

The kindness of words

family activity pack

discovering stories sharing stories creating stories

The kindness...

...of words and stories

Words can be powerful and words can be kind, and a love of stories and poetry can last and enrich your whole life. To accompany our Fair Saturday events programme and celebrate this year's Fair Saturday Movement, we have created these activities for families to encourage the telling and sharing of stories together.

Kindness is at the very heart of Fair Saturday and a big part of what makes us who we are as a country. We can show kindness in lots of different ways, but sharing stories and songs together to celebrate our culture and our diverse communities is a great way to start.

We hope you enjoy trying some of these out, and we'd love to see what you do and create. You can share your activities on instagram or facebook using the hashtags #kindnessofwords and #fairsaturdayscotland

"We don't know what the future of education will look like. But what we can do is make sure that children are motivated to want to learn. And that's what we call educational resilience. Helping children love to read and become lifelong readers and learners equipped to tackle whatever the world has in store for them in the future."

- Dr Rana Dajani, Founder, We Love Reading

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Discovering stories...

Scotland is a land of stories. From the many famous authors who have lived and written here, to the tales inspired by Scotland's people, places and communities, there's lots to discover!

A great place to look for stories that are new to you, is your local library. As well as lots of books that you can borrow for free, many libraries have activities for little ones, such as the Bookbug sessions, with songs, stories and rhymes, and groups for older children and for adults to get together and chat and share stories. Libraries also have a wealth of information on local stories, old and new, about the place where you live and its history, so if you want to be a local detective, it's a brilliant way to get started.

But you can start your search even closer to home...at home! The people around you already have lots of stories. So find a time to sit down together, get cosy, and start discovering each other's stories...



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Discovering stories... create a family story book

A lovely way to create memories and discover the stories of your family is to create a family storybook. It's a way of everyone learning more about each other, and you can add to it in the future so it becomes a living record.

What you need:

- Some pens, pencils and paper
- A scrapbook, notebook or drawing book
- Photos or postcards or tickets or anything else you'd like to stick in

What to do:

Cut up a sheet of paper into smaller pieces and on each piece write one of the questions below or come up with your own. Find a time or a place where everyone is comfortable to share their stories. It could be a cosy place at home or you could take a blanket to the park. Take it in turns to pick out a question to answer. You could each answer a different question or ask the same question to everyone. You don't have to do it all in one go - you could pick a single question to ask when you're having a meal together. Find a way that works for you to record the stories. You could write them down or draw a picture, or even record it on a phone.



Questions you can ask people at home to start sharing their stories:

What was your favourite story when you were a child?

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Where is the most exciting place you've ever visited?

What makes you feel happy?

If you could be an animal, what would you like to be?

Where in the world would you most like to go?

Describe the place where you grew up.



Your family story book can be about anything you choose. It could be general, or you could divide it into different themes, for example favourite books or toys, days out, holidays, favourite songs...

If you have an extended family, then you can ask grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins to share their stories and make a page for each person.

Food can play a huge part in family life. You could ask family and friends to share a recipe and tell the story of why they love this food. Then as well as discovering the stories you can learn to cook the dishes!

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More ideas for discovering stories...

The Empathy Lab has a great list of books that help you to imagine walking in someone else's shoes:
<https://www.empathylab.uk/2022-book-collections-and-guides>



Research the history of an interesting building or structure near where you live.



Join your local library. It's easy and free. You can search for your nearest library here: <https://scottishlibraries.org/about-us/scottish-public-library-services/>



Read a book by an author you have never tried before.



Read a story about a place you've never been to or that's set in another country.



Find out a bit about the history of your school. How long has it existed? Are there any famous pupils?



Have a look at some old maps and try to discover the story of the area where you live. When was it built? What used to be there? How has the area changed? You can find old maps of Scotland here:
<https://maps.nls.uk/towns/>



See if your local park or community space has any open days or community days to help improve your local area. You might be able to help with gardening, litter picking or beach cleaning. You'll be supporting your local community and you might learn a story or two.



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Sharing stories...

Everyone has their favourite stories. It might be a book you loved as a child, or something that you treasure now. Why not share it with others so they can enjoy it too?

We all know that preloved items are better for the environment than always buying new. Charity shops can be a great place to buy books cheaply while supporting a good cause. Even better, is exchanging books with family and friends, and then you also get their recommendations. Giving the gift of books that you have enjoyed is a wonderful way to show kindness to others, and especially for children's books it can help provide variety and introduce new ideas and stories. Lending is fine if you can't bear to part with a favourite forever!

When you do buy new books, support local independent bookshops. They really love their books and they can help you find what you're looking for and suggest new writers that you might all enjoy.



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Sharing stories... plan a story swap

A great way to find new stories to enjoy is to have a book swap with your family and friends. Ask everyone you invite to bring a book that they'd like to lend or share or tell each other your favourite stories.

What you need:

- Some blankets or cushions to make a cosy space for your book swap
- Some snacks
- Some family or friends to come and bring a book or story they'd like to share

What to do:

Make a cosy reading corner in the house or, if it's a sunny day, take a blanket to the park. Ask everyone to bring a book that they'd like to share with others or bring a story that they'd like to tell. Everyone can take it in turns to tell their story or say why they like the book they're sharing. If people are shy, then the books can just be placed in the middle and people can pick something new to read or be read to. With very little ones, the grown ups can take it in turns to read a story to everyone. If the books are too long to be read at the time, they can be borrowed.

Afterwards you can get together to talk about what you liked best about the stories. Which were your favourite characters and why? How did you feel when you read the story? Did you like the way it ended?

If everyone enjoys it, then you could make this a regular book group. And don't forget, this activity isn't just for children. The grown ups can try this too!



A book swap doesn't need to be complicated, but if you want to make it extra special you can ask everyone to dress up as their favourite character from a story.

You could even make food from stories or ask people to bring a dish.

For little ones you could plan a teddy bears' picnic, inside with lots of blankets if the weather isn't kind.

You can design some new bookmarks or colour in the ones we have created for you and give them to your friends when you lend them a book.



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More ideas for sharing stories...

If you have some books that you don't read any more, give them to friends or donate them to a charity shop.



Share some kind words this Fair Saturday. Write a letter or draw a picture to send to someone you haven't seen for a while.



Design a cover for your favourite book or story.



Make a midnight feast or build a blanket den and read or tell stories by torchlight.



Gather your toys together (or a younger brother or sister!) and read or tell them a story.



See if you can learn your favourite poem off by heart and then recite it to someone.

Tell someone at home a story about someone who has been kind to you. What did they do? How did it make you feel?

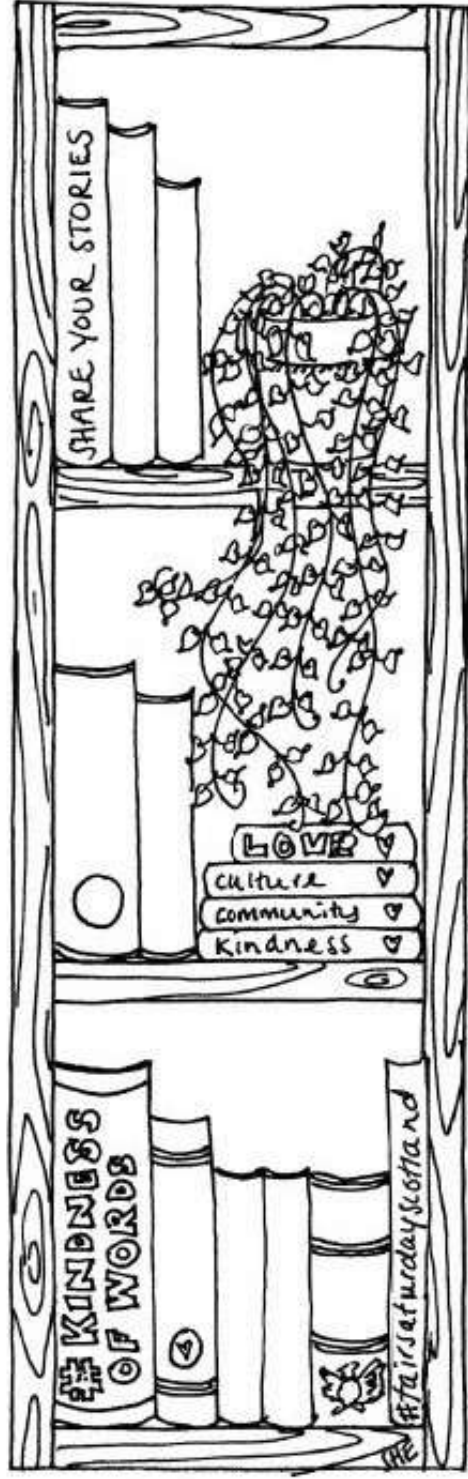
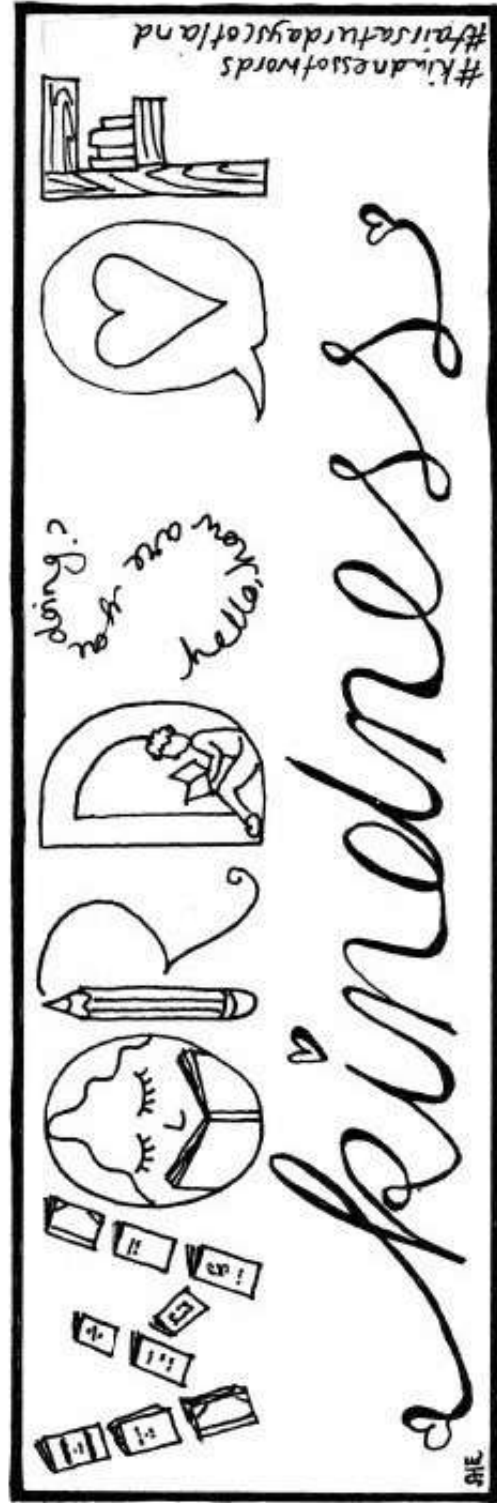
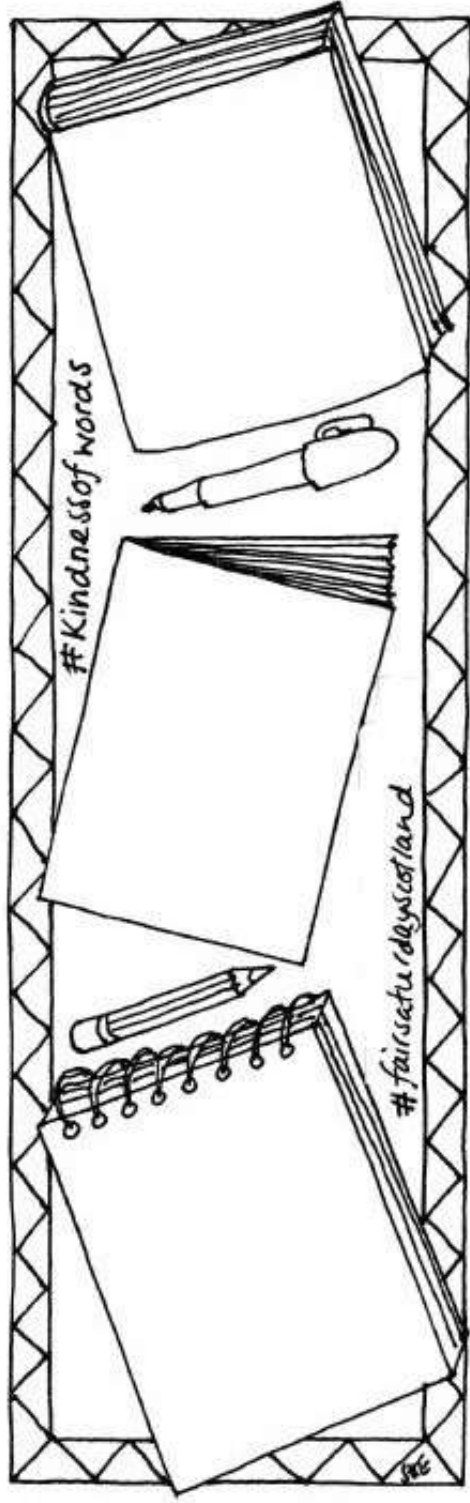


Take a book when you go out and play with your friends. You can read in a woodland camp.



Songs can be stories too! Learn the words to a song that you like and sing it to someone at home. Maybe you can teach them the words too.

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Creating stories...

Creating new stories is a way that you can share your own voice with others. You can let your imagination go wild in any way you choose, inventing new people, places and worlds. Or you can use your stories to show the world that you live in.

Creating stories doesn't need to be formal, and it doesn't need to involve writing things down, which some children find hard, and which others are too young to do. Children create stories all the time, whether they are playing with toys, alone or with others, drawing a picture or talking about their day. Start with this by encouraging them to talk about what they are doing. Ask them to describe what's happening in the scene. How do they feel about it? What's going to happen next? If you search online for open-ended questions for children, lots of ideas come up for questions to open discussions and spark ideas.

The Scottish Book Trust website and the TRACS website have lots of great resources for getting started with creating your own stories:

<https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/topics/creative-writing>

<https://tracscotland.org/our-resources/#peoples-parish-tab>



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Creating stories... go on a word walk

Any trip outside, whether it's a woodland walk or a visit to the shops can spark stories about the things that you see around you, whether it's the people or the buildings, or the colours or the sounds. This simple folding book creates the story of your walk.

What you need:

- A concertina book (you can see how to make it on the next page)
- A pen or pencil

What to do:

As you go on your walk, really focus on all of your senses. Look at the path ahead of you, but also from side to side and notice some of the tiny details. If there are plants, what colour are the leaves? If there are shops or buildings, what names or colours can you see? Are the windows an interesting shape? Is there anything out of place that shouldn't be there? Pause, and write down a word or two about what you can see on your first page then fold it over.

Now listen to the sounds around you. What noises can you hear? The crunch of leaves, the sound of footsteps, an animal? Write down a word or two about what you can hear. Now think about anything you can smell? The scent of rain on leaves or the smell of food cooking. A bonfire? Note down a word or two on the next page. Depending on the kind of walk you are on, there may be opportunities to touch and taste things too, perhaps eat a snack or find a pebble or leaf.

Soon you'll be in a rhythm of walking along, using all your senses, pausing every so often to write down something you've noticed as you continue to fold over the pages. By the time you get home, you'll have a sensory 'map story' of your walk.



Instead of writing sensory words as you walk, you could try thinking of new names for the places and things that you pass. Dinosaur Rock, Windy Wood, The Slippery Steps, The Wiggly Sign. You'll create your own personal map of your walk.

Take a wax crayon and use your book to do some rubbings of textures that you find, like leaves or stones.



Creating stories... make a concertina book

This simple concertina book can be used to record all the sensory things you discovered on your walk, but you can also use it for making a story or comic book.

What you need:

- A piece of paper, A4 is ideal but you can use any size. The paper can be patterned but one side should be plain.
- Scissors (or you can tear the paper)

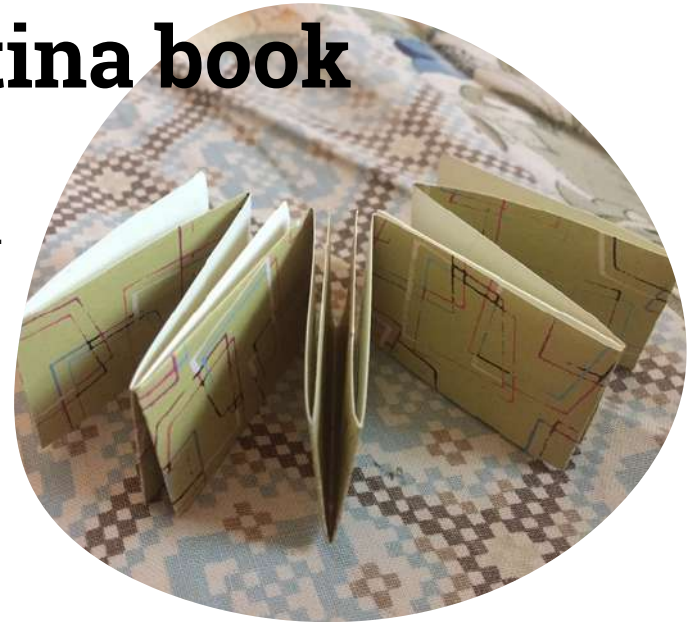
What to do:

Take your piece of paper and fold it in half widthways. Unfold it and fold the side pieces into the middle. Then do the same to make lengthways folds, first in half and then into the middle. Your page should now be divided into 16 boxes.

Cut or tear the central fold along the edge of three boxes. You can do this lengthways if you want your book to be landscape shaped or widthways for portrait. From the other end, cut along three boxes along the two outer folds. The templates on the following pages show where to make the folds and cuts.



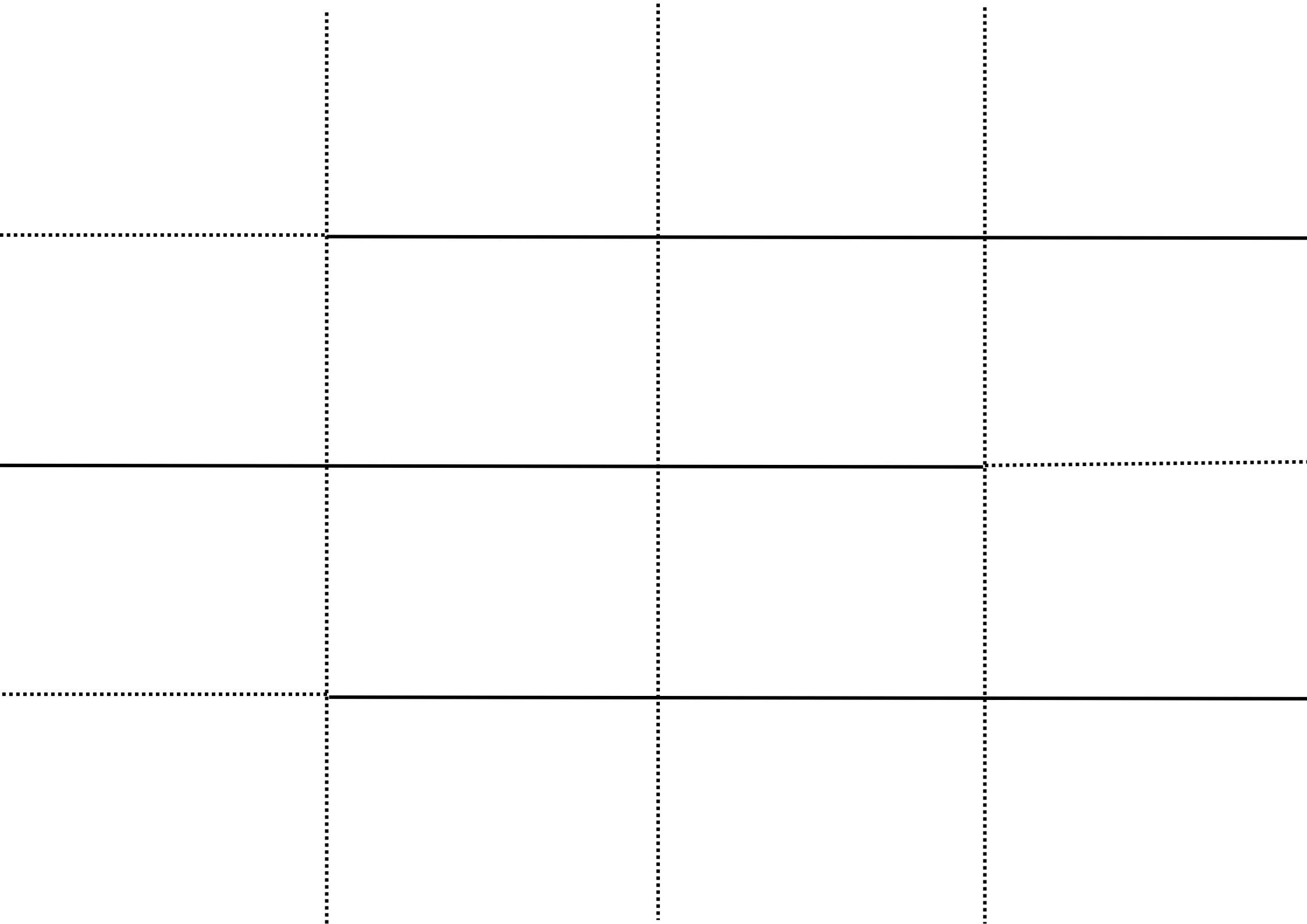
Now re-fold along the fold lines, making alternate folds until you have a concertina. You will have three 'secret' spaces. You can use these for extra pictures or writing, or tape them up to make little pockets.

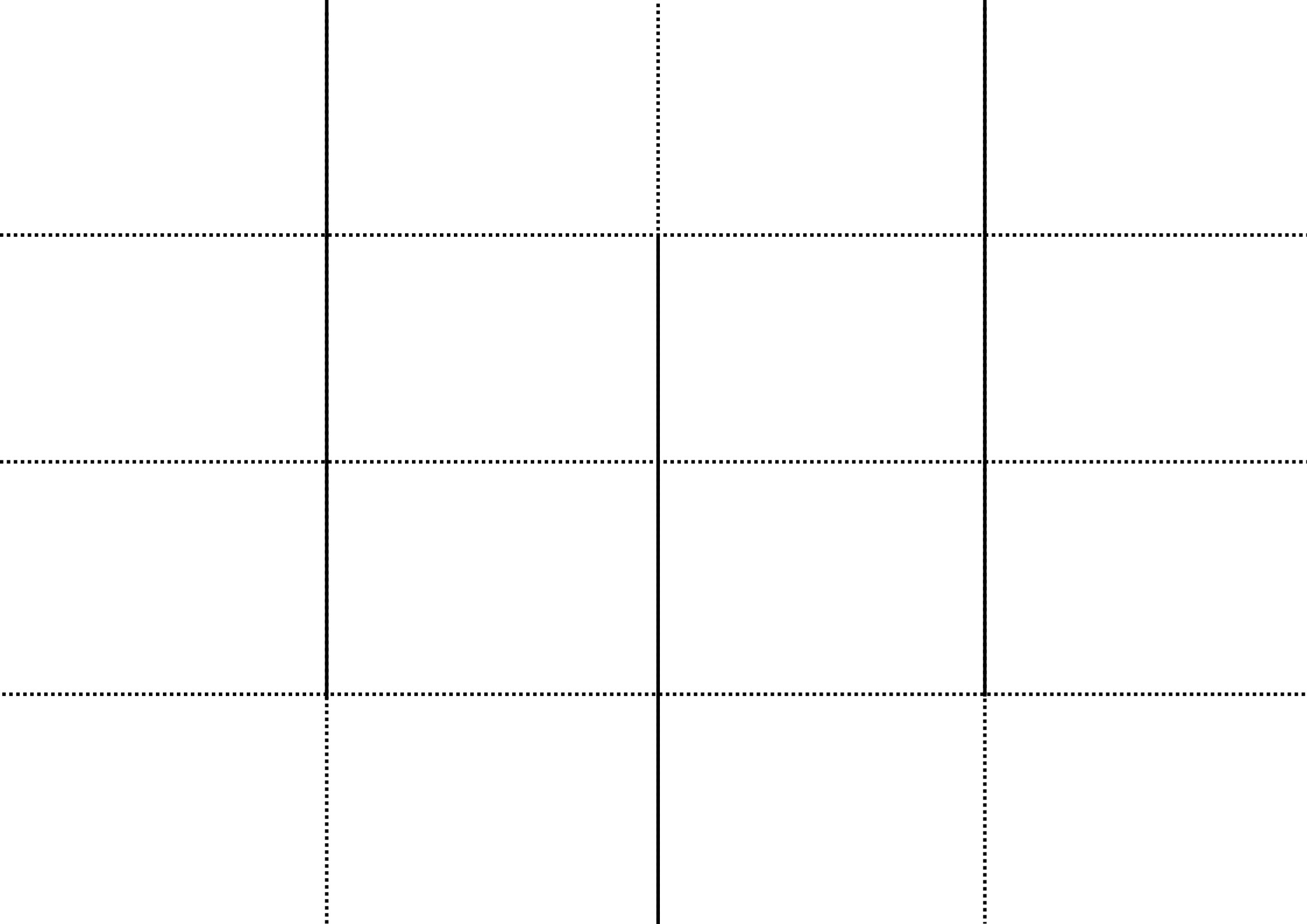


You could experiment with different kinds of paper and draw or stick pictures into it.

You could make a cover by sticking thicker paper or cardboard onto the end pieces.







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More ideas for creating stories...



Make a picture book. Tell one of your favourite stories just using pictures you have drawn.

Imagine you could travel anywhere in the world. Where would you go? Make up a story about your journey and what happens when you get there.



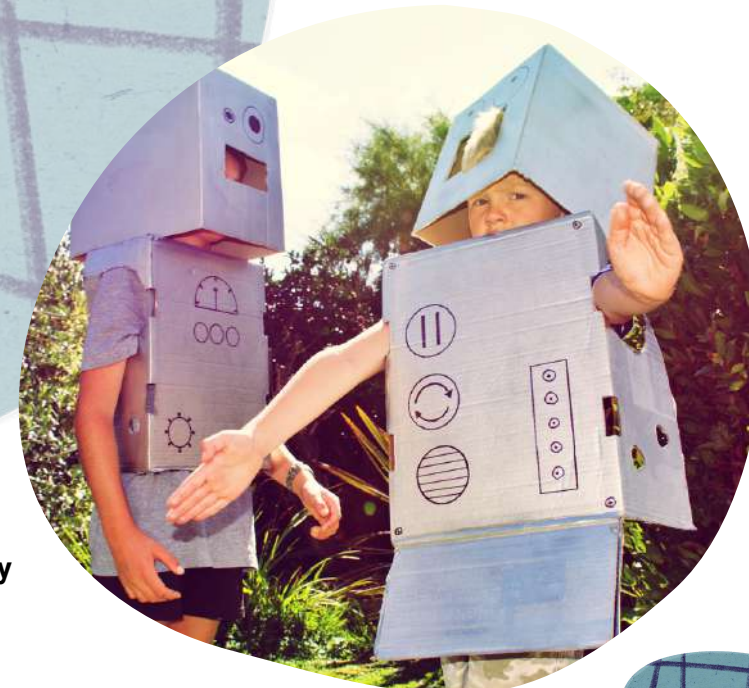
Play story consequences with your friends or someone at home. Write the first line of a story or poem. Fold your piece of paper over and pass it along for someone else to write the next line. Keep going and then read out all the stories/poems at the end.



Make up a poem or story about a toy or an object in your home. Think about how it looks, feels, smells, sounds - maybe not how it tastes! What do you like best about it? How does playing with it make you feel? What if the object or toy came to life?



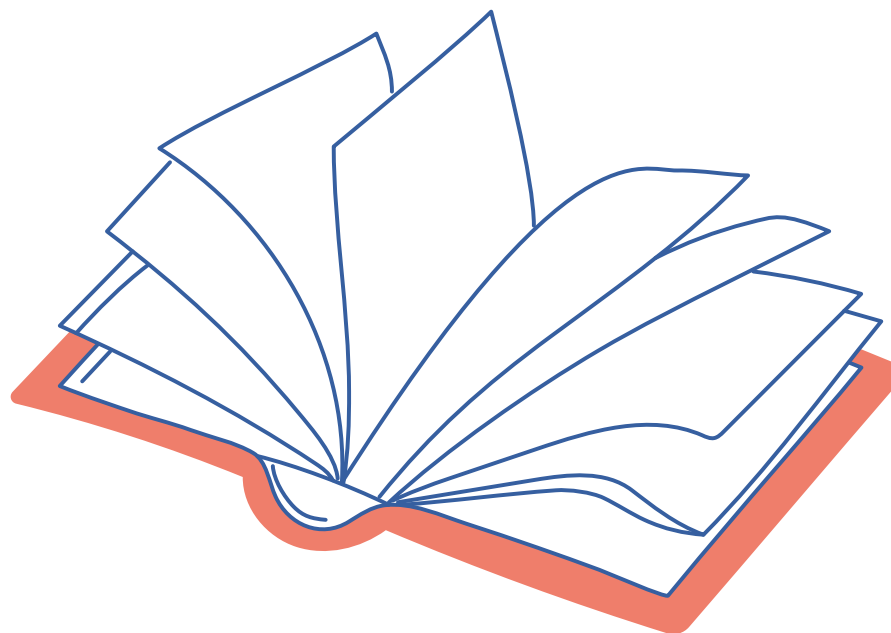
Draw the characters jumping out of your favourite story (you can use the template to help you). Where are they going to go? Can you create a new adventure for them?



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Draw the characters jumping out of your favourite book. Where will they go next?



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Stories of kindness...

Kindness can take many forms. It might be saying or sending a few kind words to a friend who needs it right now, or inviting someone for a cup of tea, either in person or virtually.

Candlestick Press is a small independent publisher that understands just how important words of kindness can be. They publish beautiful pamphlets of poetry that can be sent instead of a card and really brighten someone's day. We'd love to hear your little stories of kindness. We're running a micro-fiction competition for stories on the theme of Kindness. Stories must be no longer than 100 words and there are three categories for entrants: Adult writers, Young writers 5-11, Young writers 12-18. To enter, just email your story to us at scotland@fairsaturday.org before 31st January 2024. The top five entries in the adult and 12-18 categories will win a copy of Ten Poems of Kindness volume 1 or volume 2, and the top five entries in the 5-11 category will win a copy of Gift of the Old One, all of which have been very generously donated by Candlestick Press. We'll also publish them on our website.

candlestickpress.co.uk



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Useful websites and organisations

The following organisations are a great place to start if you would like to learn more. Their websites host a wealth of resources to encourage the reading, telling and sharing of stories, poems, rhymes and songs.

gaelic books council - <https://www.gaelicbooks.org/>

empathy lab - <https://www.empathylab.uk/>

scottish book trust - <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/>

scottish library & information council - <https://scottishlibraries.org/>

scottish poetry library - <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/>

scottish storytelling centre - <https://www.scottishstorytellingcentre.com/>

streetreads - <https://www.simonscotland.org/our-initiatives/streetreads/>

we love reading - <https://welovereading.org/>

Open Book is a charity that organises and runs weekly shared reading sessions for a diverse range of community and public participants across Scotland. They also offer a lovely series of podcasts discussing books and poetry which you can access here: <https://openbookreading.com/unbound/#podcasts>

Read for Good is a charity that motivates children to read for fun through sponsored Readathons. The money raised buys books for schools and brings the power of stories to children in hospital via mobile bookcases and resident storytellers. <https://readforgood.org/>

If you are in Edinburgh, a great place to buy secondhand books AND support charities is the [Edinburgh Community Bookshop](#). They are open 7 days a week from 10am-4pm. Each month they partner with a different local charity to raise funds for their cause by donating profits from the shop directly to them.



The kindness...

...of Fair Saturday

The Kindness of Words programme is part of the Fair Saturday Movement which takes place at the end of November each year the day after Black Friday.

Fair Saturday is Scotland's contribution to the international celebration of Fair Saturday, a global mobilisation that aims to create a positive social impact. Originating in Bilbao in 2014, Fair Saturday is a very simple idea. We believe that there are two essential elements to build fairer and more developed societies: culture and empathy. Fair Saturday aims to respond to Black Friday in a positive way by prioritising culture and social empathy towards the most vulnerable in our society, providing an opportunity "to be" rather than "to have". Artists and cultural organisations from all across Scotland and over the world get together in a global festival following just one requirement: to support a social cause of their choice through their event.

Fair Saturday is an idea to place culture at the centre. To recognise the value of cultural and social organisations. To feel. To reflect. And to act for the common good. Not just today, but also hopefully the rest of the year.

For more information about all the events in this year's Fair Saturday programme, please visit standrews.fairsaturday.org

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