

THE UK'S THEATRE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

TEACHER ACTIVITY PACK Written by Leonie Dodd



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The activities are divided into four main sections:

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Imagining and creating the world of monsters - these activities give the children the opportunity to create their own fictional monsters and explore what monsters mean to them through storymaking.

- 1. Talking about monsters
- 2. Creating a monster
- 3. There's a monster in the garden!
- 4. Monster puppets

LIVING, BREATHING, MOVING MONSTERS! p. 8

Pre or post show movement and drama activities in the hall, gym or other large clear space.

These activities focus on the children becoming monsters and exploring different descriptive vocabulary.

- 1. Warm up
- 2. Moving monsters
- 3. Monster orchestra
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- 5. Day In The Life of a Monster
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BERNARD'S MONSTER p. 13

Post-show circle time and drama activities exploring the children's responses to the play *Not Now, Bernard*. For these activities it may be useful to be in the hall, gym or other large clear space but could be managed in a classroom.

- 1. Story Whoosh of Not Now, Bernard
- 2. In role improvisation what the monster saw and did
- 3. What happened next?
- 4. Circle time discussion about parents and children

OUICK ACTIVITIES p. 16

A collection of quick games or cutting and sticking activities that relate to the themes of the story.

- Playground monster games
- · Colouring, drawing and writing templates





Bernard's parents are so busy doing their own thing that the monster can eat Bernard's dinner, break his toys and even eat Bernard, without them noticing!

Welcome to the teacher activity pack for the Unicorn Theatre's production of *Not Now, Bernard.* The activities in this pack have been designed to support and extend childrens' visit to the theatre and offer pre and post show activities that pick up on and explore the themes in the play.

Not Now, Bernard, with its simple narrative about parents who are too busy to give their son the attention he needs, has been a favourite picture book for children since it was first published in 1980. It is a story about a monster that eats Bernard, bites his father's leg, climbs all over the furniture and breaks things.

The idea of monsters hold a fascination at all ages, often expressing our unformed and unnamed fears. Early childhood education researcher, Vivian Gussin Paley, states that 'Amazingly children are born knowing how to put every thought and feeling into story form. If they are worried about being lost they become the parent. If they are angry they find a hot hippopotamus to impose his will on the world'.

The suggested activities in this pack enable children to make, become and create stories about monsters whilst providing a safe space to to express their fears, frustrations and understandings about the world through the narratives they create. Exploring monsters can also be a lot of fun as they can come in all shapes and sizes and can take on a whole range of characteristics.

The activities include multi-modal exploration of stories, free-play with teacher intervention, role-play, movement, visual art, collage, craft, story making and story acting, and circle time discussions. They aim to support the EYFS framework, with an emphasis on story and play which reinforces the principles of; a unique child; positive relationships and enabling environments leading to learning. The wide range of activities employs the characteristics for effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

There are also clear links to the key areas of learning at the Foundation Stage; **personal, social and emotional development; communication and language; physical development; expressive arts and design and understanding the world.** While the resources do not directly offer literacy and numeracy links teachers will be able to extend activities to include skills and understanding where appropriate.

We hope the resource pack offers creative ideas which are flexible enough for Early Years Teachers and Practitioners to shape for their own setting and priorities.

MAKE BELIEVE MONSTERS

AIMS

- To encourage imaginative play and creative storytelling
- To consider a wide variety of monster characters and narratives
- To develop language skills and communication

1. TALKING ABOUT MONSTERS

This activity introduces the idea of monster characters and stories to your class.

RESOURCES

Story books about monsters.

Explain that you will be creating all sorts of marvellous monsters and imagining what it might be like to be a monster. Start the session with a short discussion;

- Has anybody heard of any stories about monsters?
- What books have you read with monsters in them?
- What are monsters like?
- Are all monsters scary?
- Are monsters ever afraid of anything?

Have a look at any story books about monsters the children have suggested and any you already have in school. Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendack, The Gruffalo and The Gruffalo's Child by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler offer excellent monster stories and images.

Having explored a variety of monster stories, discuss with your class the similarities and differences between the monster characters and stories. This discussion will give you a sense of what monsters mean to your class and open further the possibility for exploration through storytelling.

2. CREATING A MONSTER TOGETHER

This next activity is a group storytelling activity. The class creates a monster together, begins to imagine the world of that monster and develops short stories about the monster. The children are encouraged to use their imaginations and build on each other's suggestions to create short stories. In creating a story as a group this activity models the questions the children might ask themselves when they come to create their own monsters and monster stories in later activities.

RESOURCES

Large piece of paper (lining paper is good for this) or A3 or sugar paper sellotaped together Thick coloured markers or crayons / Assorted bag of collage materials if appropriate Explain that you are going to work together to create your very own monster. Draw around a child on a large piece of paper. Now ask the children to suggest what the monster looks like; what kind of eyes do they have? What sort of skin do they have, is it scaly? Or furry? Does the monster have hair? Has the monster got claws or hooves or hands? Etc.

As each suggestion is made ask the children to help draw and use the collage materials to add the features onto the monster. Negotiating all the ideas of the children is an important part of the process.

Once your monster is complete ask the children to decide:

- What is the monsters name?
- Where does the monster lives?
- What the monster likes to eat?
- What the monster likes to do?
- What makes the monster happy/sad/angry/frightened?
- Have any humans seen the monster?
- What are the best and worst thighs about your monster?

As the children develop a profile of their monster start to create short stories about the monster and the monster's world through open questioning which builds on their suggestions and answers to each question. The stories can be very short and simple.



Rehearsal image

3 (a). THERE'S A MONSTER IN THE GARDEN!

This activity offers the children the excitement of discovering a monster for themselves hidden in the outside space and the opportunity to create their own individual narratives for that monster. They can be encouraged to develop their stories by considering the same kind of questions they have seen modelled in the group storytelling activity.

RESOURCES:

A model monster for each child in the class.

Get your team to make enough monsters so that each child can have their own monster. You could do this using self-hardening or other modelling clay or plasticine in different colours and adding googly eyes and other crafty bits and pieces to decorate. It would be useful to try to make as wide a variety of different monsters as possible - monsters of different colour, shape and size etc. If you are very pushed for time and assistance a variety of monsters can be easily made using a bag of assorted pompoms and gluing googly eyes onto them. You could also purchase party bag assorted monster finger puppets.

Once you have made your model monsters hide them in the outside space. Try hiding them in as many different environments as possible, eg. sand tray, flowerbed, on the climbing frame etc. Ask the children to look for the hidden monsters and then introduce their monster to other monsters that have been discovered.

Support the children in creating short stories about their monsters, once again through open questioning which builds on their suggestions and answers to each question. Questions you could ask might include those you used in the group storytelling activity, as well as the following:

- Where did you find your monster?
- Does the monster live there?
- Do the monsters like to play together?
- Does the monster have a family?
- Is there a monster school for the monster children? What do the children learn there?

3 (b). SHARING OUR MONSTER STORIES

Gather the children in a circle and ask them to introduce the monster that they found and their short stories about them. This activity could develop into acting out/performing the stories. Using an approach like *The Helicopter Technique* developed by Vivian Gussin Paley.

- Explain that if anyone would like to tell you a story about their monster, that you will write the story down and that the whole class will help act it out (later that day or the following day).
- · Find a quiet space with each child and write down their story word for word as they explain it to you.
- Create a storytelling circle; or square that you can all sit around. You could tape this out with masking tape.
- When the children come together explain that you are going to help act out each other's stories.
- Ask the child whose story it is and what part they would like to play.
- Read out the story and ask the children in turn to act out the different parts in the story. You can include playing objects; trees, cars, the sea etc.
- If there are distinct scenes in the story, 'Whoosh' one scene away and set the next one up with the next children in turn.

It is important to validate the story that the children tell, write down and retell the story exactly as each child describes it to you. Don't worry about beginning, middle or end, or if the story makes sense. What is most important is to honour the child's story however fragmentary it is. While you can ask open questions as you write down the story such as 'what happens next?', it is important not to imply that the story is lacking and accept the way the child wants to conclude their story.

When you have finished the story, talk with the children about what they liked and found interesting in the story. You can then move onto another child's story.

Vivian Gussin Paley's book *The Boy Who Would be a Helicopter* (Harvard University Press, 1990) details the philosophy behind her approach and describes the practice in detail. Theatre and Education company, MakeBelieve Arts, demonstrate a Helicopter Technique session on their website: www.makebelievearts.co.uk/ Helicopter

4 (a). MONSTER PUPPETS

Here are some suggestions for monster making activities where the children each create their own monster from craft materials. There aren't many instructions as the monsters are anything the children can imagine.

My Hand Monster

Resources:

Assortment of bright coloured card

Glue

Googly eyes

Decorative bits and pieces (anything you have in your craft box, decorative paper, feathers, buttons, pompoms etc.)

Coloured pens, pencils, crayons

Ask the children to draw around their hand and then cut out. Encourage the children to use their imagination and decorate their cut outs in any way they like to create their monster using all sorts of different materials. The cut out can be used any way up. The fingers can be legs, arms, hair, horns, tentacles or even jaws!

Wooden Spoon Monster Puppet

Resources:

Wooden spoons

Bright paint

Glue

Googly eyes

Craft foam

Pipe cleaners

Decorative bits and pieces (anything you have in your craft cupboard)

Get the children to paint their spoons and then leave them to dry. Once the spoons are dry get the children to design their own monster puppet using the craft materials. Glue on an eye or several eyes. They could use the pipe cleaners for arms or horns and the foam for hair and mouths.

Junk Monster

Resources:

Recycling materials - egg boxes, cereal boxes, plastic bottles, kitchen roll tubes etc.

Bright paint

PVA Glue

Googly eyes

Assorted craft cupboard supplies (pipe cleaners, feathers, pom poms, lollypop sticks, crepe paper etc.)

Once your class has collected a wide variety of recycling materials encourage the children to let their imaginations fly and cut and glue egg boxes and kitchen roll tubes together to create their monster body. Having constructed their monster, mix some PVA glue with the paints (to help it stick) and get the children to paint their monsters. Once dry ask the children to decorate their monsters and add their monster's features using the googly eyes and craft cupboard supplies.

With this monster making activity anything really does go!

4 (b). SHARING OUR MONSTER STORIES

Whichever making activity you choose to do encourage the children to create short stories about their weird and wonderful monster creations and share them with their classmates. Once again this could be developed into acting out/performing the stories as described in section 3 (b).



Rehearsal room image

LIVING, BREATHING, MOVING MONSTERS!

AIMS

- To support the children in becoming monsters in their monster worlds
- To explore vocabulary, movement and physical expression
- To respond to narrative action and encourage the children to offer suggestions
- To respond to music including the music they will hear when they come to watch the show

RESOURCES

Some 'monster music' for example; Prokofiev's *Montagues and Capulets* from *Romeo and Juliet*, Peer Gynt - *In the Hall of the Mountain King* or the music from our production which can be accessed at:

TRACK 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APskSfnFlug&feature=youtu.be

TRACK 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fowUZI5I8fU&feature=youtu.be

TRACK 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s9onQbaNiG8&feature=youtu.be

TRACK 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iVxWLwhZR4&feature=youtu.be

This music can only be used by teachers in an educational context and must not be copied or shared for any other purpose.

A tambourine (optional) to shake to signal to stop and start during the exercises.

Explain to the children that in this session they will be imagining what it might be like to be a monster; exploring how different monsters move and sound.

1. WARM UP

Start with a physical warm up: This will prepare the children for the session focussing on movement using the whole body.

Ask the children to find a space and curl up in a ball as small as they can.

Then slowly unfold and grow taller and taller and taller until they are as tall as they can be (arms up and on tip toe).

Then ask them to get slowly smaller again, then taller again. Gradually speed up this sequence until the children are doing spring jumps.

Repeat this sequence but this time asking the children to be as skinny as they can be and then as wide as they can be.

Again gradually speed up until the children are doing star jumps.

Shake out the whole body and then finally, to cool down, ask the children to imagine they are gently blowing in the breeze (arms up waving from side to side).

2 (a). MOVING MONSTERS

Ask the children to create a statue of a monster. Remind them that a statue doesn't move or speak. Examine each monster statue noting sharp claws, wrinkled noses, snarling teeth, ears, tails, horns, bandy legs etc. In addition to responding to what the children have created you can make suggestions for things they might try, for example hands for tails or spines, wings, big tummies, broad shoulders etc.

Now ask the children to imagine how their monster would walk. Encourage the children to explore different ways of moving. Calling out the words below and responding to the children's own offers. Some of the words you may need to discuss a little to get some ideas going with the children.

Say freeze in between each word or shake a tambourine to signal stop and go.

Stamping

Shuffling

Crawling

Lumbering

Creeping

Wobbling

Squelching

Wiggling

Flying

Sniffing

Slithering

2 (b). HAPPY MONSTERS

This exercise encourages the children to consider how we (and monsters!) express our emotions through our body and facial expression. Ask the children to create a statue of the following type of monster, then bring each monster to life considering how they move differently when they experience different emotions.

Happy monster

Sad monster

Cheeky monster

Clumsy monster

Greedy monster

Angry monster

Confused monster

Lonely monster

Friendly monster

2 (c). PLAYFUL MONSTERS

Ask the friendly monsters to go and find another friendly monster to sit with. Ask the children to decide what these monsters like to play. Do they like to play together? Brainstorm a few ideas first to make sure everyone has an idea of what they might be doing; for example playing football, breaking a toy, reading a comic. Ask them to firstly make a frozen image of the monsters playing together, look at the images one at a time and try to guess what they are doing. Then ask the children to bring their monsters to life.

3. MONSTER ORCHESTRA

Gather the children into a circle and explain that you are now all going to create a monster orchestra using all the different sounds monsters make. Before you start agree on the different hand signals you will use to signal when the children should start and stop and increase or decrease their volume. Take suggestions for the sounds monsters make. You could also ask the children to respond to the different sound suggestions below:

Grunt

Snort

Wail

Laugh

Grumble

Roar

Groan

Once you have collected a variety of monster sounds organise the children into small groups and allocate a different monster sound to each. Conduct your monster orchestra using the agreed hand signals to cue each group in, to start and stop groups and to increase and decrease their volume and create a beautiful cacophony of monster music!

4. MONSTER DINNER

With everyone remaining in the circle, explain to the children that you are now going to make a monster dinner. Ask them to imagine they are all monsters sitting around an enormous monster cooking pot. In turn ask the children to describe what the monsters like to eat and get them to walk to the centre of the circle and act out putting that ingredient into the pot. You may like to demonstrate by putting the first ingredient into the pot. For example, if the monsters like to eat wriggly worms these will be very wriggly as you try to put them into the pot. If the monster likes to eat rusty bicycles these will be heavy and awkward to lift into the pot. You can count together how many of each ingredient you add into the pot. After each suggestion ask everyone to stir the pot (from their place around the circle) and have an imaginary taste, mmmmm delicious!!

Once the cooking is finished ladle out a bowl full for each monster and ask the children to describe and act out how the monsters eat their dinner. Here are a few suggestions you could try:

Gobble

Munch

Chew

Crunch

Dribble

Slurp

As you are eating your dinner you can have a chat about your day and find out what all the monsters have been up to. And finally ending the meal with......a big burp!

5. DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MONSTER

This narration with action exercise draws together all of the work you have done so far in this section into a whole class improvisation. Explain to the children that you will be narrating a story of a day in the life of a monster using some of the movements and sounds they have used already and inviting them to make suggestions at points during the story. Ask them to listen to the story carefully and act out what happens. Say freeze or use a shake on a tambourine between each moment of action to focus the children so that they can listen to the next piece of narration. Take suggestions from the children at appropriate moments in the story and also use suggestions the children made in earlier exercises to add to the narration.

You may also like to underscore the improvisation by playing the monster music from the show in the background as you narrate. Start by asking the children to imagine that they are monsters sleeping in a monster cave.

- The monster was snoring loudly in its cave.
- As the sun came up the monster slowly woke up and rubbed its eyes. It had a big stretch, let out a roar and then scratched its enormous belly.
- The monster was very hungry! (ask the children to suggest what the monster should eat today).
- The monster opened the cupboard and took out It sniffed the and licked its lips. Then gobbled it up in one huge bite and let out an enormous burp!
- Next the monster decided to go out to play and lumbered (or ask the children for their suggestions of how they makes their way) into the garden.
- The monster kicked a football... but there was no one to pass it to.
- It hid behind the flower bed... but there was no one to come and find them.
- It did a silly dance... but there was no one to laugh with It.
- The monster felt a bit lonely and sad. It wanted someone to play with.
- At that moment another monster came along (ask the children to find a partner to work with).
- The two monsters sniffed each other and grunted and decided to be friends.
- · First they played football, but they kicked the football and it smashed a neighbours window.
- So the cheeky monsters quickly hid behind the flowerbed and snorted with delight.
- Then they had a silly dance competition and rolled around with laughter in the flowerbed squashing all the flowers.
- They stamped back to their caves as fast as they could. That night as they lay in bed they felt very happy. They drank their glass of green slime and were soon fast asleep.

6. FREE PLAY MONSTER DENS AND DRESSING UP

Set up an indoor or outside play area to create a monster's den. Let your imaginations run wild and use what resources you have. Dress the space by hanging strips and swathes of material from the walls or along washing lines. Dangle toy spiders from the ceiling and hang strips of crepe paper at the entrance to play tunnels. Provide the children with blankets and pieces of large material, tables and chairs which allow them to make monster caves within the den.

Monster costumes can be simply created from adult gloves and slippers, scarves tied around the body for tails, shawls over the head, jumpers tied around the neck become wings or cloaks.

Support the children's imaginative play by entering into the drama yourself; you could be a visiting monster for example, or a traveller who has lost their way.



From the rehearsal room

BERNARD'S MONSTER

AIMS

- To revisit and re-enact the story of Not Now, Bernard
- To support the children in expressing their responses to the play
- To recreate moments from the play in order to consider how it feels to be Bernard and the Monster
- To give the children a role from which they can employ their empathy and understanding to help resolve the problem Bernard's parents are left with

1. CIRCLE TIME STORY WHOOSH

A Story Whoosh is a way of acting out a story with the whole class taking part. It is important to go around the circle with each child taking part in turn, making it an accessible and inclusive activity in which all children contribute to telling the story. The teacher will need to take an active narrator/director role and support the children in the creation of the images.

- With the children in a circle read out the Story Whoosh (next page)
- Taking it in turns around the circle ask the children to come up and act out the different characters (and objects where appropriate) in the story.
- You can ask children to say the lines the characters say, or read them out yourself.
- When you come to a Whoosh in the story the children who are in the circle making the images go back to their seats and start with the next children in the circle to make the next section of the story.

Bernard's Dad is hammering a nail into the wall.

Bernard says 'hello Dad'

Dad bangs the hammer into his finger

'Not now, Bernard' Dad says

Bernard walks away

WHOOSH

Mum is in the kitchen taking a jug out of a high up cupboard

'Hello Mum' says Bernard

'Not now, Bernard' said his mother as she filled the jug with water from the tap

WHOOSH

Mum waters the plant in the living room.

'There's a monster in the garden and it's going to eat me,' said Bernard.

Water is spilt all over the table.

'Not now, Bernard' said his mother.

WHOOSH

Bernard went into the garden. 'Hello, monster' he said to the monster who was standing under the tree.

The monster ate Bernard up, every bit.

Then the monster went indoors.

WHOOSH

Bernard's mother was painting the wall in the kitchen.

The monster went 'roar' behind the mother's back.

Mum dripped some paint on the floor. 'Not now, Bernard' she said.

WHOOSH

Dad was sitting reading the paper

The monster bit Bernard's father's leg.

'Not now, Bernard' said his father.

WHOOSH

Bernard's mother has Bernard's dinner on a tray.

'Your dinner's ready' she said and put the dinner on a table in front of the television.

The monster ate the dinner.

Then it watched television.

WHOOSH

The monster read one of Bernard's comics.

And broke his tov robot.

Bernard's mother called 'Go to bed. I've taken up your milk'.

The monster went up stairs.

WHOOSH

The monster sat in bed with the cup of milk.

'But I'm a monster' said the monster.

'Not now, Bernard' said Bernard's mother as she switched out his light.

WHOOSH - the end.

2. CIRCLE TIME ROLE PLAY

This role play will give the children the opportunity to try and help the mother or father at the end of the story. Through the role you can facilitate the children to help you make sense of what's happened by going over the events of the day before, and offer suggestions for what Mum and Dad might do next.

- Having replayed the story through the story whoosh, explain to the children that you are going to take on the role of Bernard's Mum or Dad who has just discovered the monster in Bernard's bed.
- Ask the children to imagine they are Bernard's Mum or Dad's friends or neighbours who have come round to the house.
- As Bernard's Mum or Dad, explain what you have seen in Bernard's bedroom. A monster asleep in his bed and Bernard nowhere to be seen. There are other signs of the monster around the house – the broken toy for example.
- Ask the children what they think you should do about the monster. You can be afraid to go back up maybe someone could go back up with you?
- In role you can remember the events of yesterday from the perspective of the parent.
- · You need the children's help to find out (imagine) why the monster is here and what it wants.

3. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- Think about the story of *Not Now, Bernard* and what happened at the end of the play. If you have done the role play you can talk about some of the ideas that came out of that about what happened next. Now ask the children to decide if they were to carry on the story what they would like to happen next.
- · You can start with the sentence: 'When Mum went into Bernard's room the next day to wake him up '
- See if you can work out a number of extra scenes which you could write down and add to your Story Whoosh. You could then re-run the whole Story Whoosh with your new scenes added on to the end.

4. CIRCLE TIME DISCUSSION

- Ask the children what activities they like doing with their mum and dad and act them out together.
- Ask the children what jobs they can help their parents to do and act them out together.
- · Ask the children if there are things adults need to do on their own, that we can't help with.

To bring the discussion to a close: Discuss with the children the different ways families enjoy spending time together and why it is not always possible for this to happen.

QUICK ACTIVITIES

MONSTER PLAYGROUND GAMES

These games allow the children to play with the idea of being scared and chased by someone who wants to 'get' them. They ask to children to be focused, strategic and disciplined in their movements.

Monster Footsteps (based on Grandmother's Footsteps)

One person is the monster and stands facing the wall with their back toward the rest of the group. At the feet of the monster is something the children need to get (maybe treasure) – a bean bag, a set of keys. When the monster is facing the wall the children can move forward. When they turn around everyone has to freeze, but if they see anyone move that person has to go back to the beginning. If someone gets the treasure and runs back to the beginning they have won and they are the monster in the next round.

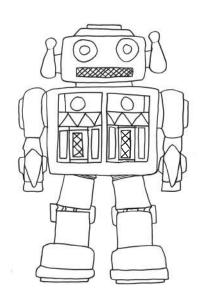
What's the Time Mr Monster? (based on What's the Time Mr Wolf?)

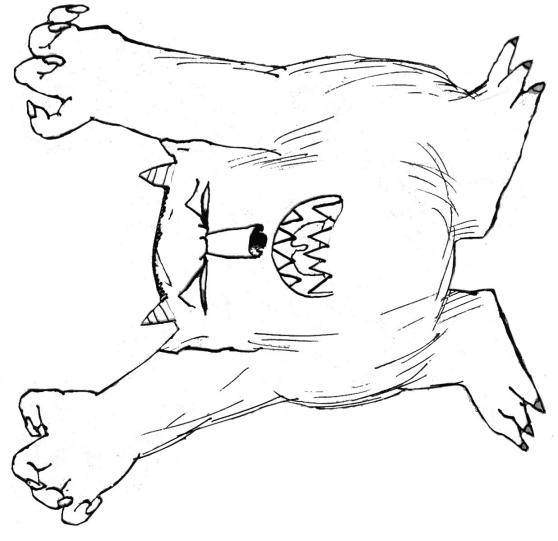
One person is the monster and stands facing the wall. The children chant 'What's the time Mr Monster?' the monster turns around and says a time, 1 o'clock or 8 o'clock for example, and the children are allowed to take that number of steps towards the monster. If, when the monster turns (s)he says 'dinner time' then the monster can chase and catch the children before they get back to the start. However, if a child makes it to the monster and touches him or her they win and are the next person to become the monster.

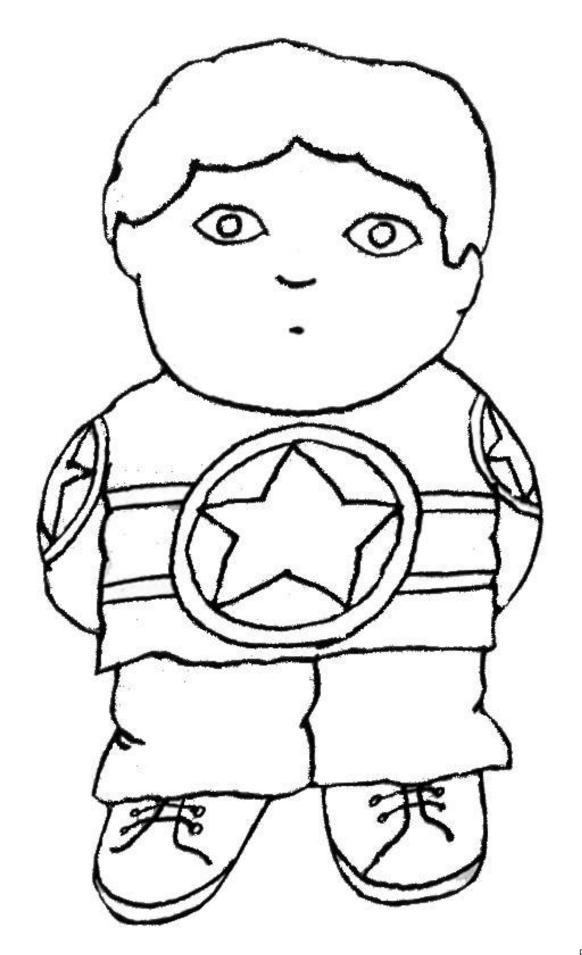
COLOURING IN, CUTTING AND WRITING

The templates on the following pages allow the children to revisit some of the wonderful illustrations from the original book which we have recreated in our production of *Not Now, Bernard.*

- 1. Add another monster or a drawing of yourself in your picture with Bernard's monster.
- 2. Colour in your own version of Bernard.
- 3. Colour in the comic, read and tell us what the stories in the comic are about.
- 4. Can you colour in, cut out and mend the robot that the Monster broke?

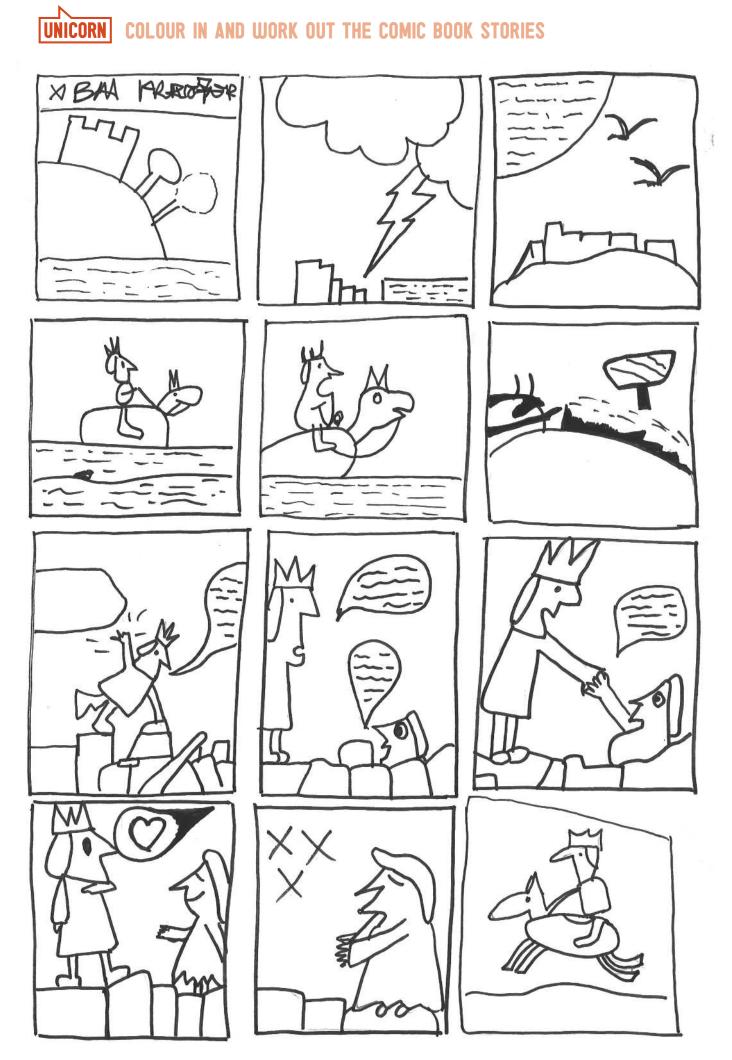




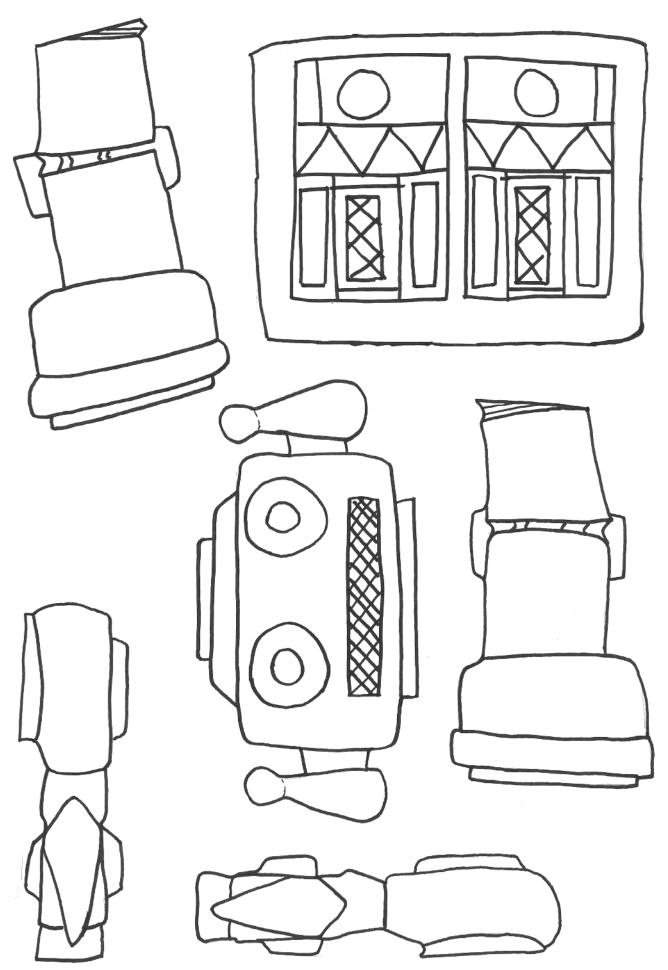


UNICORN COLOUR IN AND WORK OUT THE COMIC BOOK STORIES





UNICORN COLOUR IN, CUT OUT AND MEND THE BROKEN ROBOT





NOT NOW, BERNARD

15 FEB - 9 MAR

A Unicorn production

Based on the picture-book by David McKee
Directed by Ellen McDougall
Designed by James Button
Sound Designed by Elena Pena
Lighting Designed by Phil Clarke
Bernard / Monster Rhys Rusbatch

