

ABC BOOKS/ HARPERCOLLINS TEACHERS NOTES

TITLE: THE BICYCLE

CONCEIVED, DESIGNED AND TYPESET BY COLIN THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATED BY: QUENTIN BLAKE, RUTH PAUL, DAVID MILLER, FREYA BLACKWOOD, KIM CHATEL, SARAH DAVIS, ?, JACK STORY (CHILD WINNER OF COMPETITION), TONY ROSS, DAVID LEGGE, MICHELLE PIKE, JAN BOWMAN, DAVID 'DUB' LEFFLER, GABRIELLE WANG, COLIN THOMPSON, SHAUN TAN.

NOTES BY ROBYN SHEAHAN-BRIGHT

INTRODUCTION SUMMARY

INSPIRATION BEHIND THE BOOK

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

- SOSE
- LANGUAGE LITERACY & VISUAL LITERACY

BACKGROUND TO THE ILLUSTRATORS

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

BLACKLINE MASTERS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES



INTRODUCTION SUMMARY

This book is a celebration of the BICYCLE! But it's more than that. For it shows in the illustrative work of fifteen internationally celebrated artists how the bicycle plays such an important part in many people's, and particularly children's lives.

First, it is a relatively cheap means of conveying people from one place to another. It requires no fuel, and can be ridden by anyone, regardless of age.

So, in some underdeveloped countries where ownership of automobiles or access to public transport may not be available to many families, the bicycle is a means by which children can gain independence. And so, as this book suggests, the bicycle has allowed many poorer children to travel to school, and represents a vital link between illiteracy and literacy.

Riding a bicycle is also a lot of fun! Whether it be going on a picnic; or to the beach; or climbing a steep hill; or travelling to a nearby town if you live in the country, the bicycle can be your 'golden ticket' to adventure.

This book therefore suggests that the bicycle is a metaphor for hope, and encourages children everywhere to imagine or recall their own adventures on a bicycle.

These artists have shown in their extraordinary paintings, that children are capable of surmounting monumental problems, for they have always used their imaginations to lift them above the reality of the lives that circumstances have willed them.

This message is carried in tangible ways by organisations such as Save the Children, whose purpose is to offer children in all countries equal opportunity to education, health and the promise of a bright and fulfilled future.

And that 'promise' ... might start with a bicycle.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

This book can be used in a range of subjects with relevance to a variety of topics in the classroom.

SOSE

- **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is a major issue for any society and has a huge impact on the environment, on social and economic issues, and on individual lives.

Discussion Point: What forms of transportation are most used in today's society worldwide? Are they mainly fuel-driven or driven by people power? Try to find some facts on this question.

Discussion Point: What forms of transportation are generally most available to children?

- **BICYCLE**

Despite our reliance on increasingly fuel-driven forms of transport in the last century, there is one obvious survivor, the bicycle.

Discussion Point: How would you define a bicycle? *Wikipedia* says that it is 'also known as a bike, pushbike or cycle, is a pedal-driven, human-powered, single-track vehicle, having two wheels attached to a frame, one behind the other. A person who rides a bicycle is called a cyclist or a bicyclist.' <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bicycle>.>

Activity: Find out more about bicycles and how people have used them. For example *Wikipedia* reports some 'facts' which you might like to examine:

- 'Bicycles were introduced in the 19th century' (Were there any earlier vehicles like a bicycle? Some texts suggest that they were invented much earlier.)
- 'number about one billion worldwide, twice as many as automobiles.' (Check this fact.)
- 'are the principal means of transportation in many regions.' (Find out where?)
- 'also provide a popular form of recreation.' (What forms of recreation?)
- 'have been adapted for such uses as children's toys, adult fitness, military and police applications, courier services and bicycle racing.' (What other uses have they?)

Activity: Try to find out how correct these facts are, by researching and adding your own facts to the list. (Make sure you can cite a reputable 'authority' in your research.)

Activity: This book has been created as a tribute to the work done to give children in underdeveloped countries assistance by providing them with bicycles, and so the artists' royalties have been donated to the Save the Children Fund. Find out more about this bicycle donation movement worldwide, and see **Further Activities** below.]

Discussion Point: In the introduction, Suzanne Dvorak CEO of Save the Children, writes that 'a bicycle is a symbol of fun, simplicity, colour, adventure, freedom and happiness everything a childhood should be filled with.' What does a bicycle mean to your students? Do any of these words relate to their feelings about bicycles? Or is there another word which is more descriptive of how they regard a bicycle?

Discussion Point: Discuss the art of riding a bicycle and why it is such a useful skill. Why is riding a bicycle good for you?

[See Thomas, Melanie <<http://ezinearticles.com/?4-Reasons-Kids-Bicycles-Are-Better-Than-A-Game-Console&id=6078387>>]

Discussion Point: How does riding a bicycle assist the environment?

Discussion Point: What different sorts of bicycles are there? (There is a tricycle in one of these pictures too!)

Activity: Write a list of all the parts of a bicycle? [See **Blackline Master 4** for an activity related to this question.]

Discussion Point: How do you stay safe on a bicycle?

Activity: Write a list of words which might describe a bicycle.

Activity: Invite your students to tell a story about a bicycle ride, even if they've never ridden one.

Activity: Draw a picture of a bicycle. Make it as original as you can make it by adding some sort of 'accessory' to the bike. eg An umbrella, a basket, a wagon etc. (On the cover Quentin Blake draws

a bicycle with seven people on it. This is not as crazy as it seems. In Cambodia you regularly see several people on bicycles and motor bikes – often whole families!)

- **CHILDREN IN SOCIETY**

Many of the images in this book symbolically reflect how children heroically deal with adult problems in a world which is not of their making, but which they nevertheless confront with strength and fortitude. eg An elephant on a bike; two kids riding through a blasted landscape to a cottage above; an impossible ride soaring into the sky; another riding under the sea.

Activity: Try to imagine another scene in which the extraordinary achievements of children are symbolized by your drawing.

Activity: This is the second such collaborative book which Colin Thompson has instigated, in order to highlight an issue, and to raise money for a related charity. (The first was *Dust* on the theme of drought.) Research a particular problem in the world today. Then come up with your own idea for a book on a particular theme which you have observed. Give the project a title. Then make up a list of all the artists you'd like to include in the book, including Colin Thompson of course!

Discussion Point: What is the major problem facing the world today? Make a list of all the problems you know about first, and argue your point.

- **INDIVIDUALS/COMMUNITY**

These pictures show individual children riding bicycles, but they are not alone. For there is a network of people supporting them – family, friends, schools, government services, and charities.

Discussion Point: What support networks do your students feel are important to them? What communities do they feel a part of? eg It might be a sporting team, a special interest group or class, a cultural community.

Activity: Ask your students to write a sentence describing what their community means to them.

LANGUAGE LITERACY AND VISUAL LITERACY

- **Every part of a book is important in its overall design**, and in this book some of the artists appear on double page spreads and others have taken 'parts' of the book. Quentin Blake has illustrated both the **cover** and the **title page**. Tony Ross's illustrations appear on the **endpapers** at the back and front of the book. **Activity:** Design your own cover for this book.
- Tony Ross paints two images here which are similar to **cartoons** in that there is a simple joke in the text and illustration. **Activity:** Create your own 'cartoon' joke including a bicycle.
- Picture books can be **landscape, portrait or square** in format or shape. This book is **portrait-shaped**, but each double page spread offers the illustrator a **landscape** format to draw on. In most picture books a story is told by turning the pages much as a film works in narration, by using a storyboard of connected actions and effects. **Here each of the double page spreads painted by different artists, are stories in themselves.** Some artists have painted a single strong image (eg David Miller's elephant on a bike) others have used the page to tell a series of stories (David "Dub" Leffler uses the page like a graphic novel or comic strip); other foreground a strong image and overlay it with another type of smaller image which adds another story to the picture (David Legge); others paint a scene in which there are lots of things happening across the entire double page. **Activity:** How would you use the double page spread to tell your story? Another way it might be used is as a simple storyboard with text below each frame on one portrait page. Make up a visual and written text in this format. [See **Blackline Master 3** for an outline to use.]
- Several images contain a **quote** from a writer. **Activity:** Examine these quotes and images and then write a brief description of how the image relates to that quote.
- Write **poems** about bicycles. **Activity:** Read Kenn Nesbitt's poem 'The World's Fastest Bicycle' on his website. <<http://www.poetry4kids.com/poem-381.html>> Invite your students to write a **rhyming poem** like this, or an **acrostic**, or a **haiku** poem about a bicycle.

BACKGROUND TO THE ILLUSTRATORS

Each of the **15 illustrators** who have contributed to this book are masters of illustration and/or the picture book form. They are: QUENTIN BLAKE, RUTH PAUL, DAVID MILLER, FREYA BLACKWOOD, KIM CHATEL, SARAH DAVIS, ?, JACK STORY (CHILD WINNER OF COMPETITION), TONY ROSS, DAVID LEGGE, MICHELLE PIKE, JAN BOWMAN, DAVID 'DUB' LEFFLER, GABRIELLE WANG, COLIN THOMPSON, SHAUN TAN.

At the back of the book there is a 'key' to their painting in the book, and a little bit of information about them. **Activity:** Try to find out more about the artists, by reading some of their other books, visiting their websites, and reading more about them in books and articles such as those listed in the **Bibliography** below. For example, research the life and work of **Colin Thompson** who conceived this project. Colin is a prolific and very talented artist and writer. Find out more about him by visiting his website. <<http://www.colinthompson.com/>>

Activity: Choose one of these illustrators, to write a project about.

Activity: Investigate the medium they work in, and how they and other artists have used it.

Activity: Then answer the quiz included in these notes as **Blackline Master 1**.

Activity: Make a model of someone on a bicycle. (See David Miller's paper sculpture or Kim Chatel's fibre art to get some ideas.) You might also use papier mâché, or plasticine or fimo polymer clay to make your model.

Activity: Conduct a unit on books about bicycles, and create a display of the books and activities. [See **Bibliography** for titles.]

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

1. **Organise a Bicycle-riding Event** to raise money for bicycles for children in Cambodia, or another country. [See list of organizations in **Websites** below.]
2. **Play some Bicycle Games.** [See some examples of **Websites** below.]
3. **Decorate your Bicycle.** It might be with streamers, stickers or some other form of decoration. [But make sure you don't damage the paintwork or make the bike unsafe to ride in how you decorate it.] Have a competition to choose the most creatively decorated bike.
4. **Find some songs about bicycles and have fun learning them.** For example, 'Bicycle Built For Two.' [See Lyrics by Harry Dacre <<http://www.kiddles.com/lyrics/b041.html>>] or the 1971 hit by The Mixtures: 'The Push Bike Song' [See it on Youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCWAGpChSRI>>]

Have a Bicycle Safety Day at your school and invite people along eg Local bike shop; policeman, an expert bike rider.

5. **Have a Bicycle Party!** Have everyone in the class bring their bikes, and combine all the activities above to make it a spectacular celebration. **And get on your bike!!!**

BLACKLINE MASTER 1 ILLUSTRATOR QUIZ

1. Who is the only NZ artist in this book?
2. Which of the artists in the book has won the Kate Greenaway Award for Illustration?
3. Which of the artists has used a comic strip format in his art?
4. Whose work is done in 'fibre art'?
5. What has Colin Thompson used as the 'bricks' in his painting?
6. There is one 'mystery' artist in the book, but there is a clue to his or her identity. Do you have an idea who that artist might be?
7. Which of the artists in his book won an Oscar for this film of his own book in 2011?
8. Which artist works in paper sculpture?
9. Which of the artists do we associate with the work of Roald Dahl?
10. Which of the artists has illustrated a text by Colin Thompson?
11. Whose work depicts bicycle riding under the sea?
12. Which Chinese Australian artist is also a writer?
13. Which six year old child is included in the book?
14. In whose picture are three children depicted with closed eyes and clasped hands?

15. In whose picture does a child lose the wheel of a tricycle?

16. In whose picture is a little boy riding in the basket of his sister's bike?

17. Whose work is featured on the cover of the book?

18. Which animal (s) appear twice in this book?

19. Judging from their illustrations, which artists do you think may have used digital or computer generated art?

20. Which is your favourite illustration and why?

Answers: 1. Ruth Paul. 2. Freya Blackwood in 2010, and Quentin Blake in 1980. 3. David 'Dub' Leffler. 4. Kim Chatel. 5. Books. 6. Banksy <<http://www.banksy.co.uk/>> (Perhaps. Possibly. Maybe. Or not.) 7. Shaun Tan for *The Lost Thing*. 8. David Miller 9. Quentin Blake. 10. Sarah Davis. 11. Michelle Pike. 12. Gabrielle Wang. 13. Jack Story. 14. David Legge. 15. Tony Ross's. 16. Jan Bowman `17. Quentin Blake 18. An elephant (in Ruth Paul and David Miller's illustrations) and a tiger (in Ruth Paul and Gabrielle Wang's illustrations). 19. Colin Thompson, Jan Bowman, David "Dub" Leffler, Ruth Paul, David Legge. 20. There is no 'right' answer to this question!

BLACKLINE MASTER 2 COLOURING IN A BICYCLE

Colour in this picture and then draw the rest of the bicycle in the lower part of the page.



BLACKLINE MASTER 3 CREATE A STORYBOARD

Print this out and give your students a copy on which to draw thumbnail sketches, and write the text below the images. (You could also enlarge it to an A3 size to give them more room to work on.)

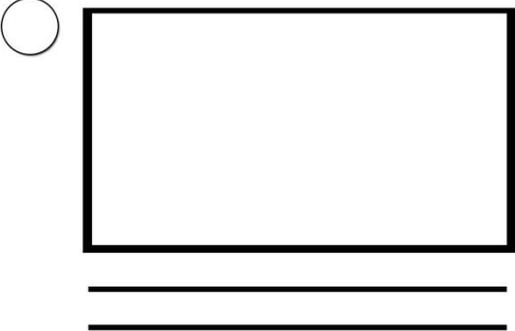
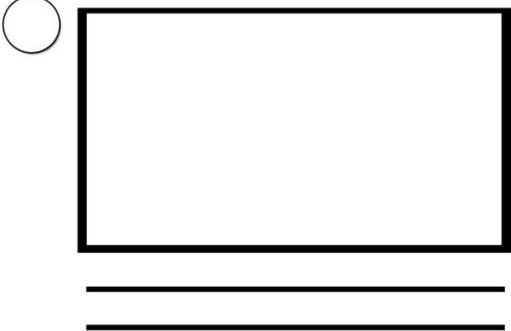
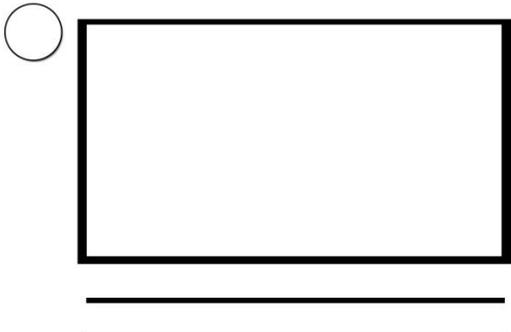
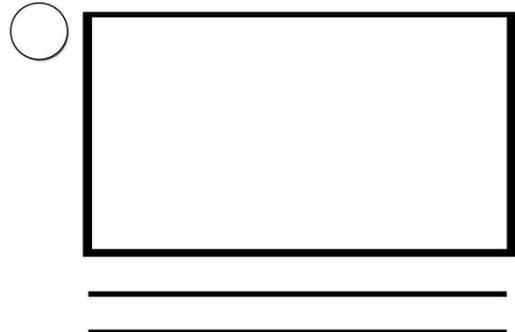
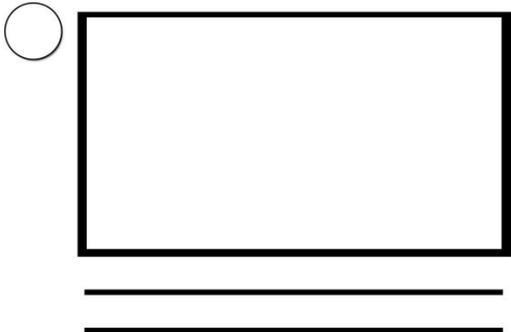
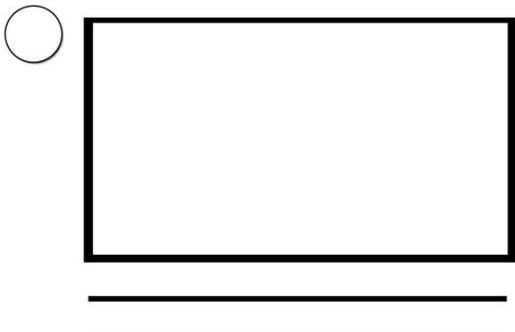
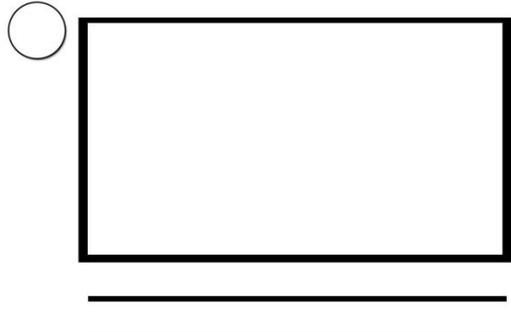
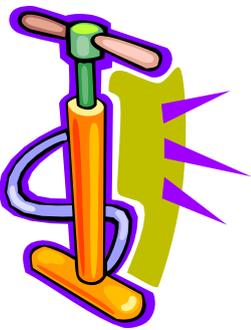
	
	
	
	

Image from: <[http:// utopian.flipbrothers.com](http://utopian.flipbrothers.com)>

BLACKLINE MASTER 4 MATCH THE BICYCLE WORD AND IMAGE

Write the word beside these pictures, which each depict a part of a bicycle, or some equipment related to bicycles. (The last image on the page has a number of parts of the bike to identify.) Then make up a sentence using each of these words.



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'Tony Ross' *Contemporary Writers British Council*

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Fiction

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Macy, Sue *Wheels of Change: How Women Rode the Bicycle to Freedom (With a few Flat Tires Along the Way)* National Geographic, 2011. [For ages 10 to older.]

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Ransome, James E *New Red Bike* Holiday House, 2011.

Shannon, David *Duck on a Bike* Blue Sky Press, 2002.

Stauffacher, Sue *Tilly the Terrible Swede: How One Woman, a Sewing Needle and a Bicycle Changed History*. Ill by Sarah McMenemy Knopf, 2011.

Ward, Michael *Mike and the Bike* Moneyfeather Books, 2005.

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[See website <http://www.mikeandthebike.com/main.php>]

Viva, Frank *Along a Long Road* Little, Brown, 2011.

Zullo, Germano Marta and the Bicycle. Ill by Albertine. Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2002.

Websites for Activities

'Bicycle Coloring Pages for Kids'.

<http://kidsfront.com/coloring-pages/bicycle_bw_673_picture.html>

Bicycle Games for Kids

<http://www.ehow.com/list_7228500_bicycle-games-kids.html>

Bicycles: Free Games and Activities

<<http://www.wartgames.com/themes/sports/bicycles.html>>

Bike Rodeo Events

<http://bicycling.about.com/od/organizedbikeevents/a/bikerodeo_event.htm>

'A Short History of the Bicycle'

<http://www.bikyle.com/history_of_bike.htm>

Thomas, Melanie R. **'4 Reasons Kids Bicycles are Better than a Game Console.'**

<<http://ezinearticles.com/?4-Reasons-Kids-Bicycles-Are-Better-Than-A-Game-Console&id=6078387>>

Websites of Organisations

Bikes 4 Africa

<<http://jolerider.org/index.php/programmes/bikes4africa>>

'Bikes for Cambodia' Facebook

<<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Bikes-for-Cambodia/110308539017387>>

Bikes for Japan

<<http://bikesforjapan.org/post/4387738842/inspired-by-daiki-mochizuki-bicycle-repair-guy>>

'Elves & More: Changing Lives One Bike at a Time'

<http://www.elvesandmore.org/EMHomePage.shtm>

The Foundation for Developing Cambodian Communities.

<<http://fdcc.org.au/>>

Lance Armstrong Foundation <[http:// www.livestrong.com](http://www.livestrong.com)>

[See also 'How to be a Safe Bicyclist' <<http://www.livestrong.com/article/177539-how-to-be-a-safe-bicyclist/>>]

On Your Bike ! [Toronto based N-P organization which provides bikes to kinds in need.]

<<http://www.onyourbike.ca/index.html>>

'Orphans in Africa Project: Bicycle Appeal

<<http://www.orphansinafrica.org/bicycle.htm>>

Save the Children Australia

<<http://www.savethechildren.org.au/>>

We-Cycle-USA

<http://www.wecycleusa.org/about/our-mission/featured_provides>

World Bicycle Relief <<http://www.worldbicyclerelief.org/>> [See also Bicycle Empowerment Network in Namibia (BEN). <http://www.worldbicyclerelief.org/our_work/education.php>]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services and has been widely published on writing for young people, Australian fiction, and publishing history. Her most recent article for *Magpies* was a profile on writer/illustrator David Mackintosh (May 2011). She is currently a member of the IBBY Australia committee, and chairs the judging panel for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards for Children and Young Adults.

