

Book Links

Connecting Books, Libraries, and Classrooms

Hands-on Learning Activities for “Illustration as Art—Line”

(Article appeared in the May 2007 issue of *Book Links*.)

Feel free to adapt these suggested activities to the age of the children you work with and the art materials available to you. Markers, crayons, pencils, and pens are popular materials. More traditional media include pen and ink, charcoal, and paint and brush. Don't forget to experiment with sticks and fingers too. All of these tools and media have the ability to create unique lines.

- ***Gilberto and the Wind* Related Activity:** What else happens when the wind blows? Have children create a picture with white and brown chalks on a toned background. Use a fine-tip black marker to draw a detailed character in the scene.
- ***Kitten's First Full Moon* Related Activity:** Working with brush and ink, have children practice controlling the pressure of the brush by painting a page of straight lines. Then try circles. Encourage them to make each mark uniform in tone and thickness and then vary the pressure to see how the lines can change. This same exercise can be done with fat-tipped markers.
- ***The Story of Ferdinand* Related Activity:** Lines in this story are very expressive. Create a picture with lines using different materials, such as pen and ink, brush and paint, or wide- and thin-tipped markers.
- ***Snowflake Bentley* Related Activity:** With the children, observe something from nature such as seashells, leaves, or flowers. Record the details of these objects, using lines.
- ***The Gardener* Related Activity:** Have children draw a quick sketch of a scene in the classroom, library, or out the window. Color the scene with watercolor paints and pastels as the artist did for the pictures in this book.

- ***Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!* Related Activity:** This is one artist who doesn't keep his artistic process a secret. Visit the "How to Draw the Pigeon" page at the publisher's Web site:
http://www.hyperionbooksforchildren.com/pigeon_drawing_instr.pdf. Learn how to master a version of this bird in 10 easy steps. After copying Willems' pigeon, have children create a character of their own with a few simple shapes and lines.
- ***The Man Who Walked between the Towers* Related Activity:** Using lines, have children quickly sketch something far away, up close, down below, and up above. Compare these drawings. How do things change?