

Resources

for Teachers
and Classes

supporting the exploring of

The King of the Sky *Nicola Davies*

Created by

Derek Coble,

Owain Gwillim, Daniel Hawkins and the year 2 and 3 children of Llangiwg Primary School

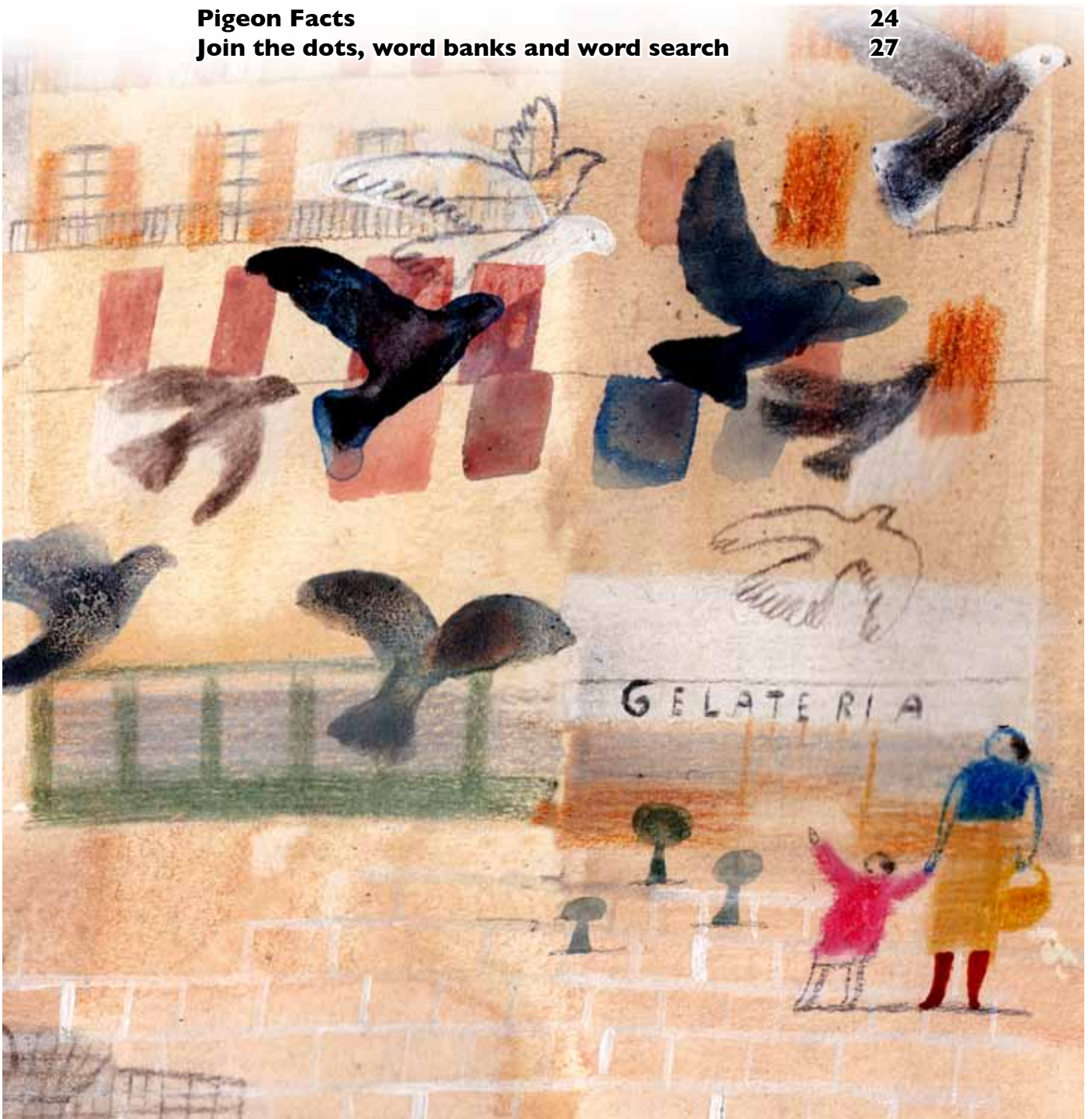


The King of the Sky

Nicola Davies

Index

Introduction For Teachers	Page 3
What Makes A House A Home?	4
Moving House And Settling Into A New Place.	9
Various Pigeon Templates And Ideas For Mobiles	11
Geographical Ideas and Maps	16
Nicola Davies	20
Local Studies and History Background	21
The Italian Cafés	22
Pigeon Facts	24
Join the dots, word banks and word search	27



The following pages offer teachers of pupils at the end of the Foundation stage and early years of key stage 2, suggestions for class-work together with templates and materials for lessons that may follow up a visit to a performance of 'The King of the Sky'.

Within the English programmes of study or as part of their P.S.E. sessions:

As part of discussion prior to writing stories and non-fiction teachers and classes may wish to use the themes explored in the play,;

- of displacement and belonging;
- of being uprooted from your home;
- of settling into a new place;

as a starting point for discussion, reflection and learning.

Those schools who explore and work with the UNICEF Declaration on the Rights of the Child across their curriculum will find that the play offers a positive view of immigration and could be a starting point for discussion of why people leave their homes and how every community has welcomed new families moving into the town or village for work and how change does not need to be for the worse.

Within their classes work in Geography

'The King of the Sky' tells the story of two journeys. Maps on the following pages offer support to provide opportunities for the development of geographical skills as defined in the National Curriculum documents:

"Locating places, environments and patterns

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

1. identify and locate places and environments using globes, atlases, and maps, ..."

While finding out about and mapping the Italian cafes and other food outlets to be found in their local area can be part of a local studies project.

"Pupils should be given opportunities to:

- study – living in Wales: their local area and an investigation of at least one aspect of the geography of the whole of Wales,
- carry out – fieldwork to observe and investigate real places and processes ..."

Within their classes work in History

The following pages offer information about the reasons for the Italian families moving to Wales in the 1920's and 1930s. This will support studies of their local communities and their history as part of the *Curriculum Cymreig (7–14)*

Learners aged 7–14 should be given opportunities to develop and apply their knowledge and understanding of the cultural, economic, environmental, historical and linguistic characteristics of Wales. ... contributes to the Curriculum Cymreig by making local and Welsh history a focus of the study and helping learners to understand the factors that have shaped Wales and other countries today

The arrival of the Italian café and the hobbies and activities of the miners in their leisure time also provides another focus for the study of the Industrial Revolution in Wales.

"Historical enquiry

Pupils should be given opportunities to:

1. ask and answer relevant questions about the past
 2. plan the investigative approach to be used, suggesting how to find relevant information
 3. use a range of sources, including ICT, e.g. artefacts, buildings and sites, adults talking about their own past, visual sources, data and appropriate written sources
- carry out
 - investigations into the history around them and into the life of people at different times and places in the past
 - ask and answer the questions
 - what do you know about life at this time; how do you know this and how can you find out more?
 - what was life like for rich and for poor people, for men, women and children, e.g. houses, food and farming, transport, education, clothes, celebrations, pastimes?
 - were there significant changes in people's lives at this time and, if so, why?



What makes a house a home?

Not just an advertising slogan but also an intriguing way into discussing our homes and what they mean to us.

For the boy home means “the cooing of the pigeons and the smell of the ice cream from his Granny’s shop”.

The class talked about their own homes using the focus of the senses.

What sounds do you associate with your house?

What is the smell of your home?

What is the touch or feel of your home?

What is the taste of your home?

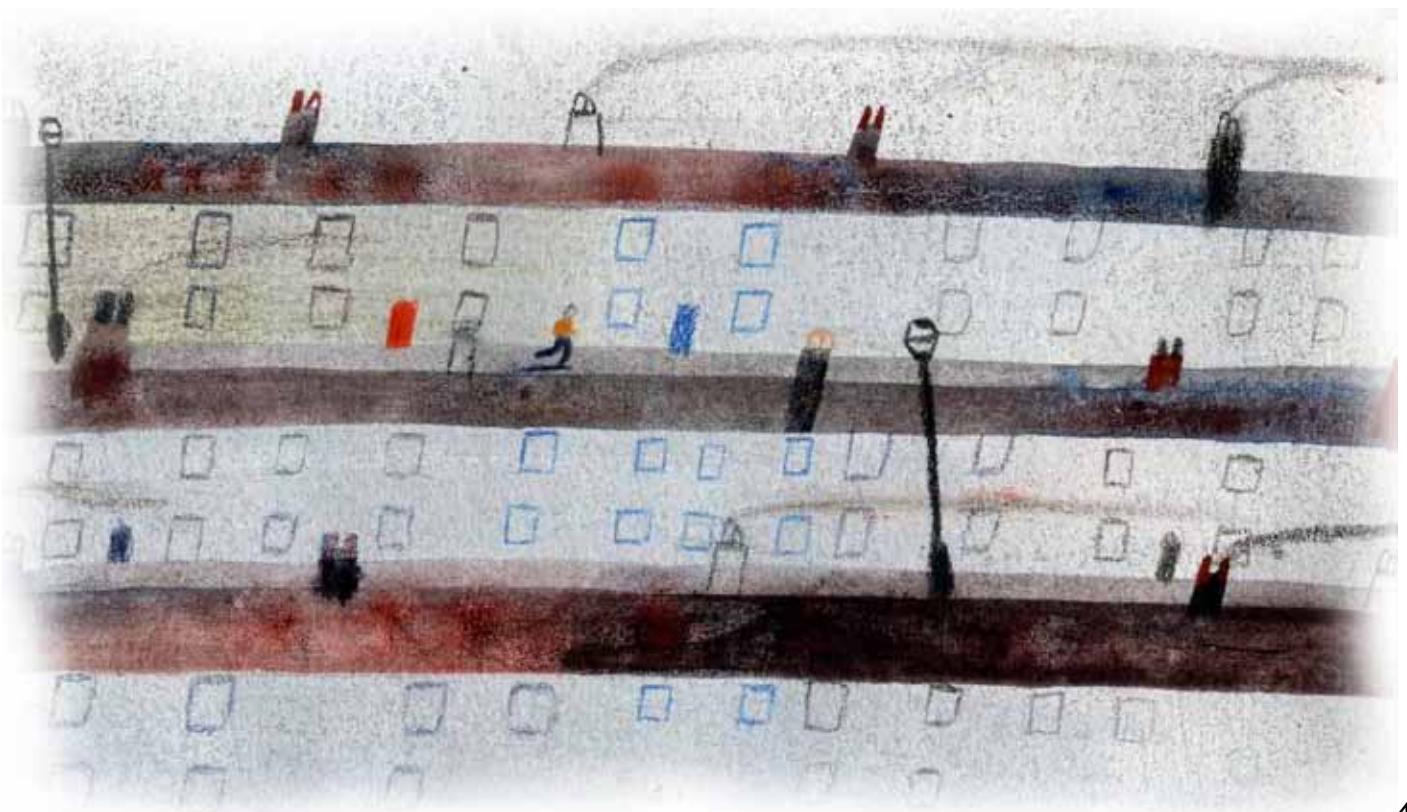
What are the colours of your home? Not just the colours of the paint on the walls. When you think of your house do you think of light or dark colours? Do you think of one room? Or inside or outside the house?

The children came up with very concrete, specific experiences/memories in answer to these questions. These could be combined into a list poem or a group piece under the title,

**A house is bricks, stones, wood and cement,
Sinks, stairs, cookers and cupboards,
But my home is**

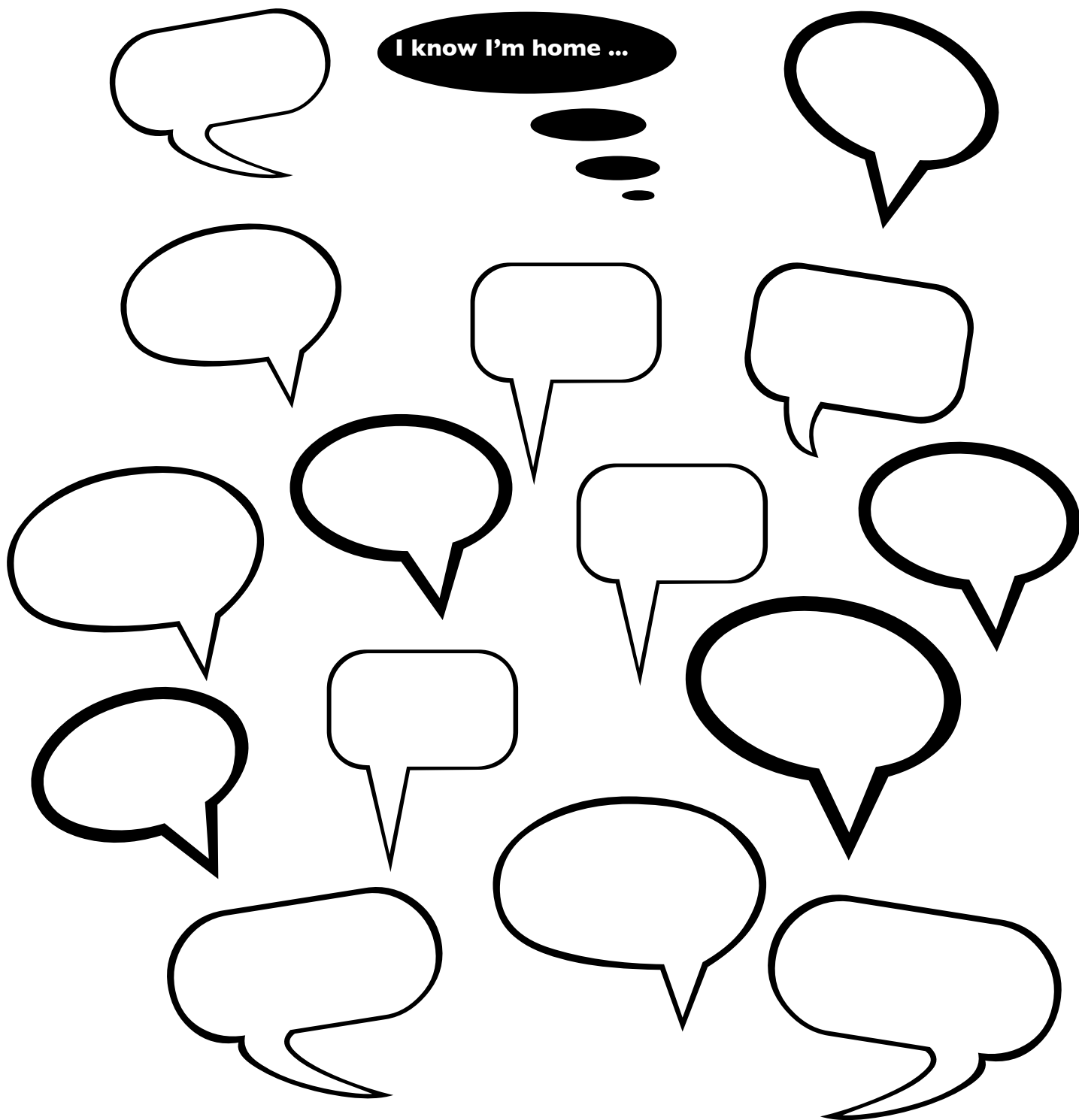
In the story the child remembers his Granny’s shop rather than his own bedroom. How is your granny’s house different?

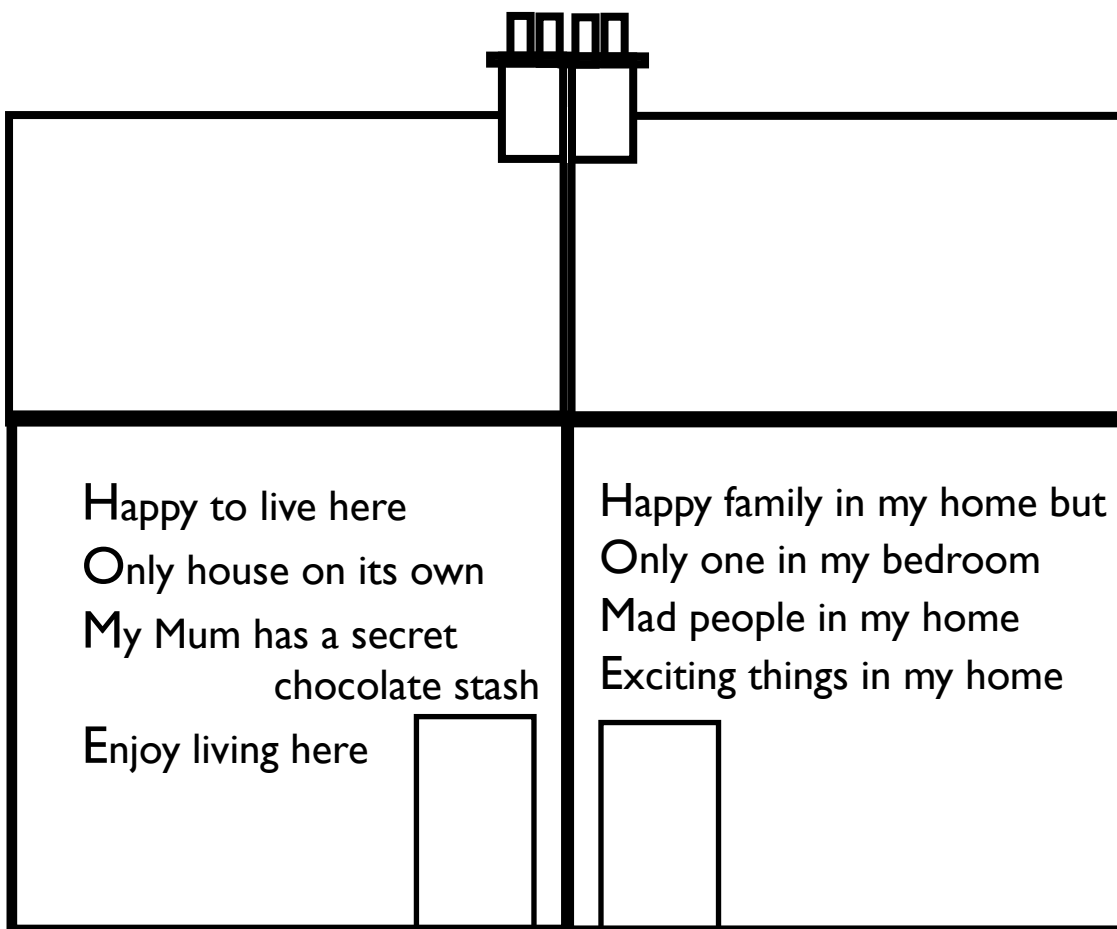
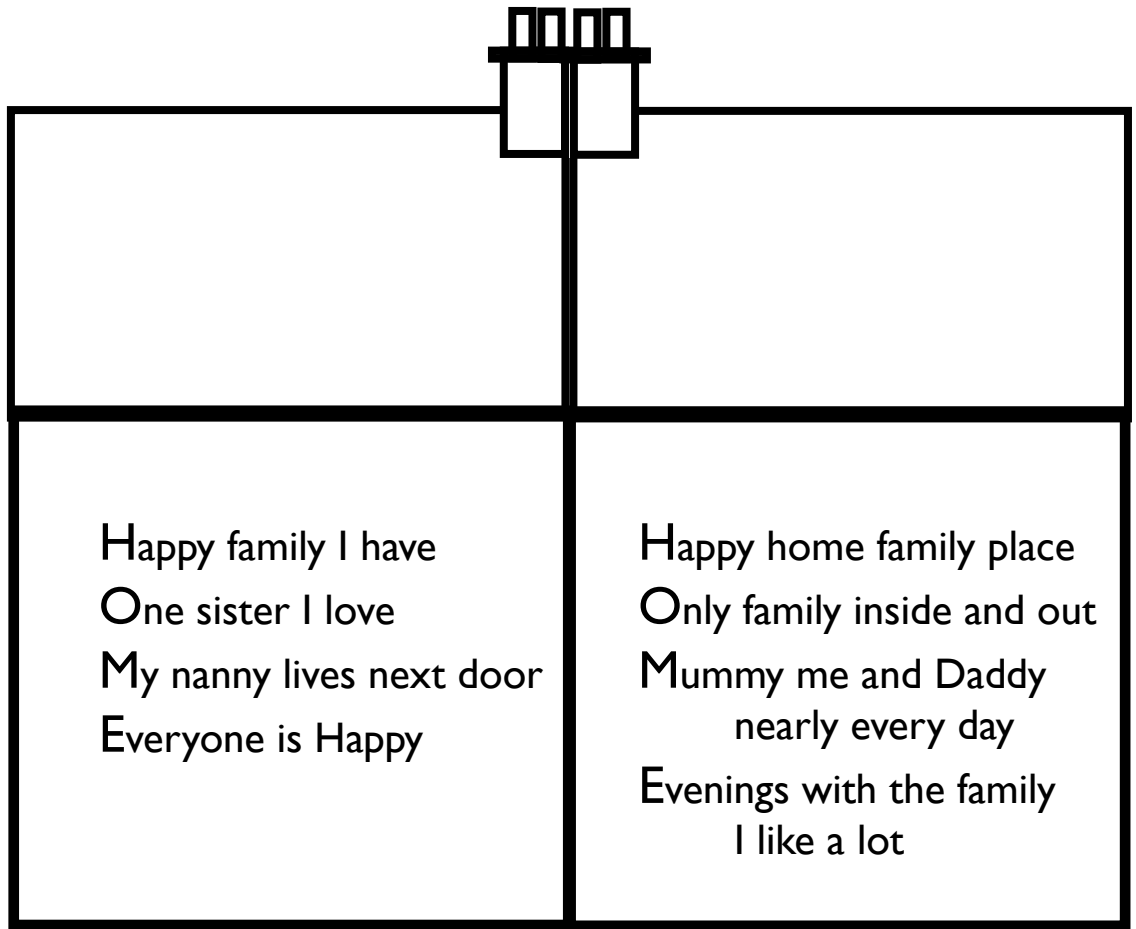
Where we feel “at home” may not always be the place where we live.



One possibility for displaying the results of discussion and writing.
Below a Year 3 group discussing their own homes

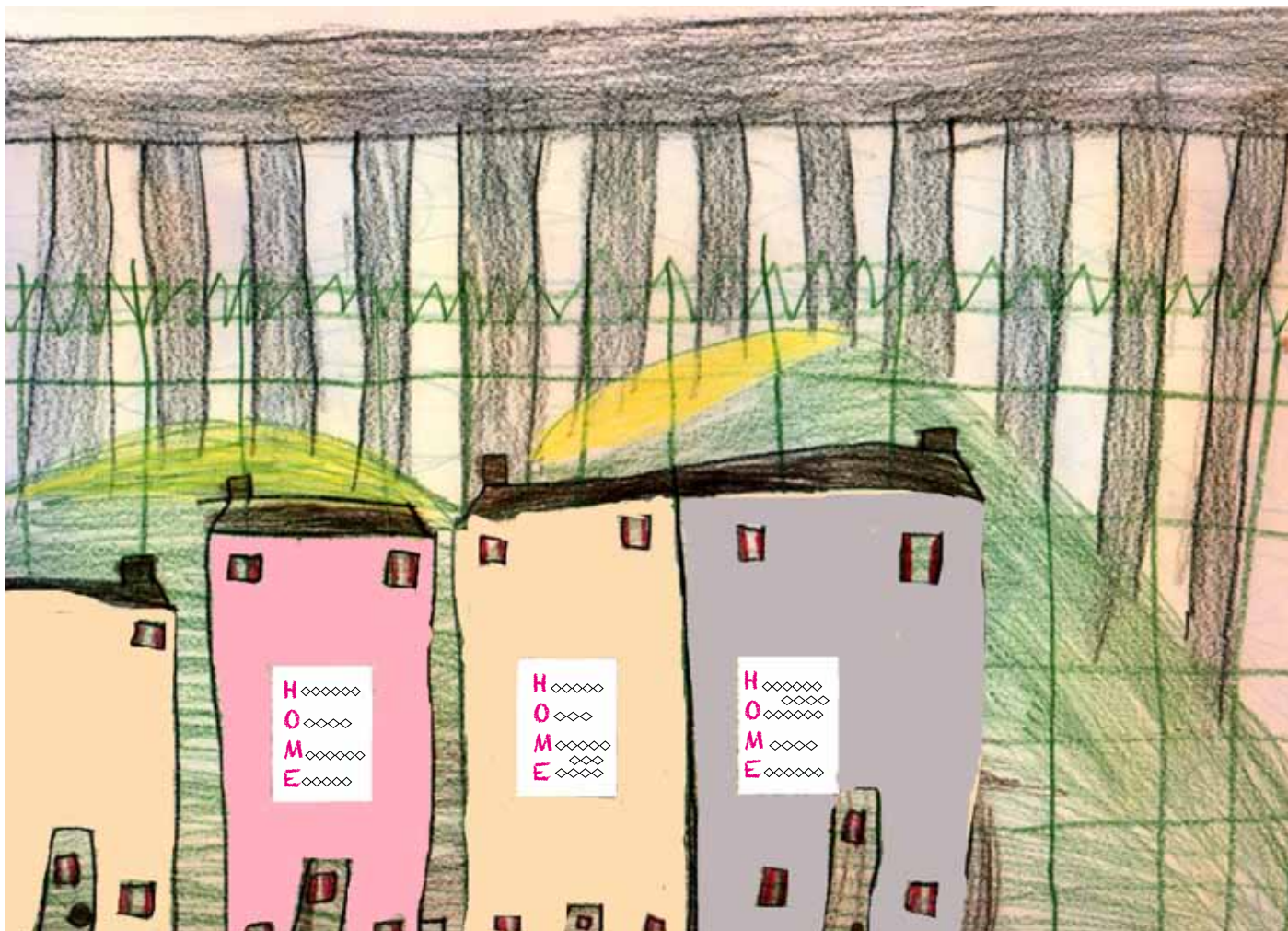






Acrostic poems.

The poems could be mounted on the classes' drawings of their own house and then arranged in a terrace. *(see next page)*



The houses in my street may look all the same but only one is MY home.

Moving House

In most classes one or two children may be able to act as a resource talking about how their family prepared for a move. Stories could be built up from individual episodes.

For some classes, with children with traumatic experiences of having to move; it may be easier, safer, for the class to distance their own experiences through the device of talking about an imaginary child in a story who is not themselves. "What might happen to them?" "How did they feel when...?" are the questions rather than "What happened to you?" or "How did your family feel?" A generic child for the whole class with a name and character that is definitely not that of anyone in the class can be less intimidating.

How did you first hear that you were going to move - Did you overhear your parents talking - or how did they tell you? What was the first thing that came into your head when you heard. Was it "YES! at last a new adventure" or horror. Is the child angry? worried? just very quiet?

How do they react to the uncertainties of the next few weeks? How can the child tell that their mother or father are worried, excited, apprehensive? How do the rest of the family behave? Is the family good at coping with stress? When your family is very busy is your Mum calm or flustered? Does she make endless lists or just flap? Is she calm with time to reassure the others or tense and snappy? Do you have to make sure you keep out of your parent's way? How do children try to help? Are brothers and sisters a help? Or a hindrance? How are their reactions different? Which reactions would make the best story?

Children have had great fun creating either through drama or as writing, the scene where they 'negotiate' what they will be allowed to pack and take with them. What do they try to smuggle into the boxes and cases? What happens to pets? Do they bury a keepsake in the garden so that something of theirs will always be there?

How do they say goodbye to their friends?

What is the last thought that goes through their head as the old front door is closed for the last time? What do they think as they look back as they turn the corner?

In the story Granny gives the child her milk churn that must be really hard to travel with and the last thing the father needs at that moment. What would the children want as a special memory of their old home? How do they get it in the van or on the train?



Arriving In A New Place.

Why do families move and how do they react to the change?

As the story was dramatised we explored the possible experiences of a new boy coming into the village. What would happen as he came into the playground?

Classes have explored how people have coped with making new friends. What could the rest of the class do to help the settling in? One class explored through everyone in the class speaking the thoughts of an imaginary new child as they went into the playground. They enjoyed the fact that in the boys head was a whole mix of different feelings. The film "Inside Out" was their reference point for this idea. We rarely only have one thought or idea in our heads. In this class there were 28 different thoughts ranging through anger via fear to optimism and stroking their lucky charm. Those who couldn't think of a thought or who had chosen one that other's had already thought of were helped to get a full range. Some just made a sound 'AAAAAGH!' 'Oh no!' When everyone had spoken the class decided which type of thoughts were most predominant. How would this have affected how they walked across the yard. Would they creep round the edge, try to cover up their doubts putting on a brave face and stride across the centre, or burst into tears?

Another group talked about how difficult it was when the teacher asked you to look after the new child. You wanted to play with your friends and this new kid trailed along. You wanted to help but ...

A problem is that in stories or drama sessions it is usual for the more explosive versions, the grimmer nastier versions with name calling, isolation or worse, to make more interesting stories than the ones that just show everything being easy and a pleasant transition into a new life. One way to not let the nasty incidents be the favourite parts, is to tell them as if they were in the past, not show them in the present tense. Place the emphasis on the reaction of those watching rather than the bullies. If you are not careful you will find that some in the class are showing you how bullies behave with rather too much involvement and enjoyment!

How do our streets or areas appear to others or the outsider?

Moving house is a stressful time.

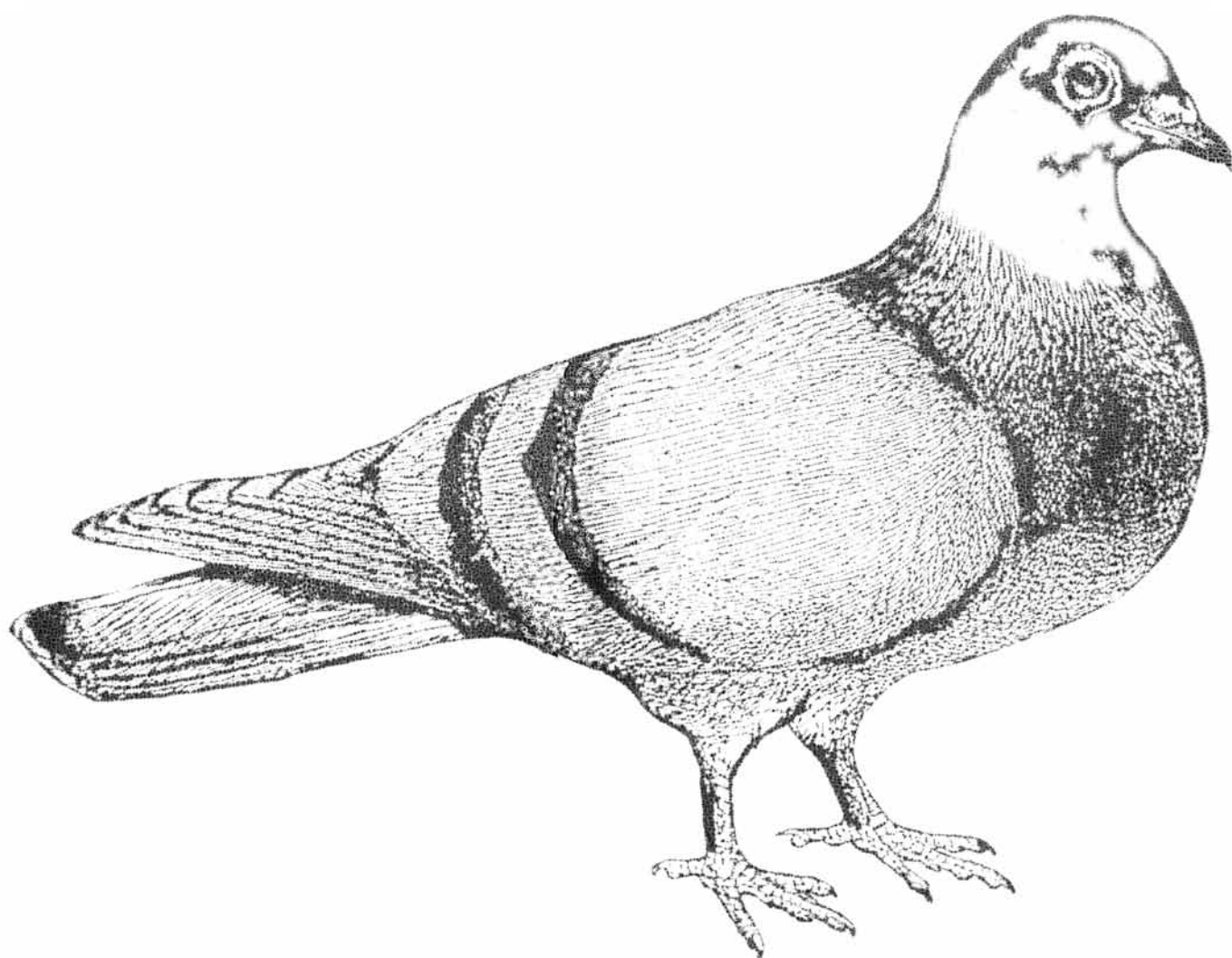
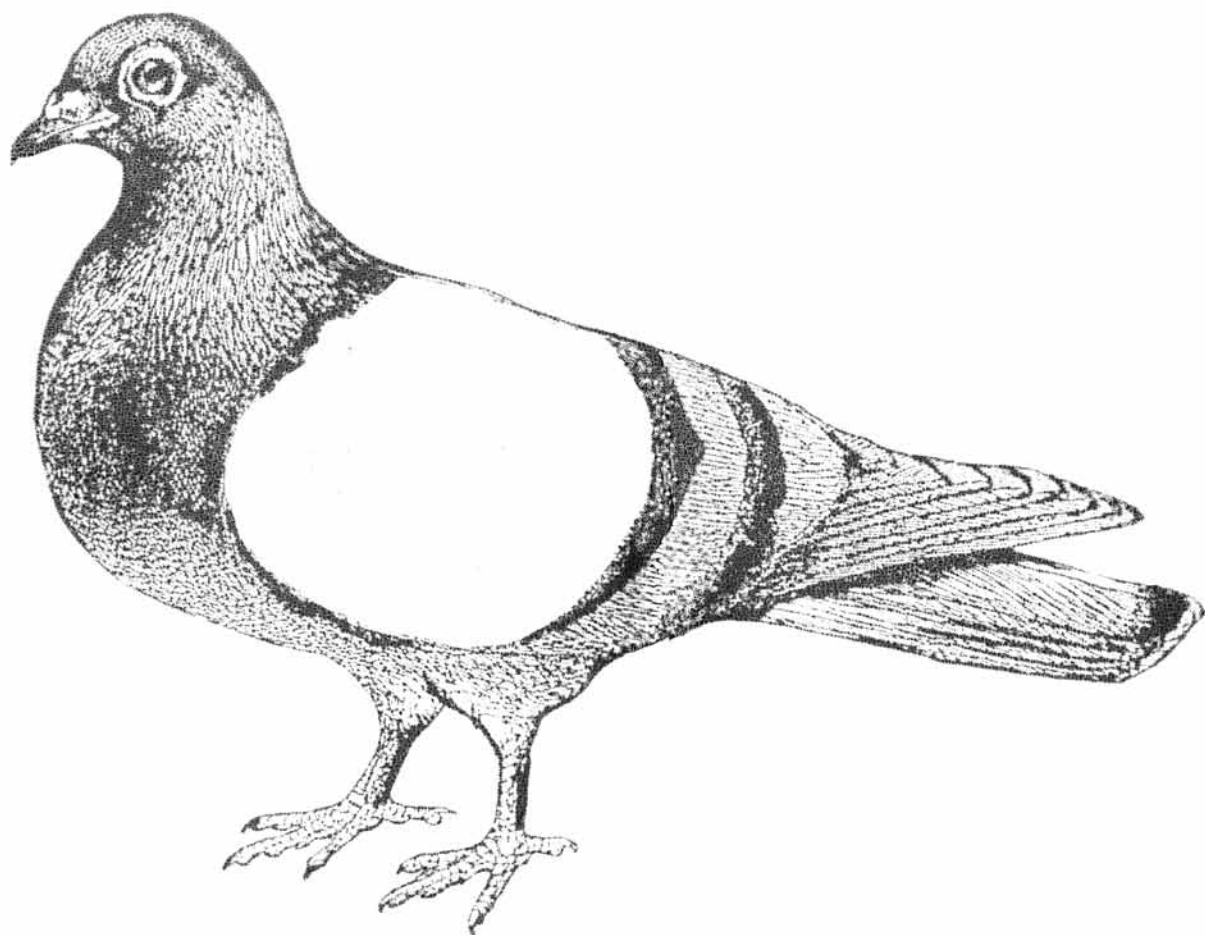
How do we react when we are unhappy? How do we know when our mothers are worried? Is it a time to keep out of her way or do we try to help?

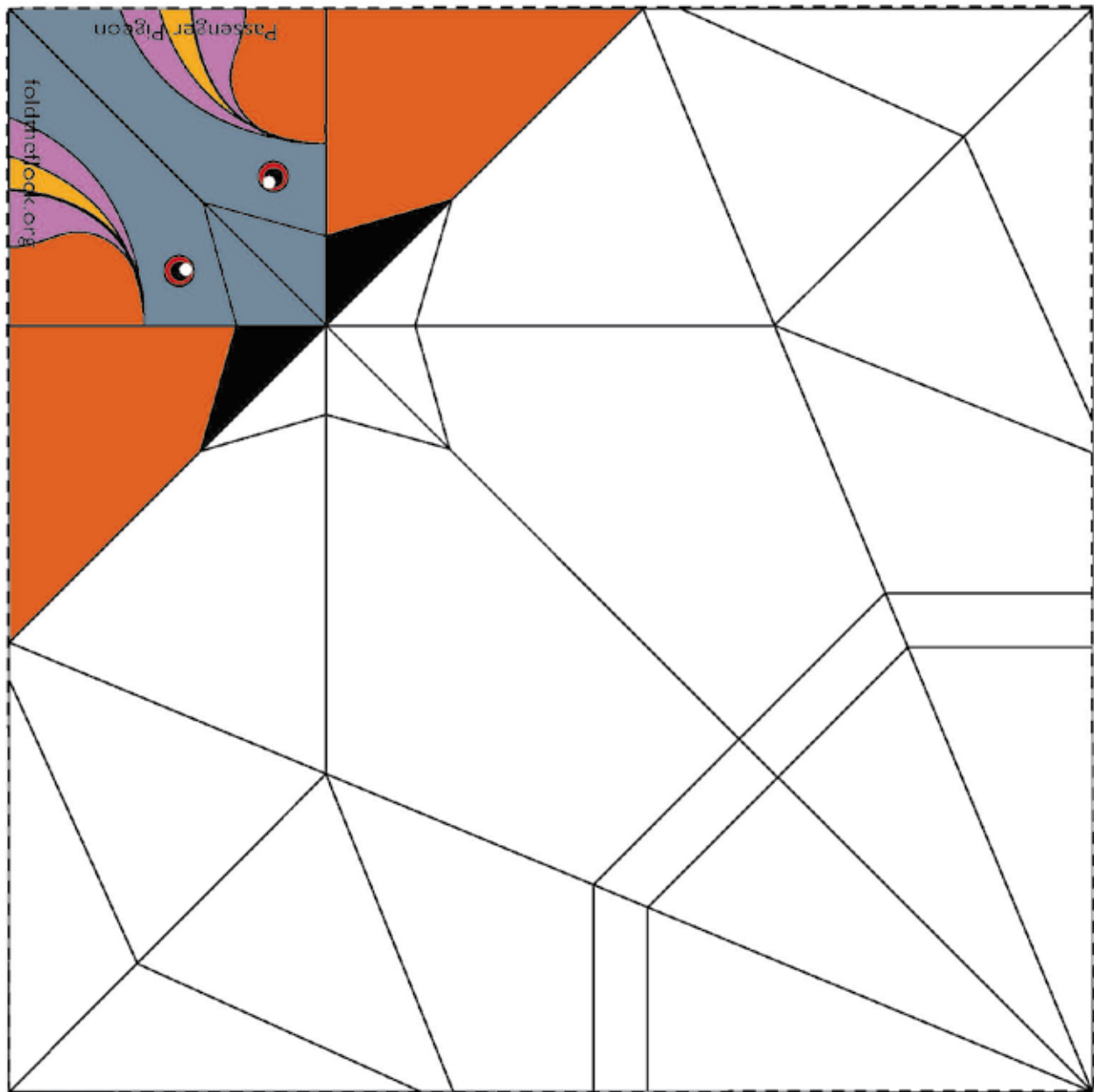
How do we behave when we are worried?

How do we react to new situations? Which reaction might produce a positive result?

Which reactions might make things more difficult?



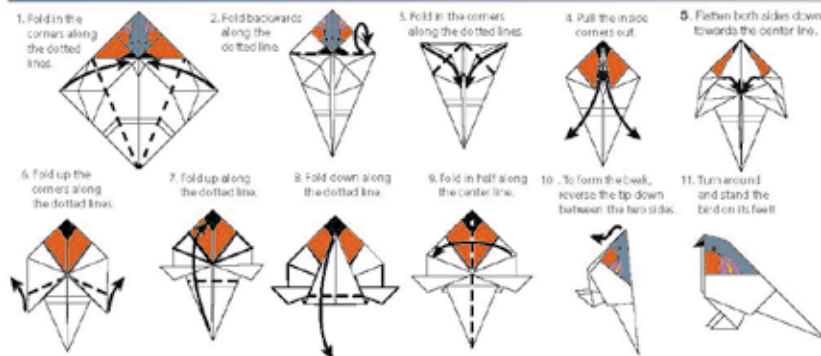




Instructions



Learn the story of the Passenger Pigeon foldtheflock.org



2014 marks the centennial anniversary of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon. To help remember the Passenger Pigeon, we are folding origami pigeons to recreate the great flocks of 100 years ago.

Make your bird count! Add this pigeon to our growing virtual flock by visiting foldtheflock.org/add. Check in regularly to see the flock grow!

Fold the Flock is an initiative of:

The Lost Bird Project
Connecting more deeply with
the earth through art
lostbirdproject.org

©2012 The Lost Bird Project
Special Thanks to Portland State



A Drawing By Laura Carlin Of A Pigeon.

Individual pigeons could be printed out on thin card, coloured, cut out and hung on a thread.
Then grouped as a mobile to make a flock of pigeons.

Another Version For A Bird Mobile.

The template for photocopying is on the following page.

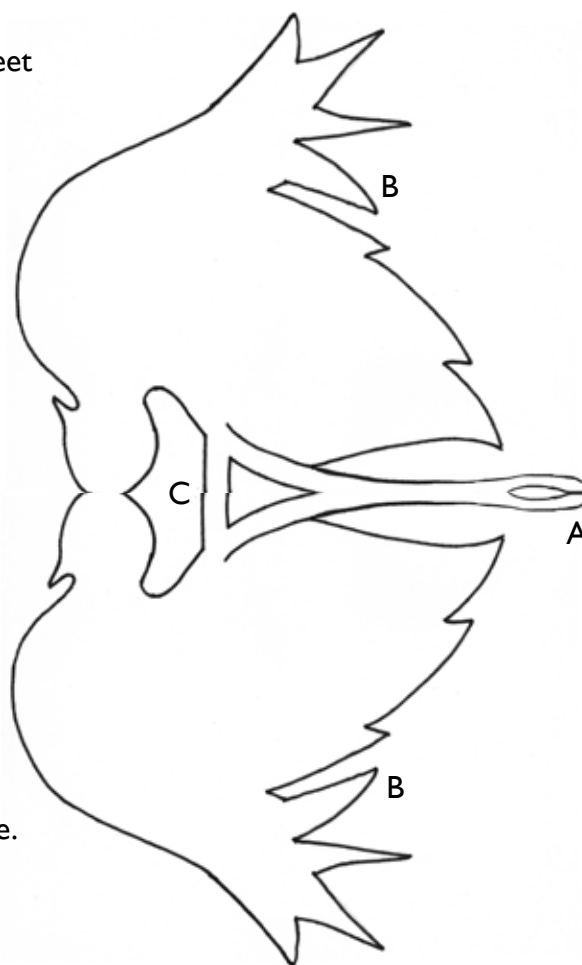
Draw or print the bird shape onto the top half of an A4 sheet

Fold a sheet of A4 thin card or cartridge paper into half
along the dotted line

Then cut out the bird through both halves of the sheet.

**Be careful not to cut along the fold
where it is marked with a dotted red line .**

Opened out the cutout shape should look like the diagram
on the right as one piece.

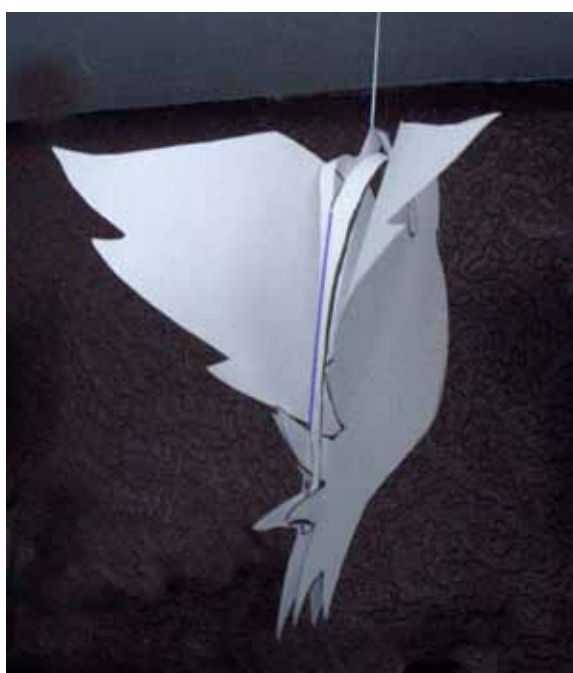


Hook the slit in A over the both parts of the tail marked B
to hold both halves together. Secure with glue.

Curl the tips of the wings outwards.

Add a thread through C to hang the dove from a branch.

This template will produce a bird that is closer to a dove than a pigeon.



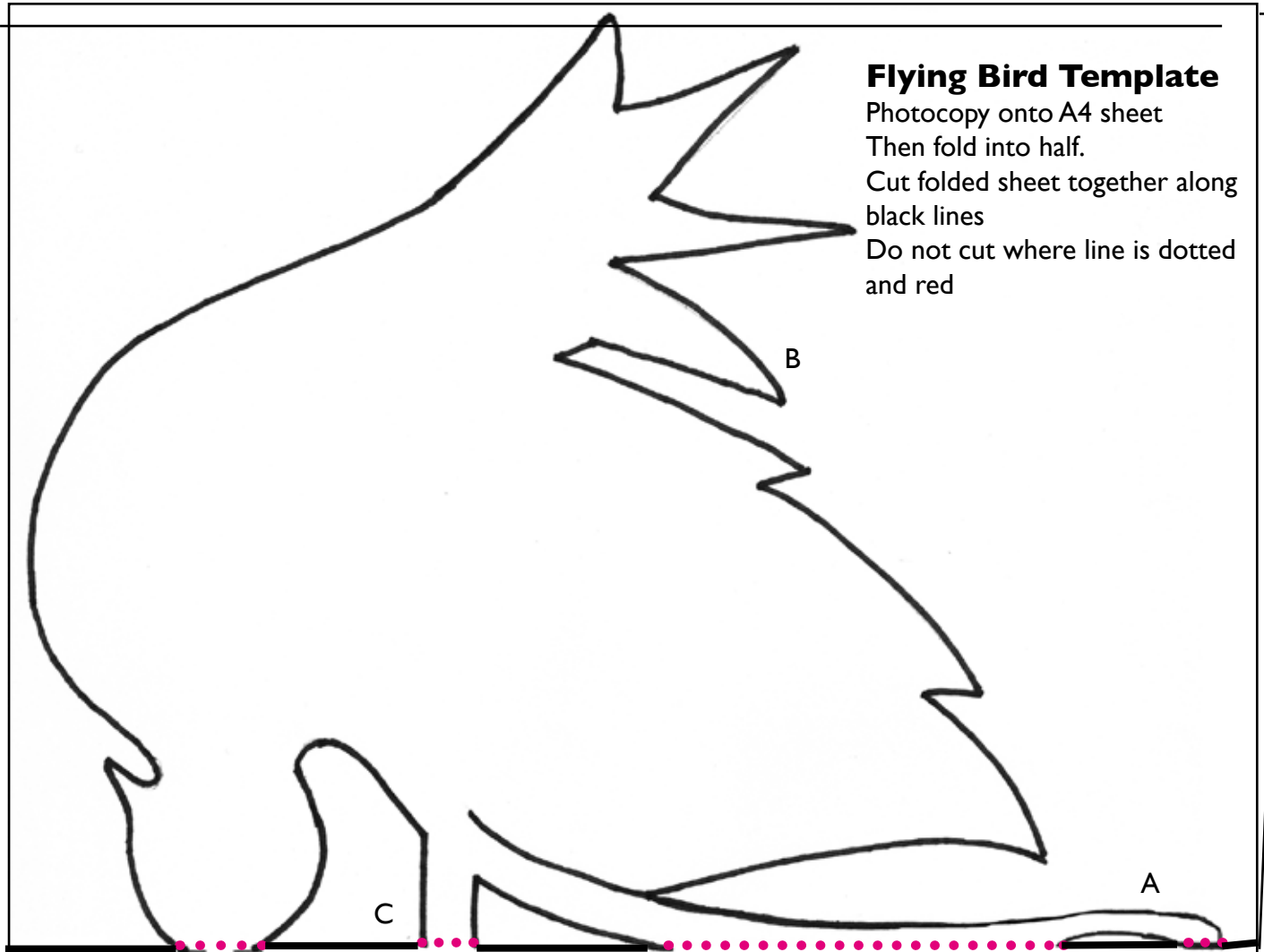
Flying Bird Template

Photocopy onto A4 sheet

Then fold into half.

Cut folded sheet together along black lines

Do not cut where line is dotted and red



The characters in the story and the pigeon travel from Italy to Wales and the story presents many opportunities for simple geographical follow up work through map-work tracing their journeys and the conditions and terrain they encounter on the way.

The following pages offer you simple map outlines of Europe.

Some pupils might want to compare distances they have travelled on holiday or to visit relations with the journey of the pigeon or the family. They could measure the distances with wool or string or a ruler from where they stayed in Greece or France, comparing that with the length of a journey from Rome.

How long did it take you to fly to Spain on holiday? The journey seems to take forever for the boy and he can't imagine the bird being able to fly that far. How do they pass the time on journeys? What games and songs are sung? Is the same food always packed for the journey? Who gets grumpy? Who is annoying?

The family didn't travel by plane which could lead on to a conversation about the changes in transport available to ordinary families then and now. In fact many of the Italian families who emigrated to Wales came by finding a berth on a cargo ship travelling out from Genoa, through the straits of Gibraltar and then up through the Bay of Biscay into the English channel. This was cheaper than the journey overland by train and ferry.

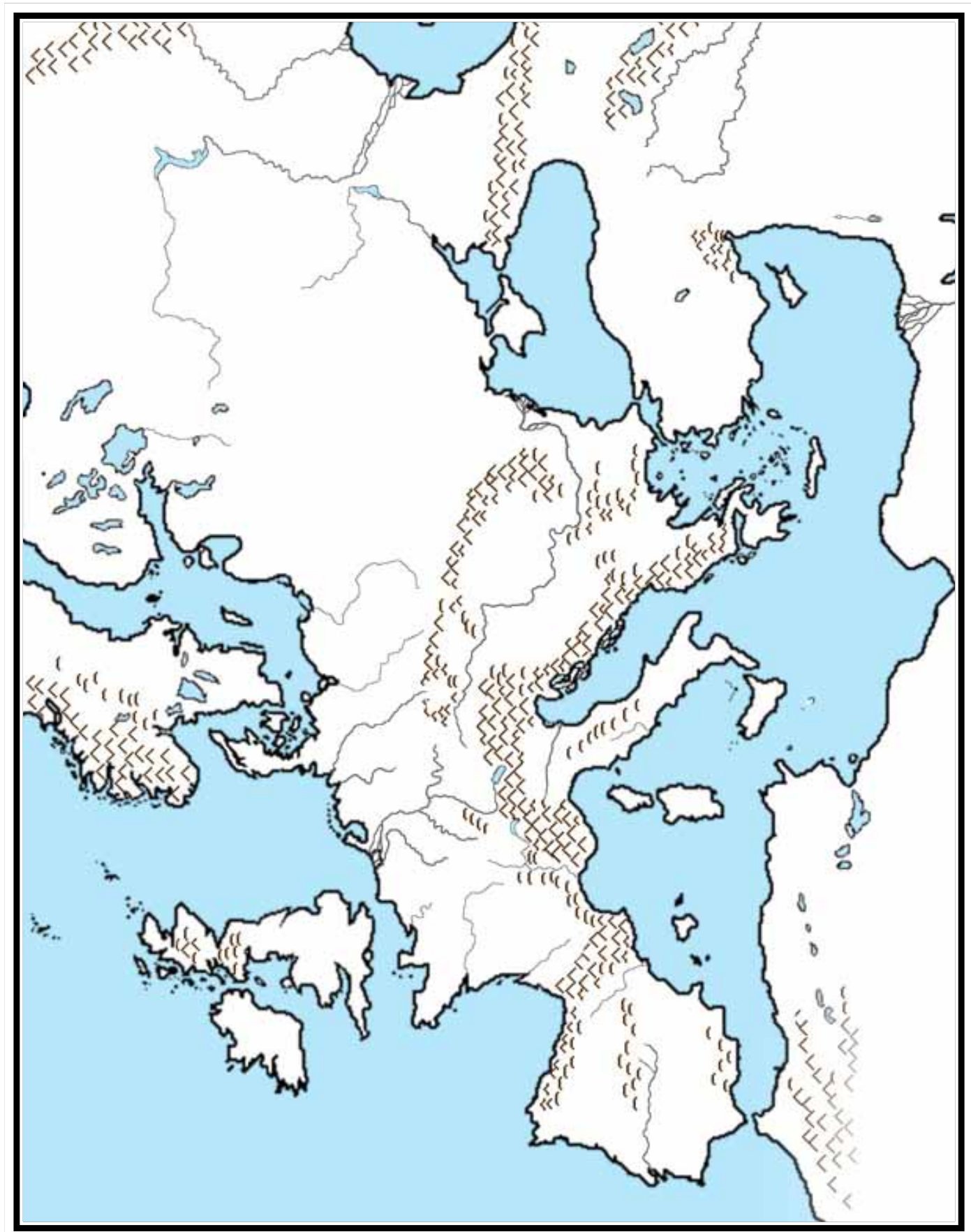
How do people emigrate these days? How much luggage could you take on a plane? How much if you went by boat?

John Burningham has written two famous stories about journey's in Mr Gumpy's Outing and Mr Gumpy's Motorcar.



A class could explore the hazards that faced the pigeons in the race. Where were the mountains? Was it safer to go round cities or stay in the countryside where there might be hunters wanting pigeons for their pies or farmers hating pigeons eating their seeds in the fields. Was the sea the major obstacle or the weather? The animations in the play show the pigeon crossing Paris and London as a way or showing his progress. Do you think this is the way the pigeon would have gone?

Can You Trace The Journey Of The Family And The Pigeon From Italy To Wales?



Can You Trace The Journey Of The Family And The Pigeon From Italy To Wales?



Can You Trace The Journey Of The Family And The Pigeon From Italy To Wales?



Nicola Davies

Nicola Davies is a zoologist and writer. She was one of the original presenters of the BBC children's wildlife programme *The Really Wild Show*. More recently, she has made her name as a children's author. Her books include *Home*, which was shortlisted for the Branford Boase Award, and *Poo* (2004), was shortlisted for a Blue Peter Book Award in 2006; *Tiny Creatures: The World of Microbes* picked up a host of science, parental and library awards in the USA. *Gaia Warriors*, published in November 2009 by Walker Books, and written in association with, and with an afterword by, James Lovelock is a book about climate change like no other that explains the science and answers the commonly asked questions about global warming.

You can find out about the award-winning writer of the story by logging into her web-site.

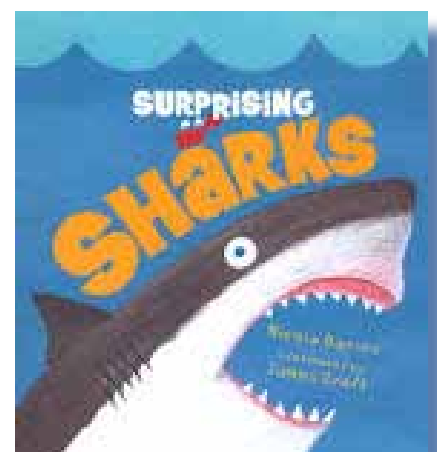
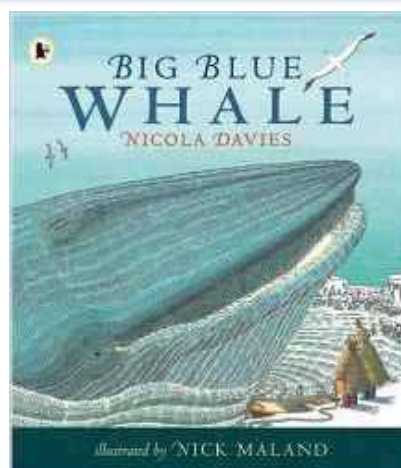
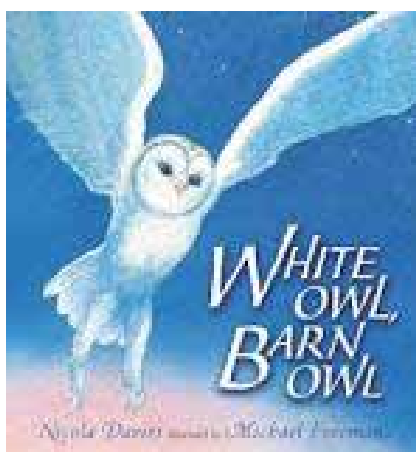
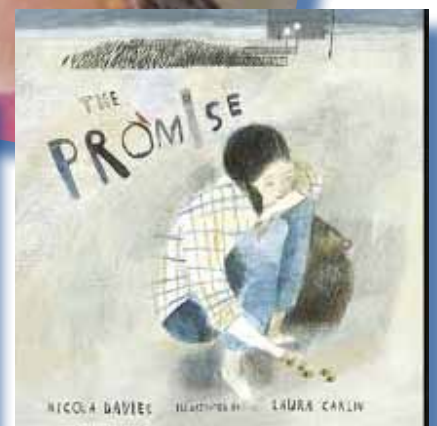
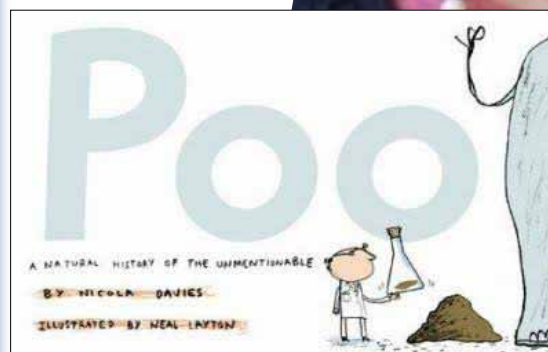
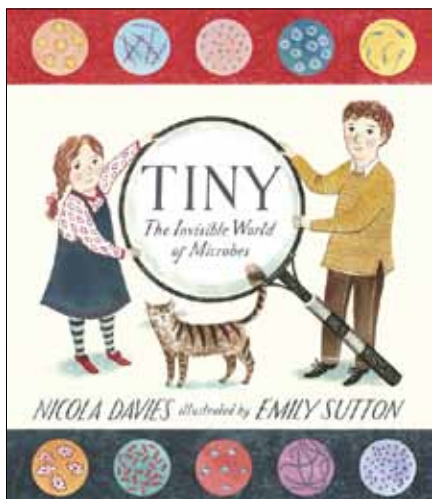
<http://www.nicola-davies.com>

You will probably find that you have several of her books in school libraries or at your local library already.

Many of Nicola's books are to be found in the non-fiction section of the library. She writes both fiction and non-fiction. Her work could give you a useful starting point for discussing the difference between fiction and non-fiction. *King of the Sky* is a piece of fiction but it is based on many true facts about pigeons and their abilities, about the history of the Italian community in South Wales, about the keeping and breeding of racing pigeons as a hobby.

Have your children ever tried to write a non-fiction guide?
Could they include five true facts into a story.
There is a view that boys often prefer to read non-fiction and lists of facts rather than fiction.

What does a survey of your class show?
How does that compare to the year 6 class?
Can we show our results as a graph?



Local Studies and History

A class studying the industrial revolution and the coal industry may be intrigued by the insight the story gives to the activities of the miners in what leisure time they had. Even today there are more than 700 pigeon lofts in South Wales alone. Pigeon lofts are present in the row of iron worker cottages at the St Fagans National History Museum.

“That’s what I thought about every day, down the pit, down in the dark, hacking away with my pick axe. I thought of my birds, up in the light. It stopped me going mad sometimes....”



For others there were prize rabbits or ferrets to breed. Or the men sang in Male Voice Choirs. Or dug their allotments. The temperance movement of the early 20th century and the presence of the non-conformist chapels meant that the public house and drinking were not central to the communities' leisure activities. The Italian Cafés flourished, in part, because the majority were temperance and teetotal. Men could get out of the house, go to play snooker or meet their friends in the evening without the 'stigma' of going into a pub.

It might be interesting to ask about hobbies people have today. Today they are not talked about in the same way as they were before the second world war. Today people have interests rather than hobbies. Is there a difference? There was a strong difference between the men's activities when they had finished work and the occupations of the women. 'A woman's work was never done,' said the old proverb. When they sat down they sewed, darned and mended clothes; knitted and crocheted. All in the home or next door where they could keep an eye on the babies and the children. It was the men who went down the garden to their sheds or further afield.

The Italian Cafés

Why Cafes? And why Wales?

A café is a simple shop for a family to open. Unlike a grocery store or greengrocers you do not need expensive stock before you can start. If you are prepared to open all hours and don't have to pay for staff outside the family then you can build up the business while you are open. Today people start with a burger van or other options are nail bars or hairdressing salons. In the 1920s the Italians were used to running cafés and ice cream parlours and neither were a feature of life in the South Wales Valleys beforehand.

The answer to the question as to why Italians from the area around the city of Bardi in Northern Italy chose to come to South Wales is less obvious. The first wave of immigrants at the beginning of the 20th century chose to stay in London mostly round Holborn but later the Italian community concentrated on the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire. There was a link in that ships full of Welsh coal were arriving everyday at the port of Genoa and it was known that there was work to be had in Wales. Some people have speculated that the Socialist and trade union movements in the valleys chimed with the views of the Italians who came from one of the poorest parts of Italy where work was scarce and who knew, once Mussolini came to power, that there was little chance of a job with their history of engagement with the left.

Not just a café.

In a novel 'The Alien Land' by John Parker there is a description of a cafe

"All along one side was a high counter ... the heat of the stove was overpowering even near the doorway of the shop but two men squatting on tilted chairs, close to the stove were talking in shrill voices apparently unaware of the heat.

There were glass shelves behind the counter and arranged upon the shelves were glasses and bottles of various colours and lines of china cups.. Below the shelves were boxes containing multicoloured sweets and alongside them other boxes placed upright to display packets of cigarettes inside them. Towards the middle of the counter was a glass case containing cakes, some iced, some filled with cream ... At the far end of the counter as far away from the stove as possible, was an ice-cream container; a highly coloured cabinet with a lid like a French sailor's cap."



Sweets, cigarettes, often sold individually, to those who had spent most of their week's wages, hot drinks mainly tea and Oxo, until the coffee machine came later in the twenties, some simple snacks, lemonade and pop, a warm place where people could linger over a cheap drink and ice cream - these were the ingredients that made the Italian café a success. Children spent their pennies on sweets while the grown-ups met in the warm fug of the café. The takings were low but with hard work and the careful cultivation of customers the cafés thrived and business grew.



As the family move and settle into a new community the play tells a positive story of immigration, without glossing over some of the difficulties. It would be an excellent stimulus for the classes local studies investigations into those communities who came to their area. This might have been as a result of the demand for new skills as the industrial revolution took hold.

In South Wales tin plate workers with smelting skills moved in from Devon and Sheffield. Mining skills were brought from Cornwall. Others brought or are continuing to bring new skills to the local community. Others like the Jewish Community came to escape persecution and war in the thirties when over seventy thousand including the children on the kindertransport trains came to the UK. Later the Vietnam boat people and the Kenyan Asians were given a new home

In South Wales the clues still remain in the names on shop fronts or factories. Almost every town and village in the South Wales valleys had an Italian café. Even if the shop has changed hands and menus been updated the name is still retained. Later in the 1960s and 70s the Chinese community spread out from the towns often taking over the Italian cafés, followed by the Indian and Bangladesh communities with their 'Indian' restaurants. Like the Italians before them working all hours in a family business, they adapted their menus to suit the local tastes with *curry and chips* and *chicken tikka marsala*. Unlike the Italians, Chinese and Indian restaurants do not use the family name above the shop.

**Some of the Italian names to be found
around Swansea and the valleys.**

Albertelli	Cresci
Basini	Forte
Bracchi	Rabaiotti
Berni	Rossi
Carpanini	Sidoli
Conti	Verdis

Why not invite a mother or father or the owner local restaurant or cafe to come into the school to talk about their experiences of running a cafe and how their family came to your town.



The Rabaiotti Cafe in Newbridge Gwent in the 1930s

A full History of the Italian Community in South Wales can be found in the the book -

**LIME LEMON AND SARSAPARILLA - the Italian Community in South Wales 1881-1945
by Colin Hughes, published by Seren ISBN 1-85411-055-1**

This seems to be out of print but is to be found in reference libraries.

Pigeon Facts

Homing and feral pigeons are the domesticated form of the rock dove.

Pigeons have been kept for sport, food and ornament for thousands of years.



Culver Hole on the Gower Peninsular is a cave that historians think was bricked up to provide a nesting place for pigeons in the middle ages. The remains of steps and ledges can be seen inside. Pigeons were kept as we keep chickens for meat and for their eggs.

The hen bird lays two white eggs and both parents share incubation duties until the chicks hatch after 18 days.

Baby pigeons are called squabs. When pigeons were kept for food, people used to eat squab pie!

Both parents make a milky substance in their crop (the food grinding pouch in pigeons throat) to feed to their chicks.



Picture showing the growth of a pigeon over just ten days.

Pigeon Post - Carrier Pigeons

Homing pigeons have been used to carry human messages for more than 3000 years.

Before telephones and telegraph lines pigeon post services were common all over the world.

Modern criminals have used pigeons to carry drugs and smuggle illegal items into prisons

During the siege of Paris in 1870 pigeons carried messages on microfilm in and out of the city.

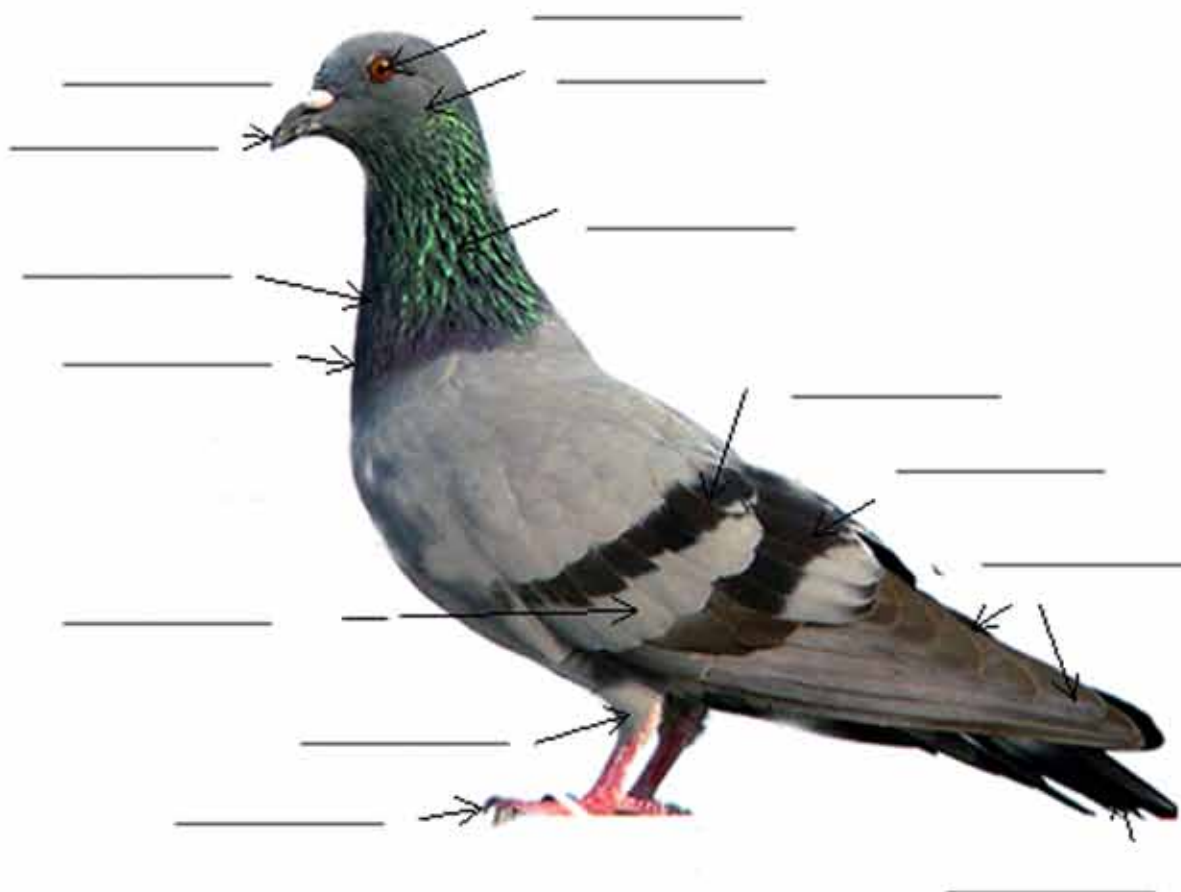
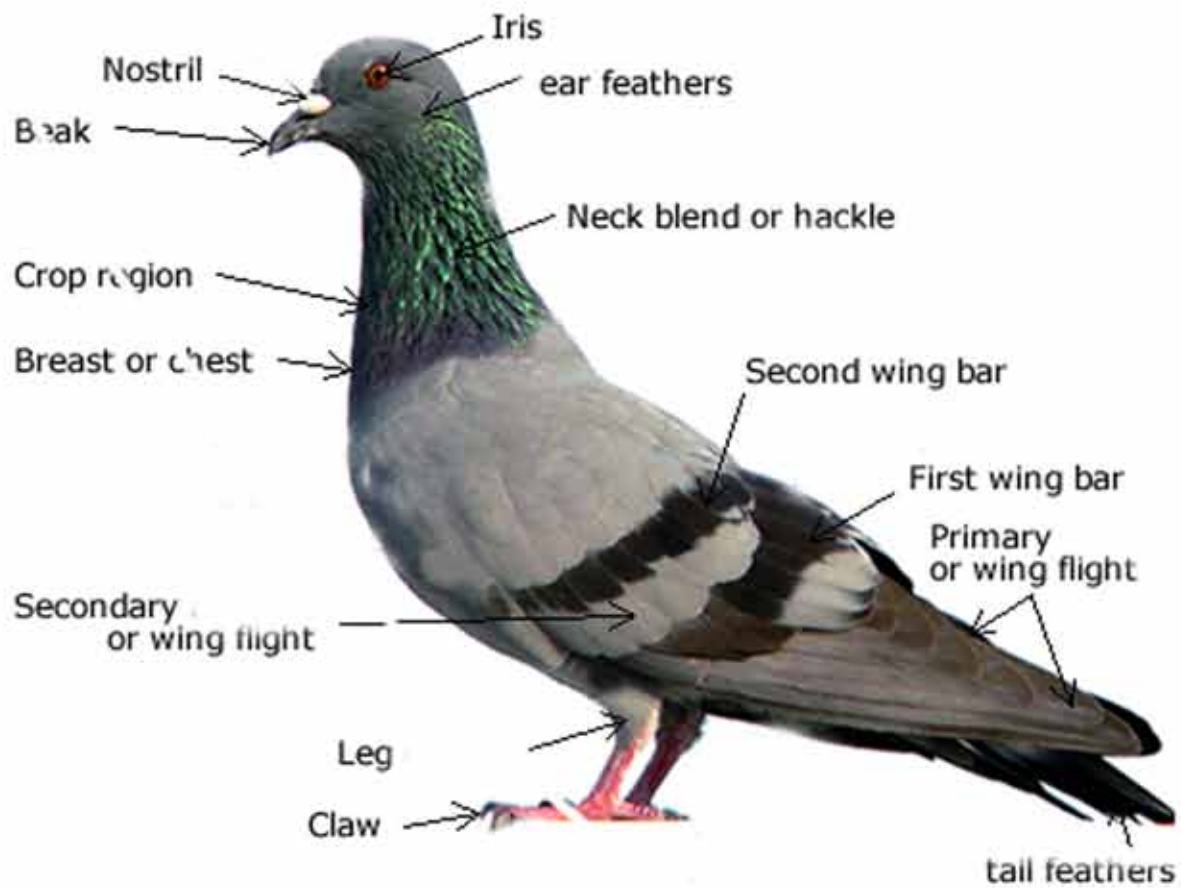
Pigeon messengers were used by UK military forces in World War 1 and World War 2.

A pigeon named Cher Ami saved a whole US battalion carrying messages during the Battle Of Verdun in 1916. She was awarded the French Croix de Guerre, the highest military medal.

250,000 pigeons were used to carry messages for the UK during World War 2. 32 of them were awarded the Dickin Medal, for bravery.

The last pigeons flew for their country in 1957.







How do pigeons find their way back home, from places they have been taken to in a closed basket, and they have never seen before?

‘Homing’ is the word for a pigeon’s ability to find its way back to its home loft from places it has never been to.

Pigeons have an in-built compass that helps them to find their way, but they can use the sun and the stars to help them find the right direction in which to fly.

Pigeons also use smell, carried in winds at great heights to steer in the direction of home.

The shape of hills, rivers, roads and buildings helps too.

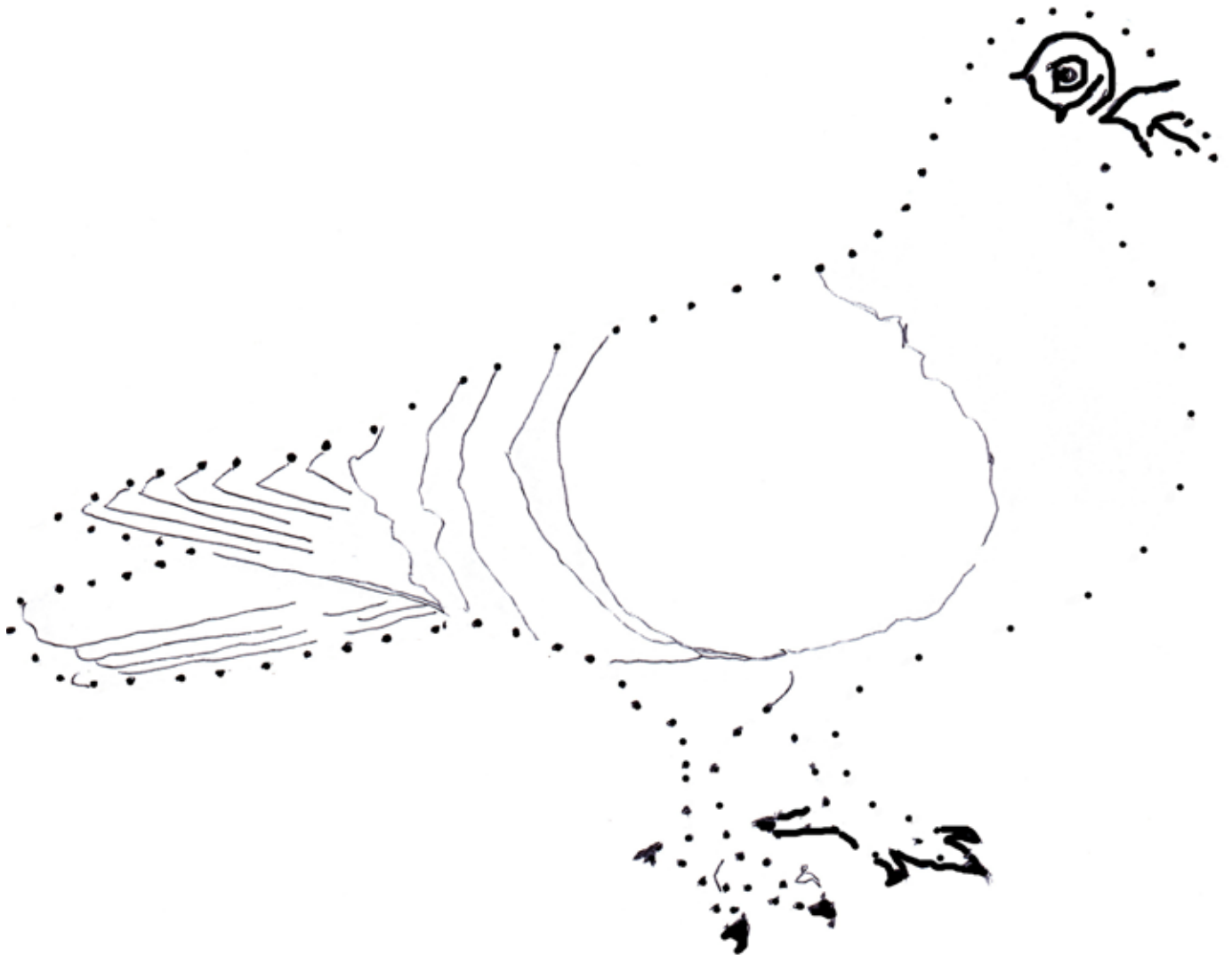
Scientists have recently found that pigeons may also use low frequency sound to help them find their way home.

Pigeons often take off and fly in big circles. They are learning the shape of landmarks around their home so they can recognise them from a distance and from any direction, also the smell and the sound of home.

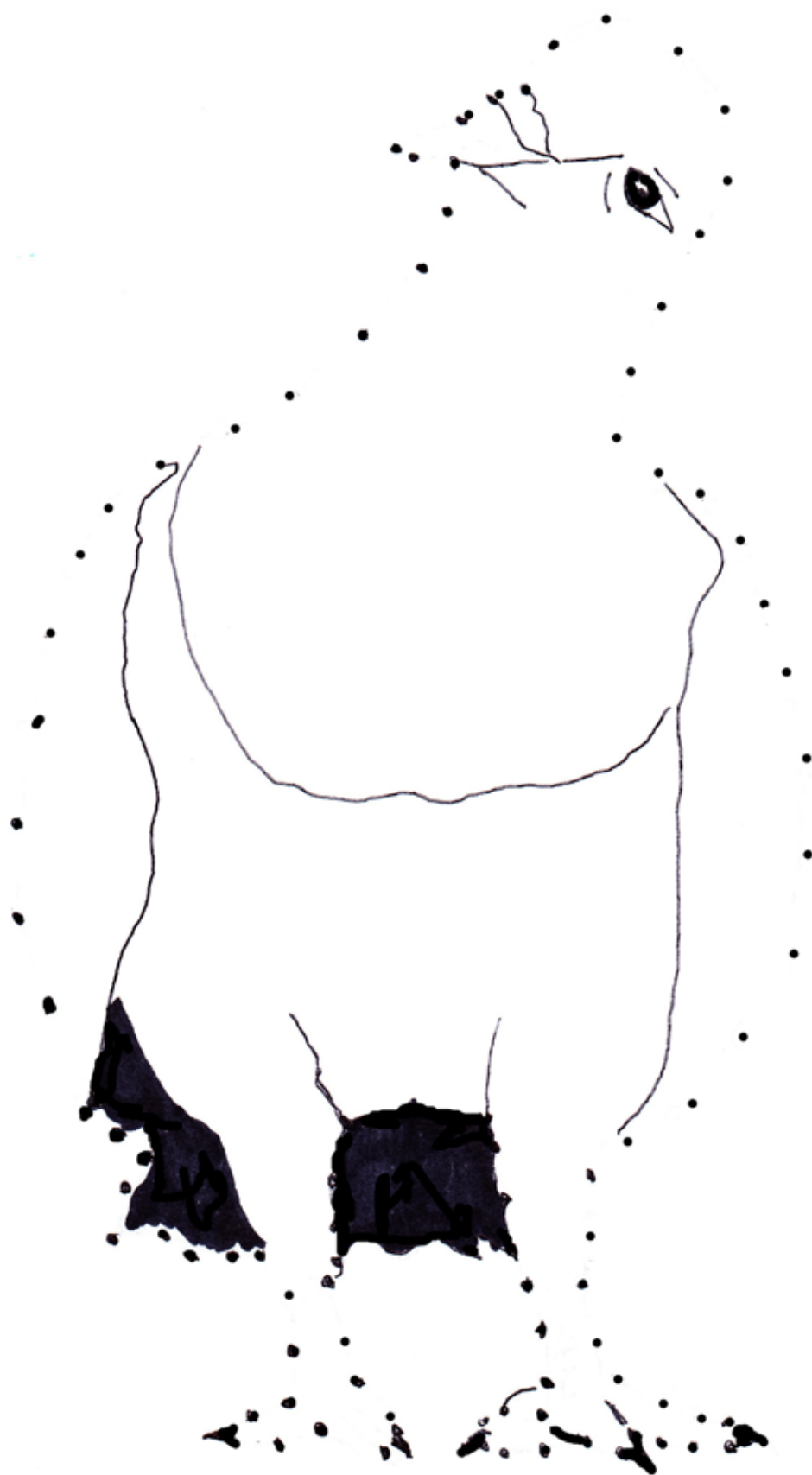
Sometimes pigeons don’t make it home. They may stop off on the way and make a new home, or die of cold or exhaustion in bad weather, or end up as a peregrine falcons’ dinner!



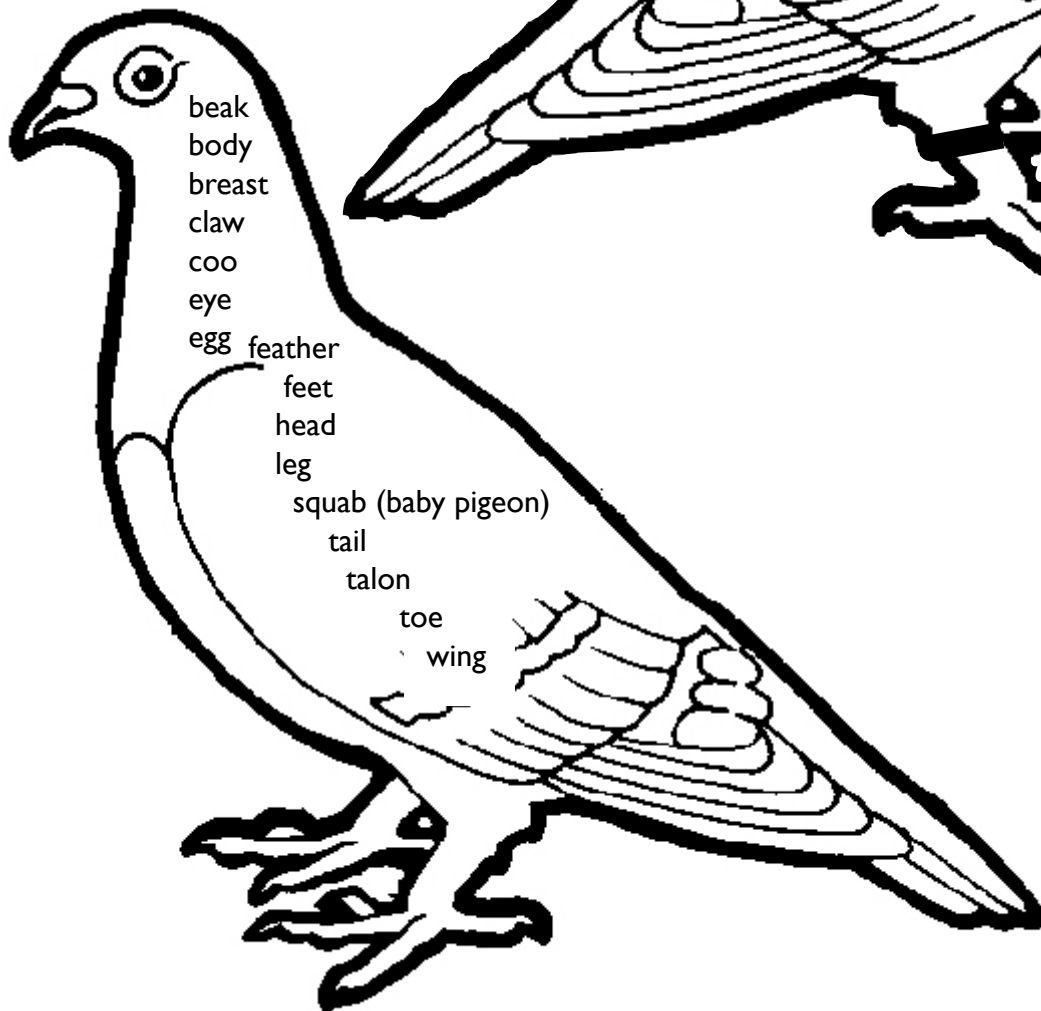
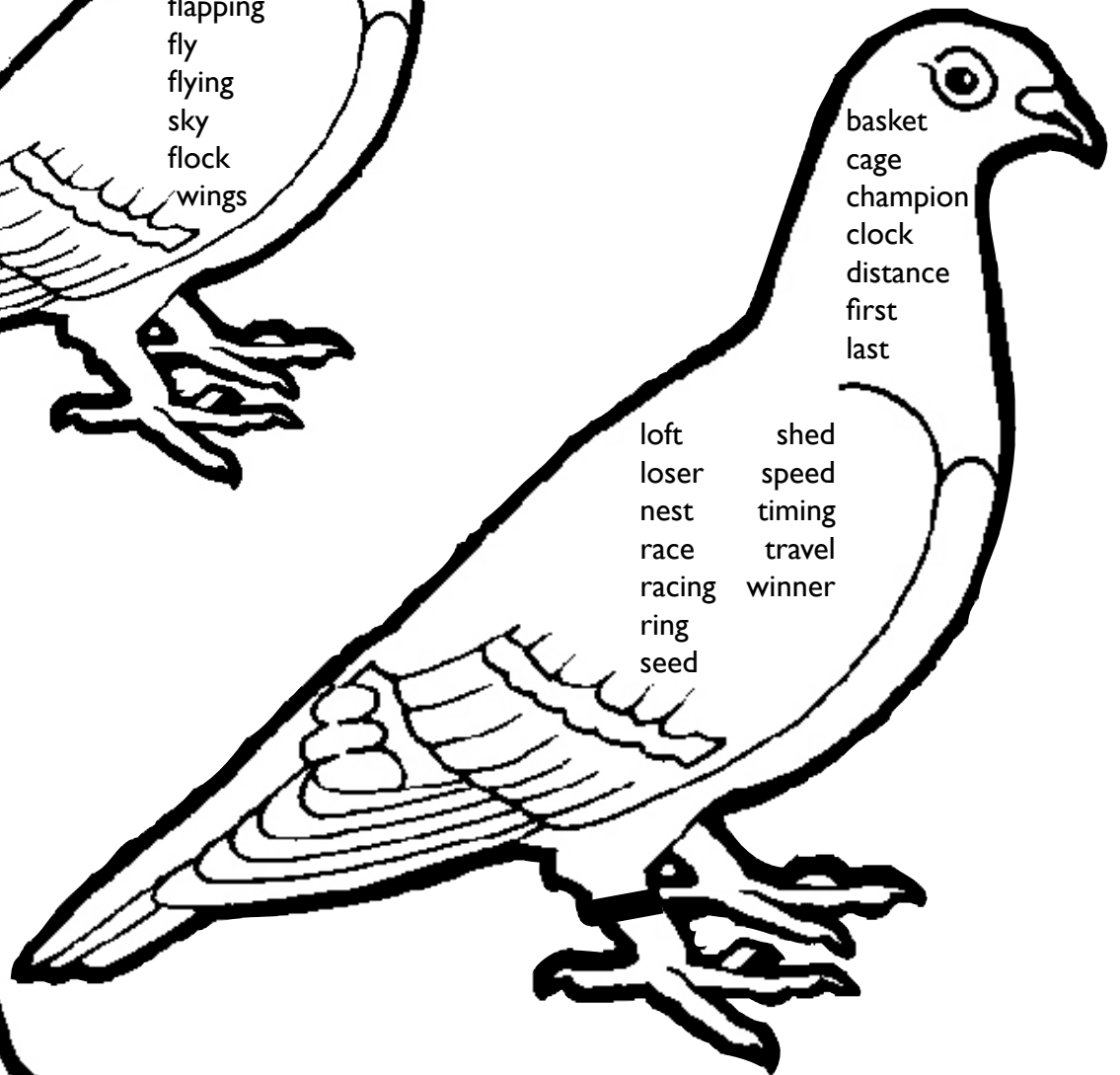
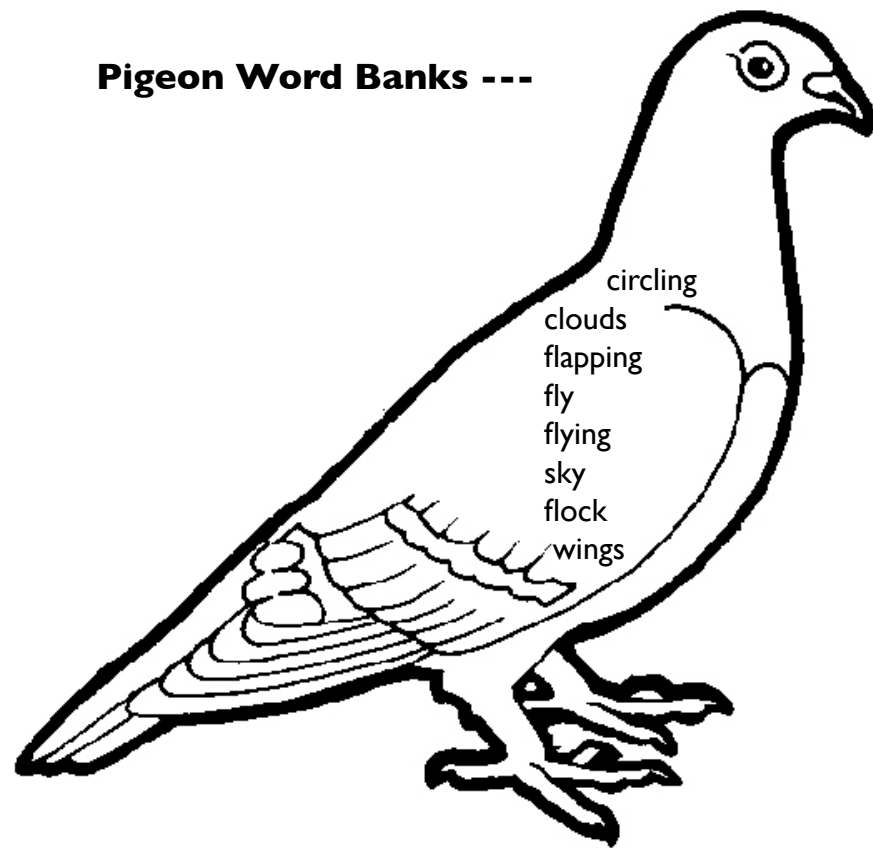
Join the dots ...



Join the dots ...



Pigeon Word Banks ---





PIGEON WORD SEARCH

F	L	Y	I	N	G	V	C	A	G	E	H	L	J	B
A	S	X	B	E	Y	K	L	I	O	S	P	O	Z	A
R	Q	R	A	C	I	N	G	G	D	E	S	F	E	S
V	T	K	L	D	N	K	S	S	A	E	L	T	J	K
C	A	G	R	E	Y	Z	P	C	Q	D	P	S	F	E
H	S	D	R	Y	S	J	C	O	O	I	N	G	R	T
A	L	B	E	A	K	I	G	C	V	R	E	A	T	O
M	Q	S	R	H	Y	N	H	W	L	S	R	Q	S	B
P	R	E	G	G	L	M	P	I	U	Q	H	H	M	R
I	Z	C	F	G	E	S	T	N	A	U	B	N	H	E
O	P	I	G	E	O	N	N	G	G	A	L	E	K	A
N	K	J	H	B	X	L	E	R	F	B	V	S	U	S
E	T	J	D	M	T	Y	O	G	S	N	K	T	L	T
D	R	S	F	E	A	T	H	E	R	E	D	Z	D	B
F	L	O	C	K	V	N	R	F	K	V	T	A	I	L

CAN YOU FIND THESE 20 WORDS

- 1 BEAK
- 2 BASKET
- 3 BREAST
- 4 CAGE
- 5 CHAMPION
- 6 COOING
- 7 EGG
- 8 FEATHER
- 9 FLYING
- 10 FLOCK
- 11 GREY
- 12 LOFT
- 13 NEST
- 14 PIGEON
- 15 RACING
- 16 SEED
- 17 SKY
- 18 SQUAB
- 19 TAIL
- 20 WING

