

Tools For  
Young Minds

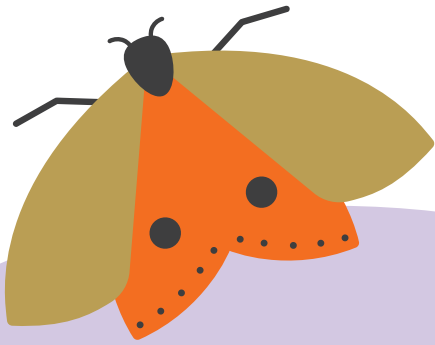


Resources for  
Parents and  
Teachers



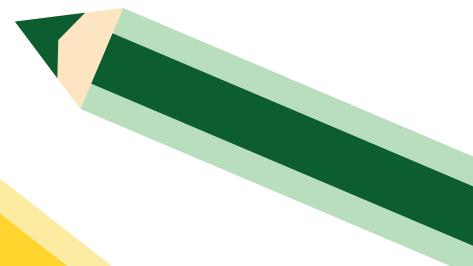
from

The School  
of Life



No stage in our lives is more important than childhood. It's as children that we are able to develop our passions, acquire communication skills and start to understand the world and our place within it.

The School of Life has a range of tools specially designed for young minds, stimulating their natural curiosity and helping them grow into self-aware and emotionally literate adults.

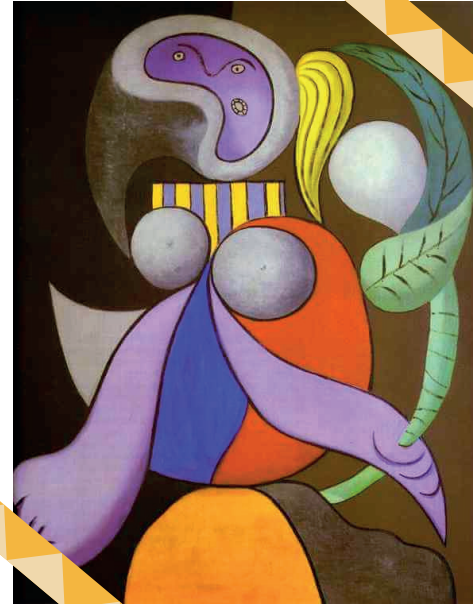


# Paint Like Picasso

Pablo Picasso was a famous artist from Spain. He didn't try to paint things exactly as they looked in real life (he found this quite boring). Instead, he liked to experiment by painting them in as many different ways he could think of.

Pick a person or object (maybe one of your parents or siblings, or a piece of furniture in your room). Try to think of different ways you can draw them/it.

- Can you draw them/it using only one colour?
- Can you draw them/it out of shapes (like cubes, circles or triangles)?
- Can you draw them in the weirdest way you can think of?



# Indoor Entomology

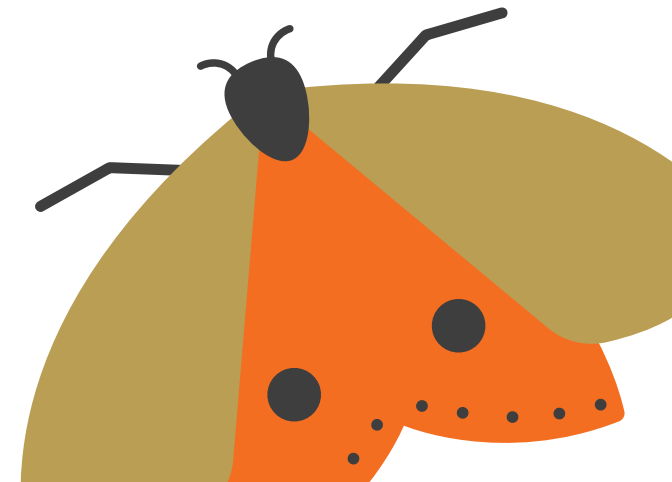
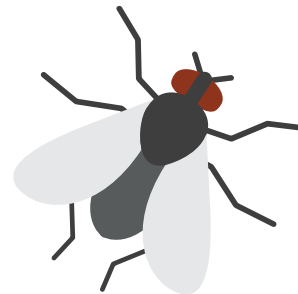


Some people get paid to look at bugs all day. They are called *entomologists*. They know that the closer you pay attention to things, the more interesting they become.

There are a surprising number of bugs living alongside you in your home. Here are a few different types:

Name	Size	Colour	No. of Legs	Can be found...
Spider	5 - 15mm	Black or brown	8	In the bath
House Fly	6 - 8mm	Black or grey	6	Ceilings, walls, lampshades
Wasp	10 - 20mm	Yellow & black	6	Kitchens, brick walls
Moths	8mm	Grey & brown	6	Cupboards, wardrobes
Daddy Long-Legs	30mm	Brown & grey	6	Walls, windows
Ladybird	3 - 7mm	Red with black spots	6	Carpets

See how many different types you find in the house, and make a note of your findings with a pen and paper.

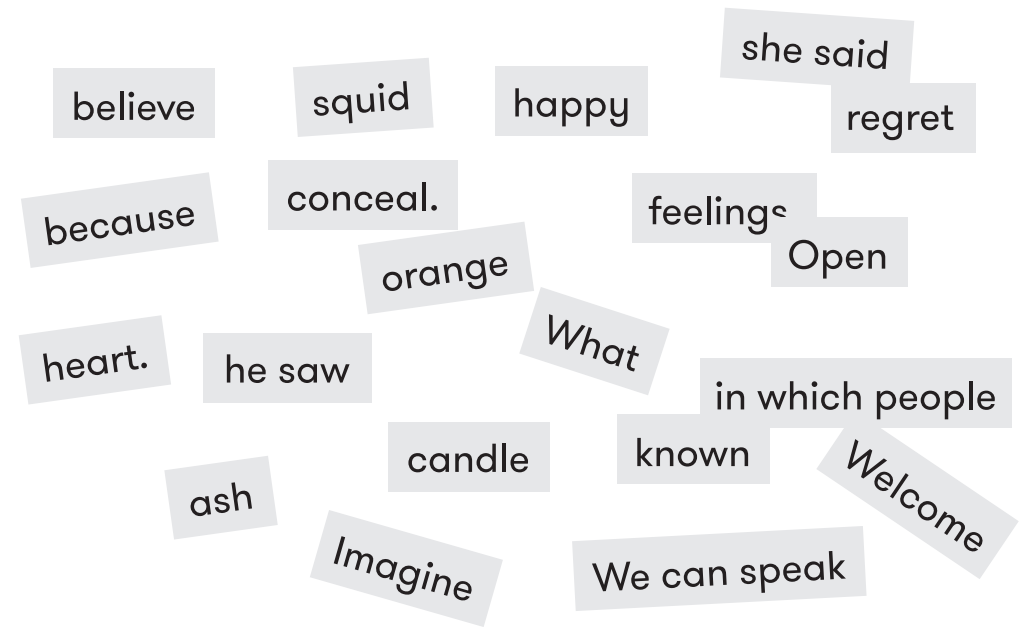


# Cut-Up Technique

During the last century, some famous experimental writers – like Tristan Tzara and William Burroughs – began making up poems by cutting out words or sentences from newspapers or magazines and arranging them to make new sentences. They called this ‘cut-up technique’.

Find an old newspaper and, with some scissors, cut out a number of words or phrases. Once you’ve done so, jumble up all the clippings on a table (or in a hat, if you can find one).

Then pick different clippings at random and arrange them into sentences. Don’t worry if they don’t make sense – it’s more important that they sound unusual or exciting.



# Memory Capsule

Memory is a surprisingly fickle thing. You probably won't remember what you did today in a months time. In a years time, you probably won't remember most of what you did this month...and in ten years time, you probably won't remember anything that happened this year. It therefore helps if you can keep a record.

First, find a sturdy container, like a biscuit tin, or a shoebox. Then, start filling it up with objects that mean something to you at this point in your life. Things like...

- A painting you've done at school
- A piece of homework you're proud of
- A photo of you and your friends
- An object you use as part of a favourite hobby, such as a bootlace (for football) or a shuttlecock (for badminton)

When you've filled the container, bury it somewhere in the garden (trying not to dig up any plants or flowers). Then, when you're five or so years older, you can dig it up - and rediscover the person you were at your current age.



# My Chimera

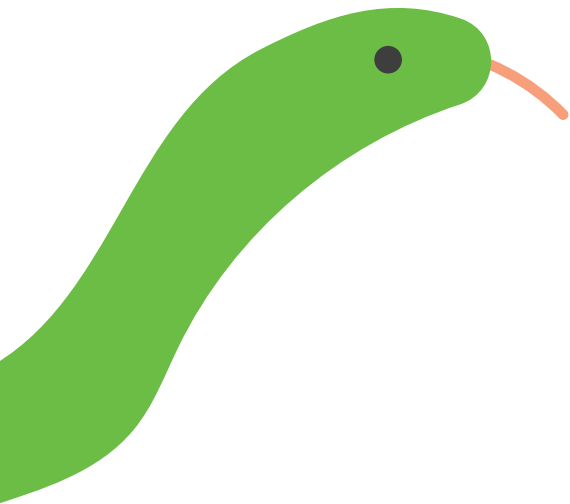


Animals come in lots of different shapes and sizes – some of them very strange indeed. If you use your imagination, you can come up with an animal that's even stranger than one those that already exists.

A chimera is a mythical beast that is made up from bits of other animals.

You could have a chimera with the head of a canary, the body of a horse, the feet of a panther and the tail of a fish. Or one with the head of a monkey, the horns of a goat, the body of a walrus and the tail of a peacock.

Make up a chimera of your own – either by using your imagination and drawing one, or by cutting out parts of different animals from a nature magazines and sticking them together on a piece of paper.



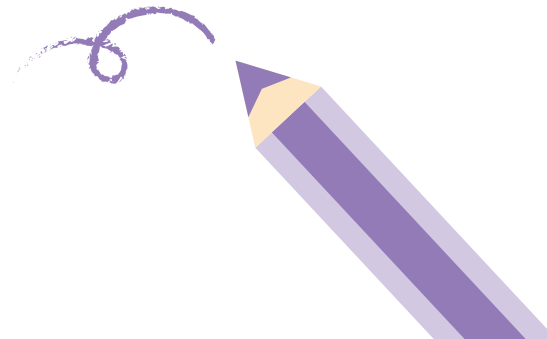
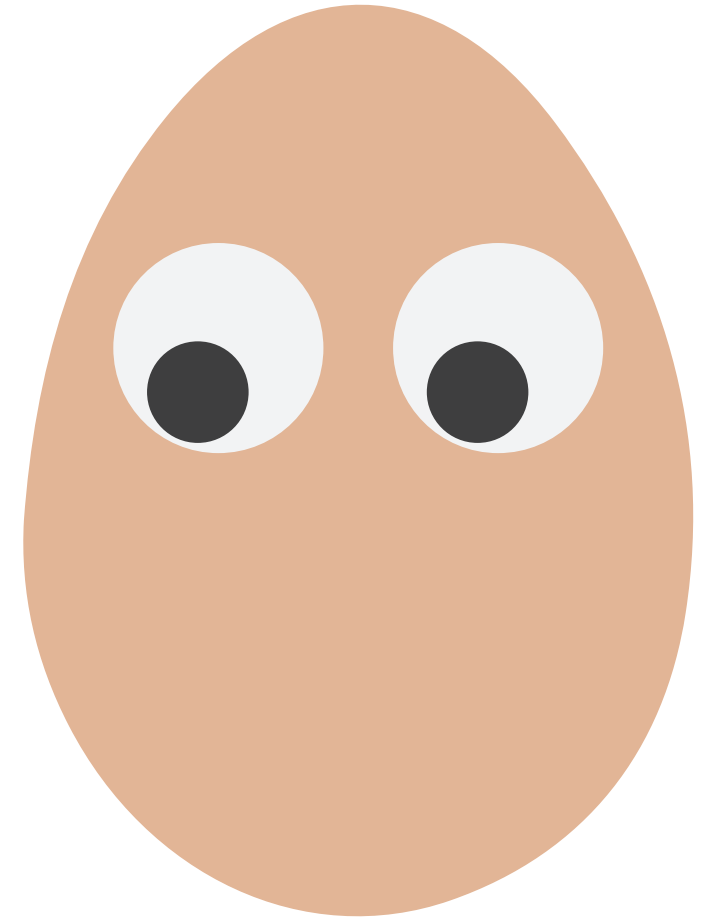
# Egg Family

Parents are rather keen on family portraits – you’ve probably been made to sit for a group photograph (and maybe more than one). You can make a different kind of family portrait.

First, find some eggs – one for each member of your family. You might want to get a grown up to hard-boil them for you to make things easier.

Then, using pens (or ideally some paints and a brush), decorate the eggs to look like members of your family.

Display them in egg cups (if you have them) – and give them to your parents as a present.



# Stand and Deliver

A Highwayman was a kind of robber who lived in the 1700s. They wore disguises and carried masks. They would wait by the roadside at night and surprise travellers, holding them at gunpoint until they handed over their money and valuables.

You can try being a highwayman at home. Make yourself a disguise (an eyemask or an old teatowel will do), find a weapon, and lie in wait in a room off the corridor in your house. When a member of your family comes along, stop them and make them

- a) give you any valuables they have.
- b) ask them to tell you – in detail – why you shouldn't kill them

Let them pass if they do well (and give them back their valuables).



# Putting Things In Order

There's something strangely pleasurable about putting things in order. So much of life lies outside of our control – whether the weather will be nice enough to play outside, whether our parents will be in a good enough mood to drive us over to a friend's house – that when there's a part of it that we can govern and bring order to, we feel a sense of pride and calm.

Find a place in your home that's in a bit of a jumble, and bring some much-needed order to bear. You might try...

- Arranging the books on your bookshelves into alphabetical order (or by colour)
- Sorting the shoes by the door in order of size (smallest to largest)
- Organising the contents of the kitchen cupboards into categories (all the jars on the left, all the packets in the middle, all the cans on the right)
- Stacking all the pans in the kitchen draws properly (largest on the bottom, smallest on the top)
- Placing all the cushions on the sofa into a neat arrangement.

Ask your parents if there's anything around the house you can bring order to – you'll find they'll be extremely grateful for your efforts!



# Good News

Most of the news is either dull, confusing or miserable (and sometimes all three at once). This is because it's usually about things that have gone wrong – like floods, diseases or wars.

But news that focuses only what's wrong is ridiculous, given how much goes right every day.

Here is a chance for you to redraw the balance. Using a pen and paper, make your own newspaper. Only this time, you choose the headlines. Instead of recording things that have gone wrong, your newspaper should focus on things that have gone right. Start with the life around you.

YOUNG GIRL LEARNS TO TIE SHOELACES

BOY GETS GOOD PRETTY GOOD MARK ON SCIENCE HOMEWORK

DAD LEARNS NOT TO SWEAR SO MUCH WHEN HE LOSES KEYS

It's good to develop the art of reminding yourself of things that are going well in life. Any old idiot can find the bad news; only really clever people are good at hunting out, and keeping in mind, the good news.



# Interview Your Grandma

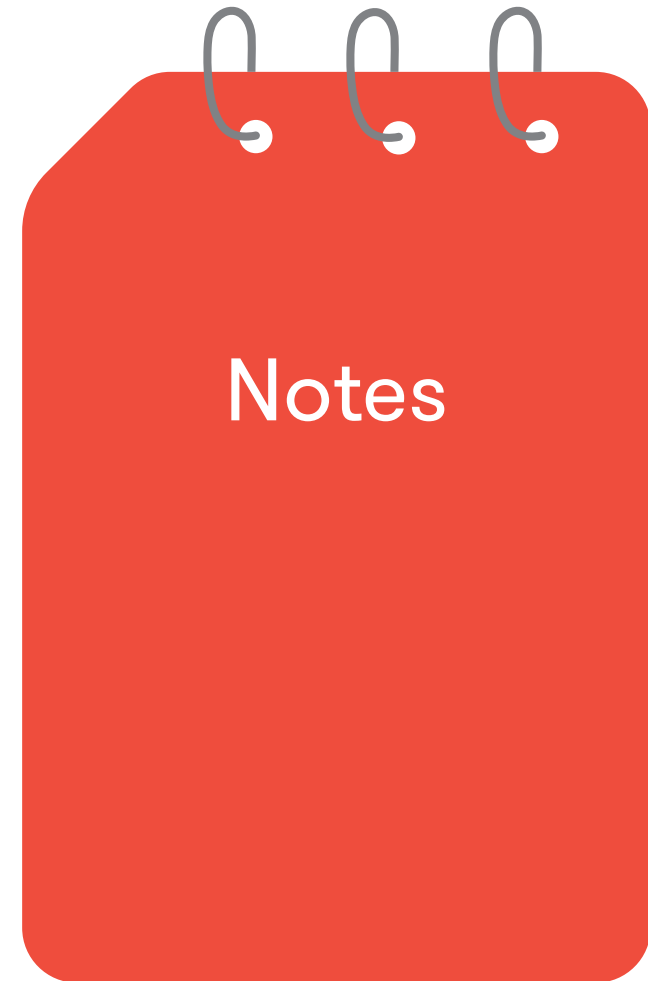
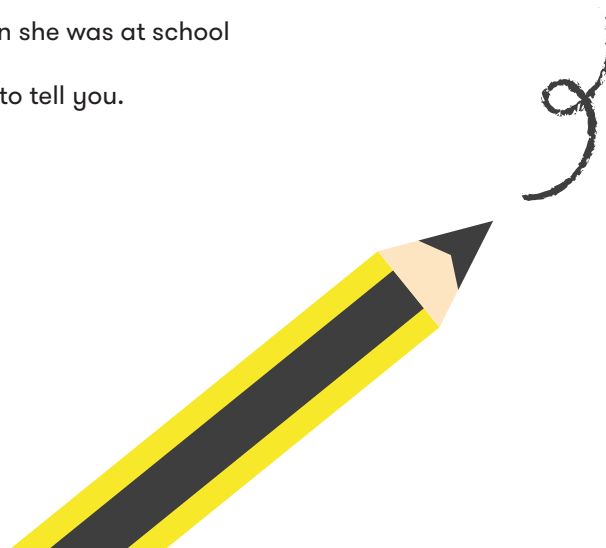
Grown ups are usually very busy. But older grown ups – like your grandma\* – are usually retired, which means they have much less to do. This can be quite boring (and a little lonely sometimes).

Why not give your grandma a call? Find out her number from your parents and ring her up. But this time, rather than just chatting about what you've been up to, do a little bit of investigation. Your grandmother is likely to be just as interesting as an alien might be:

- Ask her what her own childhood was like
- Ask her what your mum or dad was like when they were little
- Ask her what she does all day now she's retired
- Ask her what important historical events she lived through (and what it was like)
- Ask her if she ever had an interesting love affair before she met your grand-dad
- Ask her who her worst enemy was when she was at school

She probably has lots of interesting things to tell you.

\* or another elderly person you know







**TASK #2: HOW ARE OTHER PEOPLE'S JOBS SOLVING PROBLEMS?**

There are so many ways that people need different kinds of help; from everyday problems (like getting stains out of your clothes) to trickier ones (like being able to open up about your inner worries and fears). If you think about it, almost all jobs have an element of helping others or solving problems.

Think about the kinds of jobs your parents, aunts and uncles, older siblings or even your neighbours do for a living. Imagine them at their job and do a drawing of them working. Can you guess what kind of problems they are solving with their jobs?

This is:

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when they are at work.  
The problem they are solving is:

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This is:

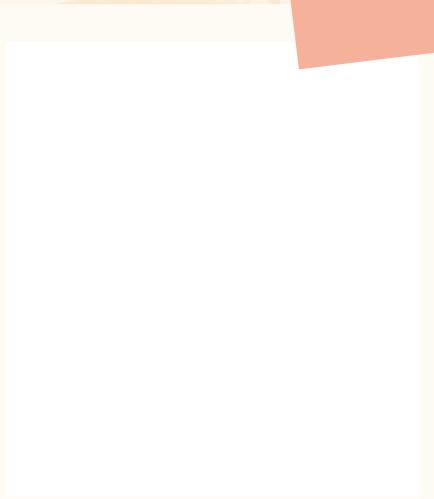
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when they are at work.  
The problem they are solving is:

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This is:

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when they are at work.  
The problem they are solving is:

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**TASK #4: WHAT MAKES A JOB ENJOYABLE?**

Now that you know what might make you happy in your career, you can use this to work out which jobs might be the most enjoyable for you personally. Write down some of the skills and abilities you have. Then, have a think about how you could use these skills to help others, and how you might see the results of your work. Write these down too.

For example, let's say one of your skills was making other people laugh. You could use this skill to help others by writing comedy scripts for television, helping to entertain and cheer up people who might be going through a tough time. You could see the results of your work by looking back at all the programmes and episodes you wrote over your career.

What skills and abilities do you have?

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How can you use your skills to help others?

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How could you see the results of your work?

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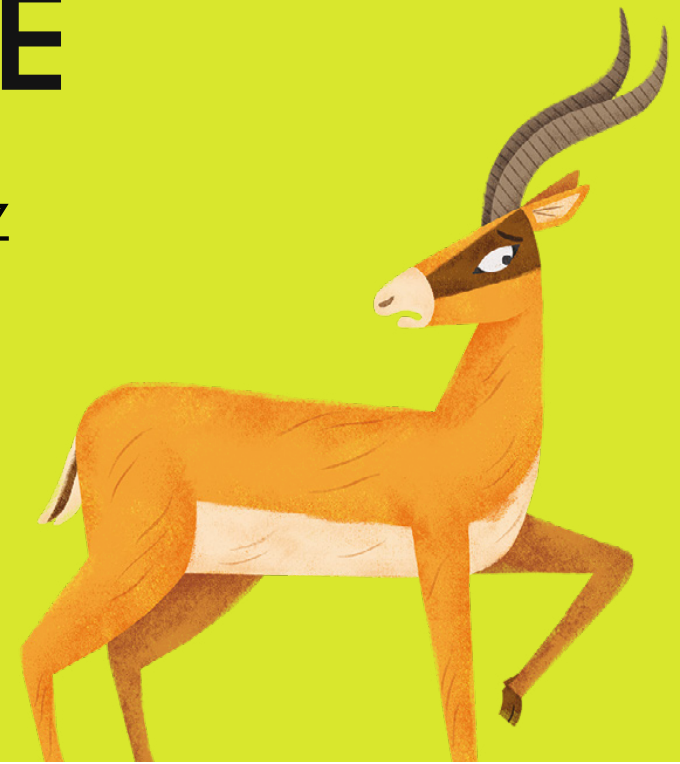




# AN EMOTIONAL MENAGERIE

A Glossary of Feelings from A-Z

**THE  
SCHOOL  
OF LIFE**





## A is for Anger

If Anger was an animal,  
It would have teeth and claws,  
A mangy mane, a bristly tail,  
And growling, gaping jaws.

It comes along when things go wrong,  
When our plans go awry.  
When toys are broken, trainers lost,  
Or favourite treats denied.

It bares its teeth and starts to roar:  
'Unkind!' 'Unjust!' 'UNFAIR!'  
It wants the world to be just so,  
Without problems or cares.

To let it go, remember this:  
Life won't always go right.  
Some things we'd like to happen won't;  
Some things we wouldn't, might.

It's sad, we know, and that's the point:  
In fact, that's why we rage.  
Anger is sadness in disguise:  
Our hurt let loose, uncaged.

Life lets us down now and again:  
You, me, and everyone.  
So next time Anger rears its head,  
Accept this, and move on.

# B is for Boredom

If Boredom was an animal,  
It would have jellied skin,  
Limp tentacles, a boneless head,  
And a deadening sting.

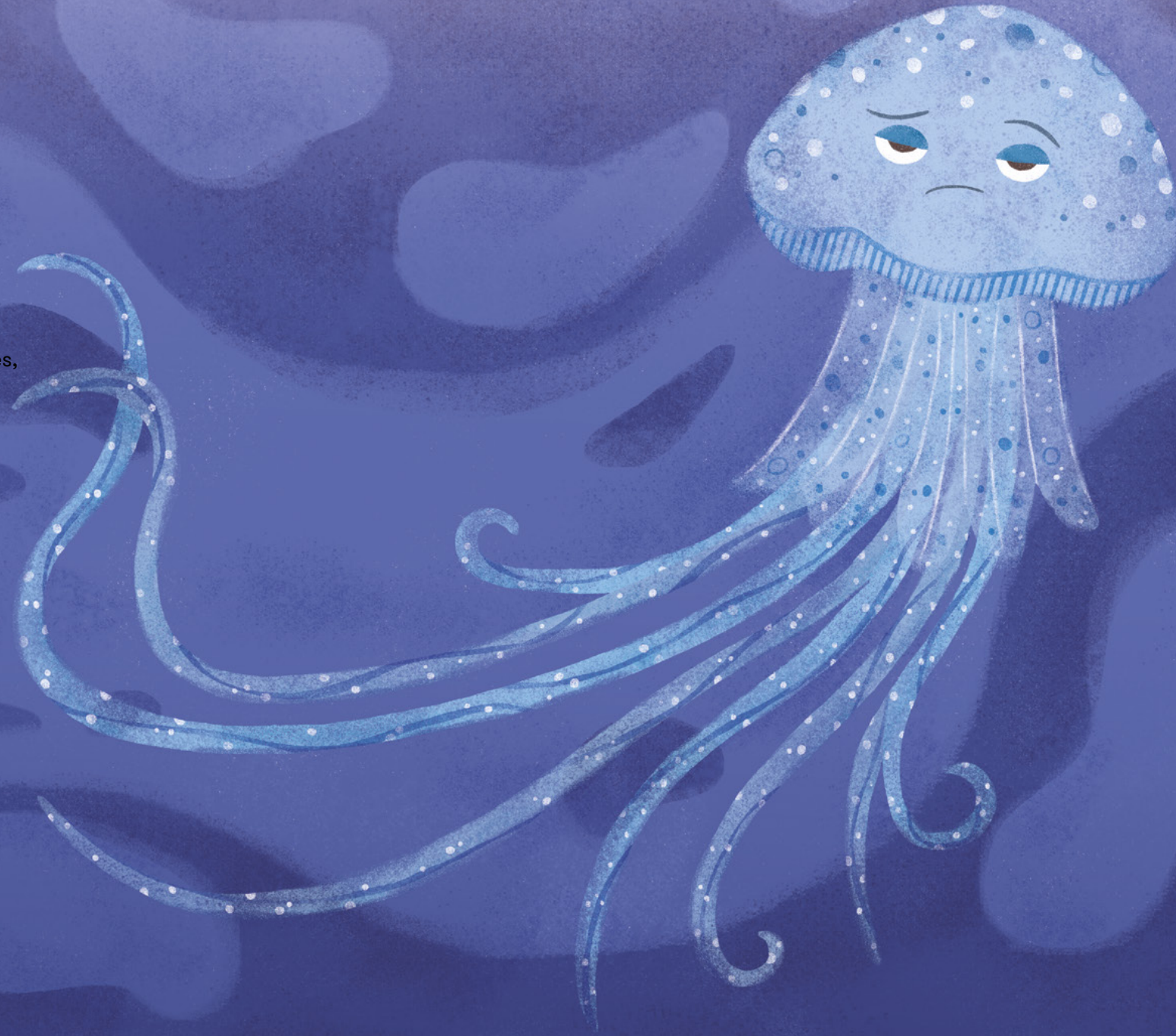
It washes up when tasks or days  
Feel like they'll never end:  
Car journeys, homework, shop queues, chores,  
And wet autumn weekends.

It lies there like a burst balloon,  
Flat, hissing out complaints:  
'Are we there yet?' 'Am I done?'  
'I'm so bored I might faint.'

It stings us all occasionally.  
(Yes, grown-ups get bored too!)  
Sometimes we must just wait until  
The tedious part is through.

But don't forget to listen, too:  
For Boredom's just a clue  
That shows us what we don't like doing  
And what we'd rather do.

To wash it back into the sea,  
Listen to all it says,  
And try next time to spend your time  
In more exciting ways...



# C is for Curiosity

If Curiosity was an animal,  
It would have a jet-black beak,  
Beady eyes, coal-coloured wings,  
And scrawny, scratching feet.

It loves to peck at mysteries:  
Those things it doesn't know.  
It wants to find the answers so  
Its own knowledge might grow.

It makes us feel inquisitive  
To understand things more:  
'How do planes fly?' 'Why is grass green?'  
Or 'what are earlobes for?'

We're fascinated by new things,  
The secrets of the Earth.  
We get engrossed in facts and dates,  
And prize them for their worth.

The best people are curious:  
The smartest and most fun.  
They know that learning's valuable,  
And learning's never done.

You should feed your Curiosity  
By finding out more stuff.  
For all the world is interesting  
If you look close enough.



AN IDEA FROM ZERA YACOB

## MEANNESS AND UNHAPPINESS

Write down a list of the people who are mean to you. Then write why you think they might be unhappy. How might their meanness and unhappiness be related?

PERSON WHO IS BEING MEAN

REASONS WHY THEY MIGHT BE UNHAPPY



AN IDEA FROM FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

## THINGS THAT ARE HARD THAT I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN (ONE DAY)

Make a list of things of things that you would like to learn to do, as well as what you will do with your new skill. For example:

- How to speak another country's language... and then I'll make friends with someone from there.
- How to dance with confidence... and then I'll ask someone to dance with me.
- How to ride a bike... and then I'll travel somewhere new and exciting.

How to... \_\_\_\_\_ and then I'll... \_\_\_\_\_

How to... \_\_\_\_\_ and then I'll... \_\_\_\_\_

How to... \_\_\_\_\_ and then I'll... \_\_\_\_\_



AN IDEA FROM MATSUO BASHO

## A CHECKLIST TO SEE IF I'M JUST TIRED

When you suddenly feel sad, before you despair, see if the following might apply:

- I have not had anything to eat for a few hours
- I went to bed very late last night
- I had a really busy day at school today

Add in a few other 'small' explanations for feeling like you have very big problems:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



AN IDEA FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses.

Once you are done, think about how the two lists are related.

WHAT I'M GOOD AT

WHAT I'M NOT GOOD AT

WHAT I'M GOOD AT	WHAT I'M NOT GOOD AT



AN IDEA FROM BUDDHA

# WHAT OTHER THINGS COULD BE MENDED AND IMPROVED?

*Make a list of things — other than cups and glasses — that could be fixed.*

*For example:*

- Using colourful patches to mend your favourite jeans
- Fixing a friendship by apologising (and really meaning it)
- Yourself—think of all the times you've fallen over or failed a test. These aren't anything to be embarrassed about! They help you learn and have made you who you are.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



AN IDEA FROM ARISTOTLE

# A LIST OF INTERESTING PROBLEMS

*Make a list of problems that you think are particularly interesting to solve.*

*For example:*

- How can we make cities nicer to live in?
- Why are some people mean to each other?
- What is the best way to live a happy life?

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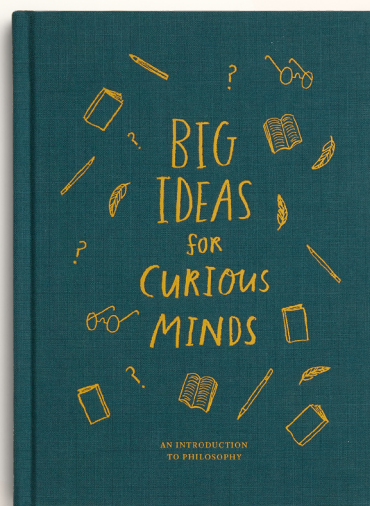


# Children's Books Available from The School of Life

[THESCHOOLOFLIFE.COM/TOOLS-FOR-YOUNG-MINDS](https://theschooloflife.com/tools-for-young-minds)



**What Can I Do  
When I Grow Up**  
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**Big Ideas for Curious Minds**  
ISBN: 978-1-9997471-4-5  
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**Happy, Healthy Minds**  
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