposing them into smaller parts.
- Use logical reasoning to explain how some simple algorithms work and to detect and correct errors in algorithms and programs.
- Use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked, and be discerning in evaluating digital content.

History

- Taught the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements.



Lesson objectives and outcomes

Lesson 1: The Power of the Pencil

Objectives:

- To celebrate creativity and illustrate how we can all have a variety of skills and talents.
- To investigate the history of pencils and discover the point of pencils throughout history.

Outcomes:

A class conversation about creativity designing their own #PackedLunchPostIt; a completed letter written from the perspective of a pencil; and writing a report about the inventor of the modern pencil as well as understanding the history of writing tools through time.

Lesson 2: The City of Chroma

Objectives:

- To appreciate basic colour theory and mixing, altering the tint and shade of a colour.
- To use a colour wheel to identify primary and secondary colours and explore our understanding of the significance of visual art.

Outcomes:

An exploration of colour mixing using tints, shades and tones linked to monochromatic colours; a creation of a colour wheel; and the design of an illustrated city linked to colour theory knowledge.



Lesson 3: Code Breakers and Code Makers

Objectives:

- To understand that there are lots of different types of secret codes.
- To design simple codes and communicate messages using problem solving skills.

Outcomes:

A class consideration about a world without many of the communication methods we rely on today; a completed record of the safety of websites we visit; and the creation of codes using a cipher wheel.

Lesson 4: Portals to the Past, Present and Future

Objectives:

- To recognise the inspirations and analyse the features of a portal story.
- To plan and write a fictional portal story.

Outcomes:

A brainstorm of ideas for a magical portal world; a written plan of a portal story identifying its main features and plot pattern; and the completion of a fictional portal story.

Lesson 5: From Pencil to Portrait

Objectives:

- To learn about the lives, artworks, styles, influences and techniques of famous artists.
- To draw using the correct scale and proportions, and express feelings through self-portraiture.

Outcomes:

A research task linked to learning more about a chosen artist; an understanding of drawing a portrait using the correct proportions; and a completed 'split face' self-portrait using a photograph.

Lesson One: The Power of the Pencil

Questions

- What is a pencil? How might a pencil be “magic”? What power does a pencil have?
- What would your pencil say about you?
- Who invented the pencil?



Task 1:

To begin a conversation about creativity, present a pencil to the class - it might be one they are familiar with using in school or a large novelty one would be good for visibility. Hold up the pencil and ask the children what it is. Then ask what it is used for. As children give responses, invite them to mime those uses. The mimes might include writing, drawing, sketching, colouring, joining the dots, doing word searches etc. Select some children to tell you about their favourite or best achievements using a pencil - e.g. it could be writing a particular poem or piece of work, completing a puzzle they enjoy, drawing a detailed illustration. Show children [a video of the](#)

[#PackedLunchPostIts](#) that author Rob Biddulph created when his daughter was feeling anxious about starting school. Relate this to the events of Peanut and her father in Chapter 4 in the book. Provide the children with their own Post It note and ask them to create their own design either to put in their own lunchbox to see at lunchtime or to give to someone at home. Encourage freedom of thought, and creativity, reminding them not to worry if they don't think they can draw but that the main thing is to have a go and have fun. You may want to follow along with a [#DrawWithRob](#) video from Rob Biddulph's [YouTube channel](#).

Task 2:

Gather children together and read aloud *The Day The Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers. Ask children to think about why they think the crayons chose to write letters to Duncan. Allow a few moments for discussion and talk more about the book encourages us to show empathy by understanding what it is like from another character's viewpoint. Explain why the crayons write a letter as letters help us to put our thoughts into words that we can share directly with another person.

Tell the children that they will be writing a letter to themselves from the perspective of their pencil. Use one of the letters from *The Day the Crayons Quit* to point out the different features of a letter, including the date, a greeting, a body where the writer shares their thinking, and a closing. Hold up a pencil and ask the children to think about what a pencil might want to say: What are pencils good at? What are they not so good at? What might they complain about? As a class, you may want to role play and act out the thoughts of a pencil to get into character before writing your letters. After writing, invite children to read their letter aloud. Encourage them to be dramatic in their reading, thinking about tone and expression.



Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City

Part One... in which Peanut learns some surprising truths

Lesson One: The Power of the Pencil

Task 3:

Chapter 16 of the book is named after Nicolas-Jacques Conté, a French painter, inventor, army officer and balloonist, and who among others, is credited with the invention of the modern wooden, graphite pencil. Ask the children to research the life of Nicolas-Jacques Conté and using their research, create a poster, double-

page spread or presentation about him. You may want to encourage children to look further back in history and understand how prior to the invention of the modern pencil, there were a variety of ancient writing tools, implements and materials used by people like the Mesopotamians, Greeks, Romans and Ancient Chinese.



Lesson notes and observations:



Lesson Two: The City of Chroma

Questions

- Why are colour choices important? How do we know what colours blend together successfully?
- How does the colour wheel help us to understand how colours work together?
- How do you create tone, mood and expression if you are only using one colour?

Task 1:

In Chapter 19, Peanut visits Chroma, a very special place where the world's creative and artistic energy comes from but which has now been destroyed by Mr White leaving it devoid of colour. Introduce children to some images of monochromatic art such as *Still Life with Green Apples* (Paul Cezanne, 1873). Write out the word 'monochrome' on the board and explain how it comes from the two Greek words *mono* (meaning "one") and *chroma* (meaning "surface" or "the colour of the skin"), so monochromatic art is art that is created using just one colour. Discuss how an artist may decide to create a piece of artwork which is monochromatic. This means that the artist uses tints, shades and tones of a single colour. Can they identify which colours have been used in the paintings shown? What do the words tints, shades and tones mean when mixing colours? Describe how a **tint** is

where an artist adds a colour to white to create a lighter version of the colour. For example, a tint is pink. Pink is a tint created by adding white to red. A **shade** is where an artist adds black to a colour to darken it down, and a **tone** is where an artist adds grey to a colour. Show the children a pre-prepared colour chart that the teacher has made to show how with incremental amounts of white or black paint added, the colour lightens or darkens and different tints or shades occur. Teacher to demonstrate for children how a little bit of white or black paint was added several times over. Discuss success criteria for tints or shades of colour - what makes a good tint or shade? Focus on the skills the children need to be demonstrating such as brush control. Children can explore and create their own tints and shades on paper (into pre-prepared boxes if possible).



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Lesson Two: The City of Chroma

Task 2:

Following on from Task 1, start the discussion by displaying a colour wheel on the board and asking children what they think is the meaning of a colour wheel. Write down their suggestions and explain how a colour wheel is a tool used in art and design to show colours and their relationship to each other. Show how in the red-yellow-blue colour model, the primary colours are red, blue, and yellow. Point out the three parts in between two colors, and also emphasise the triangular formation. Then demonstrate the mixing of the primary colours. Ask children to predict the result of each blend.

When you are done with the secondary colours, apply them to the colour wheel and point out their positions. Then proceed to the mixing of the secondary colors to come up with the tertiary colours. **Extension:** Use this as an opportunity to discuss complementary colours (that are opposite each other on the wheel); analogous colours (that are next to each other on the wheel); triadic and tetradic colours (three and four colours that are equal in distance from each other on the colour wheel) and warm and cool colours. Colour wheels could also be created on paper plates to hang and display.

Task 3:

Following on from Task 1, start the discussion by using their newly-learned colour knowledge, especially about monochromatic colours, ask children to create their own illustrated city using one colour, with a range of tones, tints, or shades. Encourage them to consider what they might include within their city landscapes including

the shape of buildings, landmarks and people, and how colour is used to create tone, mood, atmosphere and expression within their artwork. You may wish to model an example as a class, relating back to the illustrations shown in the book of Chroma and other places like The Strip and The Cute Quarter.

Lesson notes and observations:



Lesson Three: Code Breakers and Code Makers

Questions

- What is a secret code? What kinds of things might people want to keep secret?
- How can we communicate using codes?
- How quickly can you encrypt and decrypt a message?

Task 1:

To get children thinking about secret codes, ask them to imagine a world without phones, computers, television, WiFi and social media. Introduce Samuel Morse who, in 1844, invented a special code that consisted of dots and dashes called Morse code. Demonstrate some examples

of spelling out words in Morse code and encourage the children to have a go at writing their own. **Extension:** Show a video of Morse code being transmitted along a telegraph wire. Tap out the sounds and see if the message can still be deciphered.

Task 2:

Throughout the book, Rockwell and Little-Bit's logical and lateral thinking is on show so link back to the book in Part Three in Chapter 59 when they end up solving a secret code to help them to find Malcolm Markmaker. Discuss the methods they used to solve the clues. Relate this to the wider world by getting children to think about what kinds of information might need to be kept hidden. Write the words 'cryptography', 'encode' and 'decode' on the board and explain their meanings, including that 'cryptography' comes from the Greek words kryptos (meaning 'hidden') and graphia (meaning 'writing'). Ask children what would happen if all of our passwords

were transmitted over the internet without any sort of encryption? Take ideas about how we might protect sensitive information, e.g. using password-protected storage ensuring that emails and other messages cannot be read by anyone who intercepts the data. Discuss how many websites are also secured so that hackers cannot gain access to the computer files that make up the website or personal data stored in them. Point out how the addresses of secure websites begin with 'https' rather than 'http'. Visit websites online to check which are secure using 'https' or displaying a padlock and keep a record of their findings in a table.



Lesson Three: Code Breakers and Code Makers

Task 3:

Show the illustrations of the cipher in the book on pages 270-272. Explain that a cipher is a code used to protect information that is being stored or communicated, so that only people who are allowed can access it. Demonstrate how using the cipher wheel to encrypt a message (making it secret) involves transforming each letter of the message into another letter or a number by following a series of steps: an algorithm. In this case, the algorithm involves simply shifting each letter of the message by a certain number of places through the alphabet. Suggest that algorithms are commonplace in mathematics and computing. Describe how the message's receiver is

aware of the algorithm and can decrypt the messages by applying the algorithm in reverse. To anyone else, the message looks nonsensical and is unsolvable. To further children's curiosity and problem-solving skills, provide them with a template to make their own cipher wheel and use it to send secret messages to their friends and each other in the classroom. Encourage children to try encrypting their messages and see if someone else can decrypt it with their equation or even work it out themselves. **Extension:** Generate a range of different cipher combinations to make your messages more difficult to solve.



Lesson notes and observations:



Part Four... in which Peanut finds herself in a spot of bother (Well, several spots of bother, actually)

Lesson Four: Portals to the Past, Present and Future

Questions

- What is a portal?
- If you could visit another world, where would you choose and why?
- Do you know any portal stories? Can we write our own portal story?



Task 1:

To spark children's imaginations and get them talking about portals, show children a range of visuals including different types of doors, doors in fantastical places and people opening doors. Discuss the appearance of these doors, where they are located and what may be on the other side. Write down a list of children's predictions on the board. Link back to the book when Peanut draws herself a door at the end of Part 1, and the other mentions of doors or portals throughout. Also, use the website [The Secret Door](#), as a source of inspiration, where children can click on the door to reveal a multitude of different settings and unusual places. Talk about the range of real places where children could find themselves as well as a variety of imaginative settings that they can

think of. Share how portals feature in many well-known stories such as when Lucy discovers Narnia in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis, Harry Potter and the wall at Platform 9¾ and when Alice falls down the rabbit hole and peers through the keyhole in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. Ask children to describe the world they'd like to be in on the other side of a door that they have drawn. Would it be real or imaginary? What adjectives would they use to describe it? Ask children to draw their own door closed and open in the centre of a page in their book and brainstorm ideas around the edge to begin to build their new, magical portal world of what may lie on the other side of it

Task 2:

Recap children's ideas from Task 1 about their ideas of a portal fantasy land. Tell them that, using their ideas, they will be writing their own fictional portal story. But first, they will need to plan out their portal story to help them to write it. As a class, start to identify the main features and plot pattern of a portal story including 1) main character finds portal and magically enters new world; 2) the new world is described in vivid detail;

3) main character explores this new world and encounters a problem and other characters; 4) main character has to escape and return through the portal back to the world they are used to. Remind the children that once they have identified the structure of the story, the possibilities of portals are endless as a portal can be almost anything ranging from doors, rabbit holes, keyholes and mirrors to wardrobes, paintings, tunnels and screens. Once children have decided on the plot, characters and settings of their stories, encourage them to let their ideas flow during the planning stage and not to worry about spelling, handwriting or presentation as they can go back and edit this later when writing.



Part Four... in which Peanut finds herself in a spot of bother (Well, several spots of bother, actually)

Lesson Four: Portals to the Past, Present and Future

Task 3:

Following Task 2, now that children have all of the tools required to write their own portal story, ask them to write it. Remind them that they may like to write about a more traditional portal or one that is completely imaginary. Prompt them to look back at their plans, brainstorming and

inspirations from earlier sessions to help them, as well as using dictionaries and thesauri, and to try to bring in some of the techniques from other portal stories into their own work. Once completed, invite children to share their stories with the class and each other.



Lesson notes and observations:



Lesson Five: From Pencil to Portrait

Questions

- What is a portrait?
- Which famous portraits do you know?
- Do portraits always show the best side of ourselves? Do portraits belong in galleries?

Task 1:

There are many artists mentioned throughout the book including Jackson Pollock, David Hockney, Stanley Spencer and John Singer Sargent. Ask children to research

a chosen artist of their choice and to create a presentation based on their life, artwork and style.

Task 2:

To introduce your class to the topic of portraits, discuss them. This may also be a good time to talk about portrait and landscape in terms of the orientation of paper to make links. Do children know any famous portraits? Share a selection of portraits on each table. Children can work in groups to discuss which they like or dislike and why. Provide them with sentence starters to help them to discuss the artworks. Can they rank the pictures in order of favourite to least favourite? Explain to the children that in this lesson they will learn about the correct proportions of the face when drawing a portrait. Model the step-by-step process of drawing somebody's face including that the face is divided into three equal parts:

hairline to eyebrows, eyebrows to the bottom of the nose, and bottom of the nose to the bottom of the chin. Show how the eyes are positioned halfway between the top of the head and the chin. Next, ensure children are sitting opposite their partners before they begin drawing their portraits. Provide handouts for children to refer to when drawing to remind them of the correct scale. Afterwards, discuss how well children have followed the guidelines in order to draw a portrait of their partner with accurate proportions. **Extension:** Show children some portraits which have incorrect proportions. Can they spot that the eyes are too high or the mouth is too wide, for example?



Lesson Five: From Pencil to Portrait

Task 3:

Prior to this lesson, ensure you have photographs of every child in your class. Print these photos in black and white and cut them in half vertically before starting the lesson. What can children remember from the last task? Can they remember or recall any of the guidelines for drawing a face? Explain that this time, children will be drawing self-portraits. Share examples of famous self-portraits. This is a good opportunity for children to broaden their knowledge of well-known artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Frida Kahlo, as well as any others you might like to introduce. Explain to the children that they will be using the halved photographs

to help them create a 'split face' portrait, completing the other side in pencil. As children are drawing, ask them to consider how symmetrical our faces are. Are they exactly the same on one side as the other? Or do we have imperfections? You may also want to use this as an opportunity to explore and positively talk about body image. When children have finished their self-portraits, they can then complete a coloured patterned background to contrast with and complement their monochrome portrait. **Extension:** Using their research of their chosen artist from Task 1, they may want to replicate their self-portrait in a similar style or technique to them.

Lesson notes and observations:



Further ideas and activities

- Read more books that feature art and artists such as *Draw With Rob* by Rob Biddulph; *Luna Loves Art* by Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers; *Katie and the Waterlily Pond* by James Mayhew and the Artists Children Should Know series published by Prestel.
- Take a virtual tour of the National Portrait Gallery, and 'see' the *Mirror* exhibition of women's self-portraits.
- Find out more about how the pencil is made, and has evolved from the first modern pencil made by Nicolas-Jacques Conté, into the pencil we know today. Discover that today, pencils are mass-produced by machines that cut down the wood, insert the lead, and stamp or print a design rather than the materials of graphite and clay being grounded down by hand, put into a cylindrical mold, and fired in a kiln like during the 17th century.
- Set up an art and drawing area within your classroom, to encourage creativity, expression and imagination. Display your own gallery of illustrations created by the children.
- It sounds like Peanut Jones will continue to be a spy in the next adventure as part of the Resistance. Discuss with a partner if you think you would make a good spy. What are your spy strengths? Create your own fake spy identity, secret spy organization name and design a badge for it. You could even use props to create your own spy disguise or create your own bandolier to hold your secret art materials.



Lesson notes and observations:



Discussion Notes for Book Club Chat

1. What did you like best about this book?
2. What three words would you use to describe the book?
3. Why do you think the book is arranged and split up into five parts?
4. Which was your favourite illustration? Did it match the way the story looked in your head?
5. Think about one of the other characters in the story such as Rockwell, Little-Bit, Doodle, Mrs. M and more. Why did the author include them? If you could hear this same story from another character's point of view, who would you choose and why?
6. Which character in the book would you most like to meet? Which of these characters would you be friends with? Did any of them remind you of someone you know? Why?
7. Is the setting of the story important to the book? In what ways? Which places in the book would you most like to visit?
8. Did you learn anything new from reading the book?
9. Share a favourite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?
10. The book ends on a cliffhanger 'to be continued...' What do you think will happen to the characters next? What questions do you still have?

