st*art*

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East Gippsland Art Gallery
Online Learning Program

CHARACTER DESIGN

Hello!

This resource has been adapted from the face to face workshop that has been postponed due to the current global event. But fear not my friends! We have designed an 'at home' version for you to follow - just because you are at home doesn't mean you should miss out!

So, raid your supplies cupboard, find a quiet spot and lets get creating!

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

Inspired by the Leigh Hobb's Mr. Chicken Comes to Bairnsdale exhibition, this stART youth resource is for young people between 13 – 16 years of age interested in designing and illustrating characters for children's books, games or interested in a career in illustration. Participants will be guided through the design process including brainstorming through sketching and exploring basic shapes, building silhouettes and wireframing, and using colour theory techniques.

You will finish up with a unique finished character design and character turnaround sketch.

Workshop Breakdown
Character Design Process
Brainstorming
Silhouettes and wireframes
Make your character unique
Create a Turnaround
Colour
Final Design

INSPIRATION

THE DESIGN PROCESS

Boring... I hear you say. Ah, listen carefully my dear friends, the design process is the 'guts' of every designer/illustrator's game plan. So, have faith and follow along - we WILL reach the end of the process and you WILL create greatness :)

BRAINSTORMING

SILHOUETTES & WIREFRAMING

MAKE IT UNIQUE!

CREATE A TURNAROUND

COLOUR

FINAL DESIGN! (WOOHOO!)

This guy believes in you!
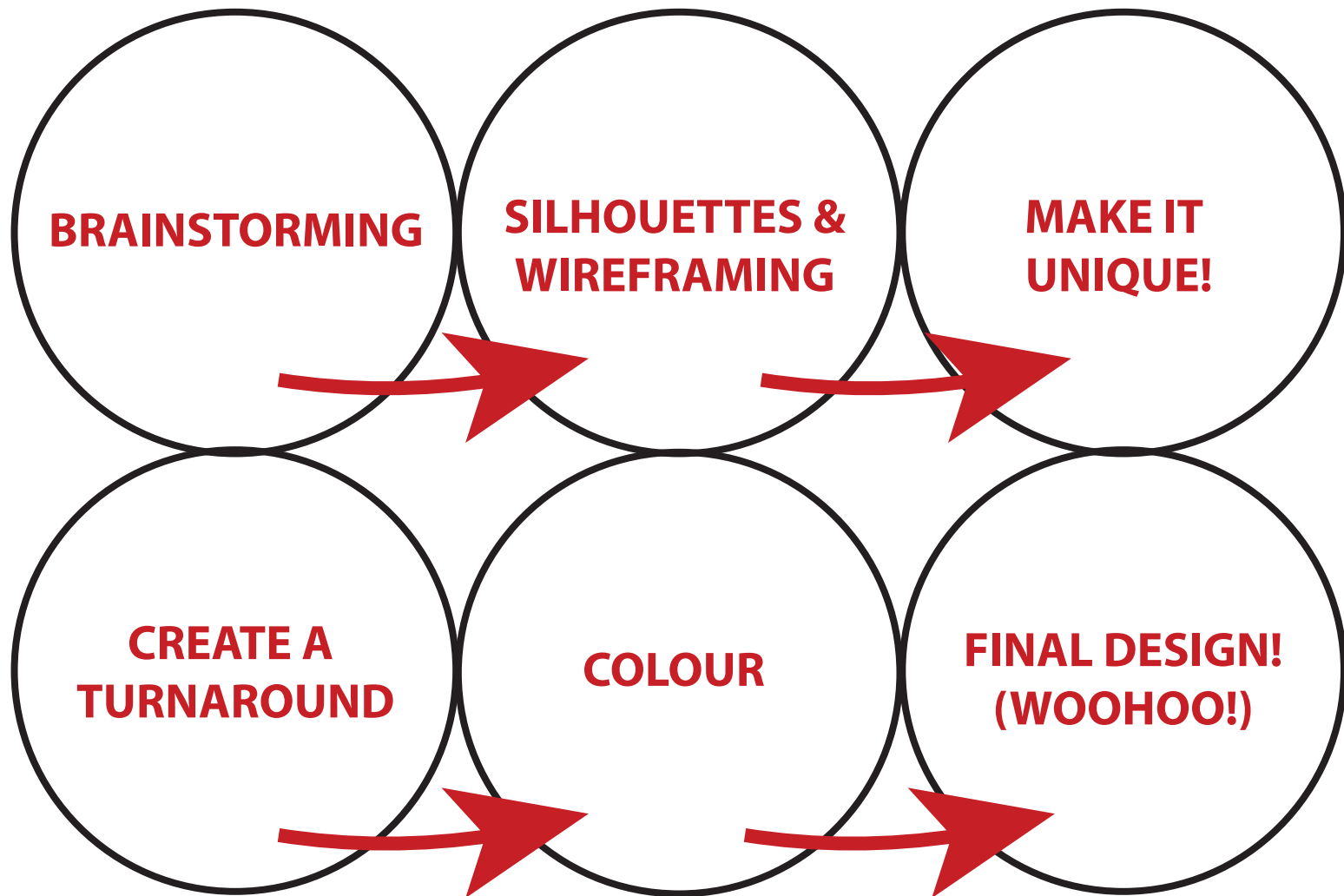
BRAINSTORMING

START DRAWING! Ok, sometimes this is easier said than done. You need inspiration right? This workshop was originally designed to be run as part of the **Leigh Hobbs** exhibition, so we were going to be looking at his children's book illustrations. Other children's book illustrators like **Alison Lester, Shaun Tan, Graeme Base, Roland Harvey** can give you a range of ideas from the seemingly simplistic style of Leigh Hobbs to the more detailed and rich illustrations of Greame Base. What I'm trying to say is - visit the links above if you are fresh out of inspiration.

For those of you smarty pants who already have oodles of inspiration - you can jump straight in...

NOW **START DRAWING!!** On an A3 (or 2 A4 pages), sketch out as many ideas for your character as you can come up with.

++ Fill the page, play around with expressions, viewpoints, don't be afraid to draw over previous drawings, just keep drawing!
You can brainstorm more than one character if you like. You can base your brainstorming on an existing story, or better yet - write your own story!
(PS - you don't need a story to design a character - just saying...)
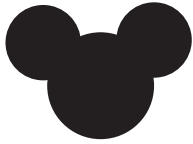
I chose a bunny - because it's Easter while I'm creating this and because I like bunnys.

Here's an example of some of my brainstorming...
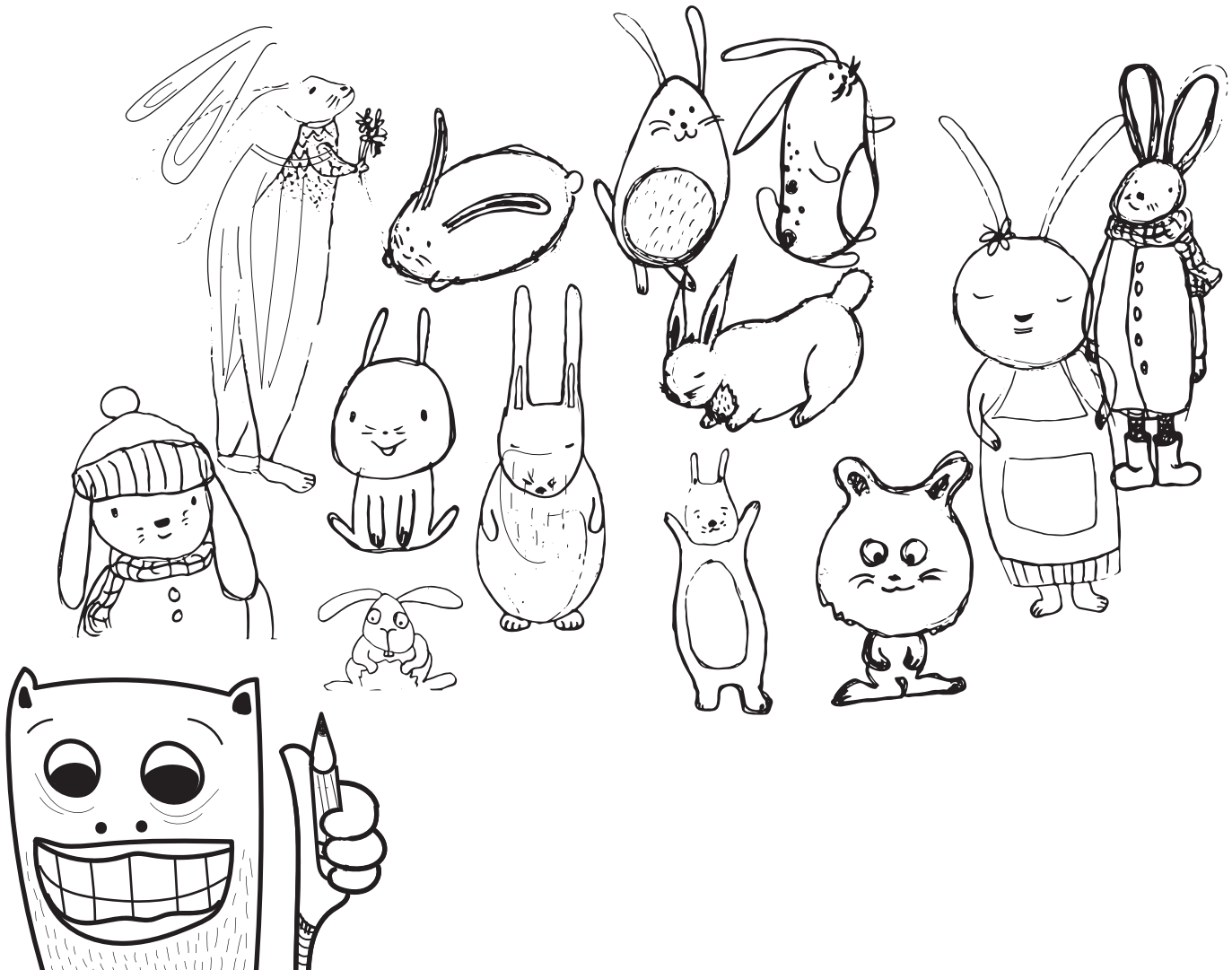
SILHOUETTES & WIREFRAMES

A character should be recognisable by it's **silhouette** (think Mickey Mouse, Winnie the Pooh, Bugs Bunny,etc).

A silhouette with lots of **sharp angles might be seen as an evil character** (think Shredder from the Ninja Turtles) and one with softer edges might be considered a 'good' character (Mickey Mouse) This is not a hard and fast rule though! Think about Ursula from The Little Mermaid!
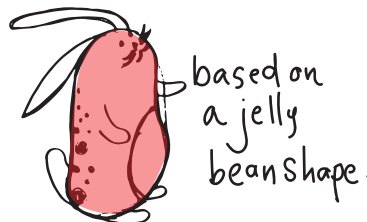
Think about this...
A triangular shape might appear more imposing and powerful compared to a softer 'blobby' shape.
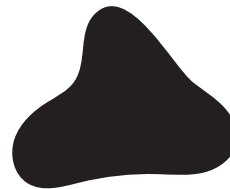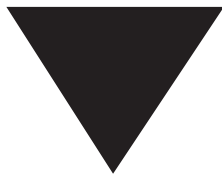
Think about characteristics – Is your character shy, outrageous or outgoing? How do the shapes you use relate to the characteristics of your character/s?

pretty cute really!

based on a jelly bean shape.

shy cute but a little mischievous...

**Create a silhouette of your character**
Now that you have brainstormed like crazy, pick your favourite ideas and use some basic shapes to build your character's silhouette
(start with a circle, rectangle, jelly bean to get started)
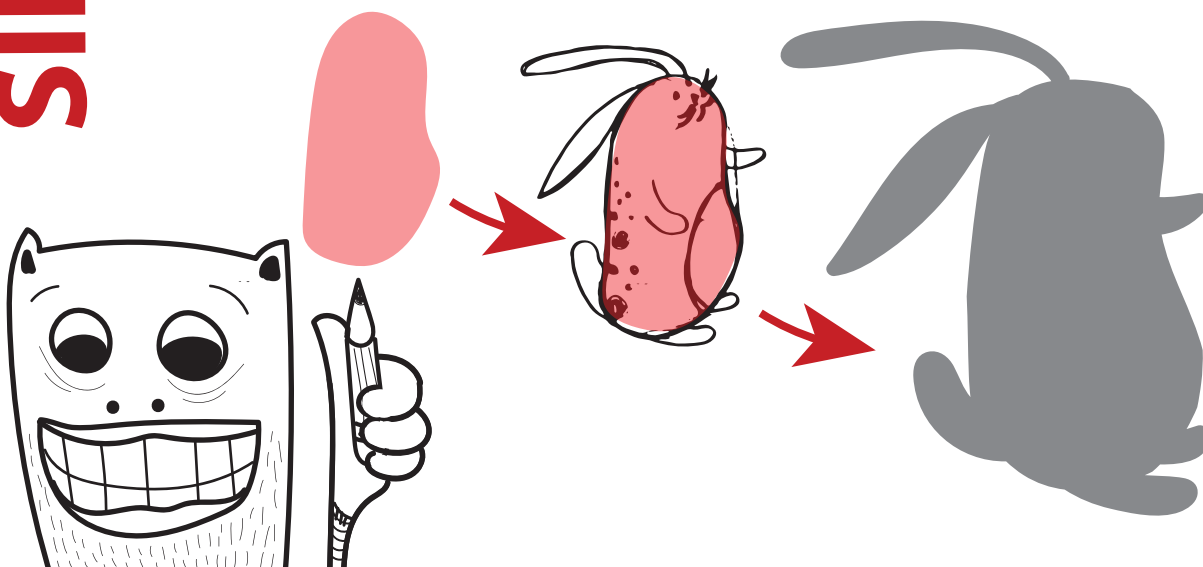
Let's go 3D! Start to turn your character's 2D shape into a 3D form. Easier said than done? Find an old toy, teddy bear or a piece of fruit at home. Hold the object in your hands and imagine that you are drawing lines around the form. These are called contour lines. By drawing contour lines on your character it helps you to imagine the 3D form in your head and will help when it comes to adding tone, shadow and other details.
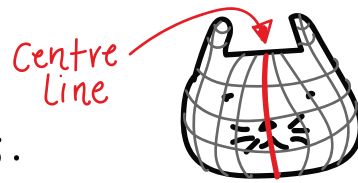
Here's a sausage
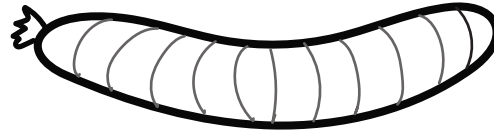
with contour lines

TIP: Always divide your character in half. By that, I mean always find the centre line (imagine the spine that runs through the centre of your body - this is what we need to find in our character)
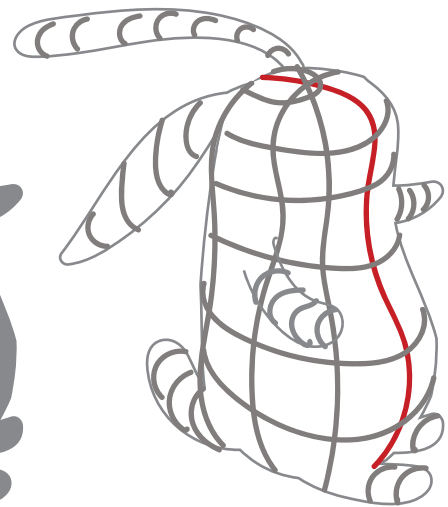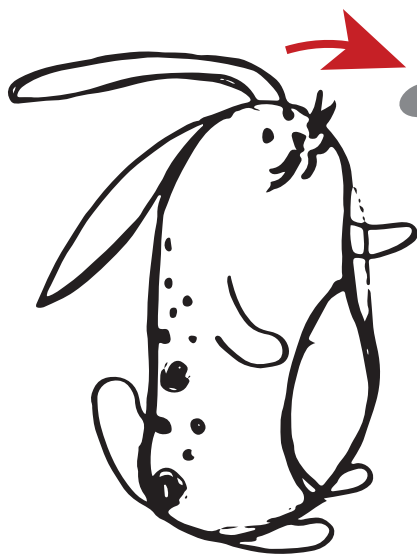
Here's an apple with contour lines.

Centre line

*Here's a cute bunny with contour lines*

++ Use tracing paper to create the 3D forms by tracing over the top of your sketch.

TIP: If you don't own tracing paper use your window by placing your drawing with new paper on top. Then trace your sketch and add the contour lines as below

My character is gazing upward and to the right so the centre line for this drawing is placed to the right. Your character may be looking straight at the viewer, so you would place your centre line straight down the middle.

Imagine that your character is made of sausages (or cylinders) it makes it so much easier to create your contour lines.
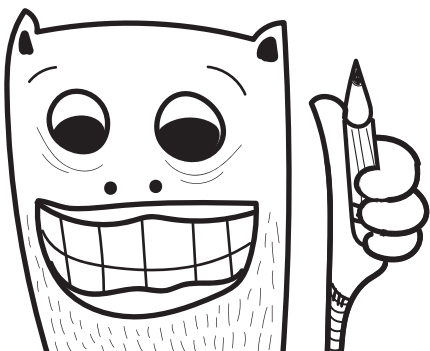
MAKE IT UNIQUE!

Make your character stand out from the rest!
Look at the examples from your inspiration – what makes them unique apart from their overall shape and design?
**Take your wireframe sketch and trace again. This time add in the basic features of your character - just keep it to lines only for now.**

Complete the Character Questions on the following page to help you create a unique backstory that will inspire your design elements and additions like hats, clothing, accessories, glasses, magnifying glass, eye patch, hair, flower the list goes on….

Create your line drawing first → **Complete the character questions**
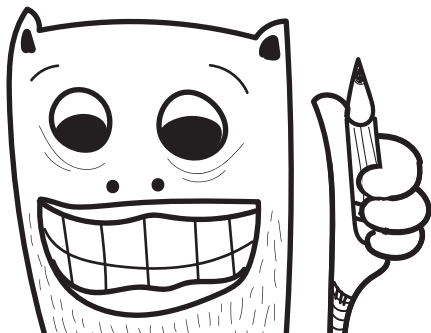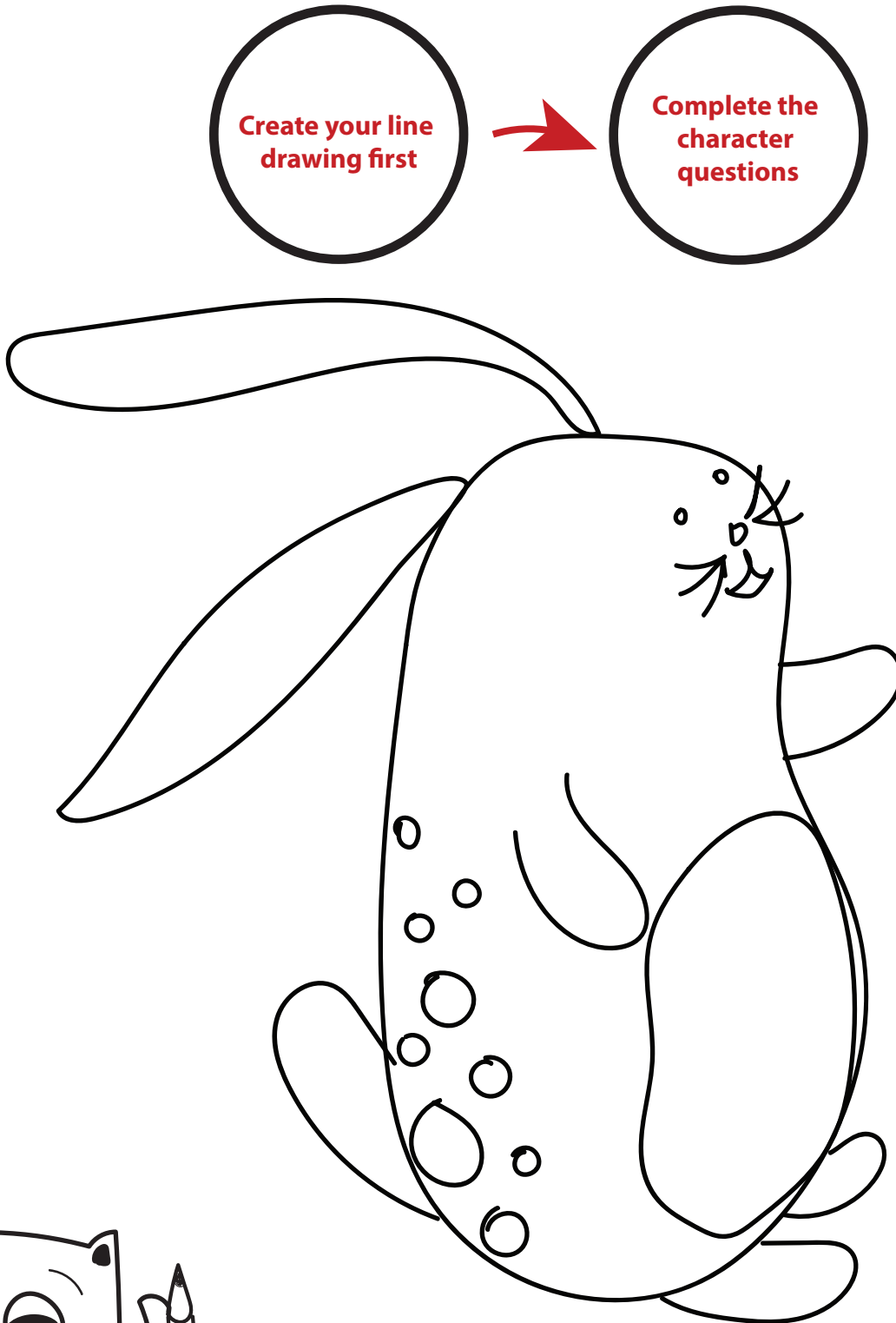
MAKE IT UNIQUE!

CHARACTER QUESTIONS

What is their name? _____

Do they have any nicknames? _____

Where do they live? _____

Where are they from? _____

How old are they? _____

What are their physical characteristics? _____

Who is in their family? _____

Who are their friends? _____

What was their childhood like? _____

Or are they a child? _____

What is their favourite food? _____

What is their favourite clothing? Or accessory? _____

How does your character spend their free time? _____

How do they carry their bag? _____

What does your character's bedroom look like? _____

Does your character have a secret? _____

What is their biggest fear? _____

Does your character have a job? _____

If so, what is it? Or what do they want to be? _____

What is their goal or dream? _____

Do they have a hobby? _____

What is their favourite memory? _____

What makes them laugh? Cry? _____
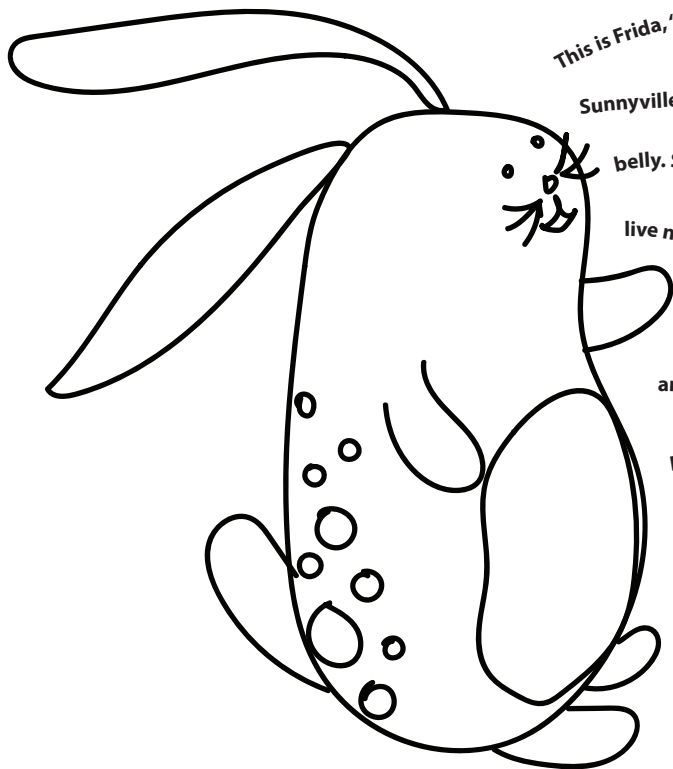
This is Frida, "Foo Foo" for short. She lives in a village called Sunnyville. Frida was born in Sunnyville and she is 6 years old. She is soft and cuddly with long floppy ears and a rotund belly. She lives with her Mum and Dad, Nana and brother Charlie. Her friends, the Twombys live next door. Frida loves apple muffins and apple juice. Frida loves wearing her scarf nearly all year round. Frida plays in the garden and fields most days dragging a little satchel around with her to collect apples and flowers. Her bedroom is full of flowers and crafts. Frida loves to collect apples and take them door to door in her village. She loves to chase butterflies and it makes her laugh when Charlie trips over. She always helps Charlie.

MAKE IT UNIQUE!

Read over your Character Questions and draw in some details that make your character visually unique. I will be adding a scarf, a satchel, some flowers, some apples and some butterflies.

Meet Frida!

Wait, what? What's a turnaround? A turnaround is a series of sketches that show your character from a number of different angles. Character designers, animators and illustrators need to explore all angles of a character before moving ahead in the design process. We need to figure out what our character looks like from the front view, side view, and back view. We can even throw in a three-quater view too - or start to play with different poses.

Here's an example of a Winnie the Pooh turnaround.
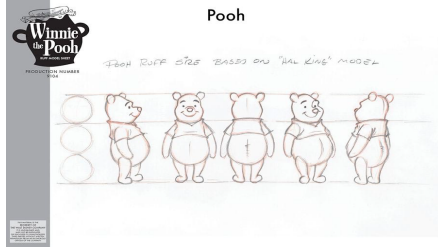
We'll start with FRONT, SIDE and BACK views

You will need: Your line drawing and 3D wireframe sketch to refer to, a ruler, pencil and a couple of pieces of A4 paper.

++Start with your paper in a landscape orientation

++Draw a front view on the far left and make sure the drawing is at a good height – arms and legs should be splayed out a bit so that each view can show some features
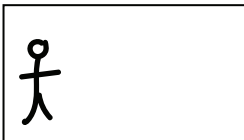
++ Using a ruler, lightly draw horizontal guides reaching the length of your paper.

++Divide the page into three blocks, including your front view (four if you wish to draw a three-quarter view)
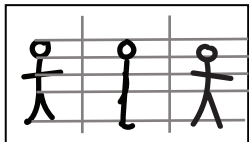
++Draw the side view by matching the height position of each of the features using the horizontal guidelines
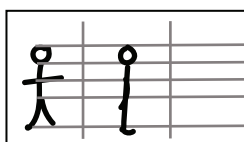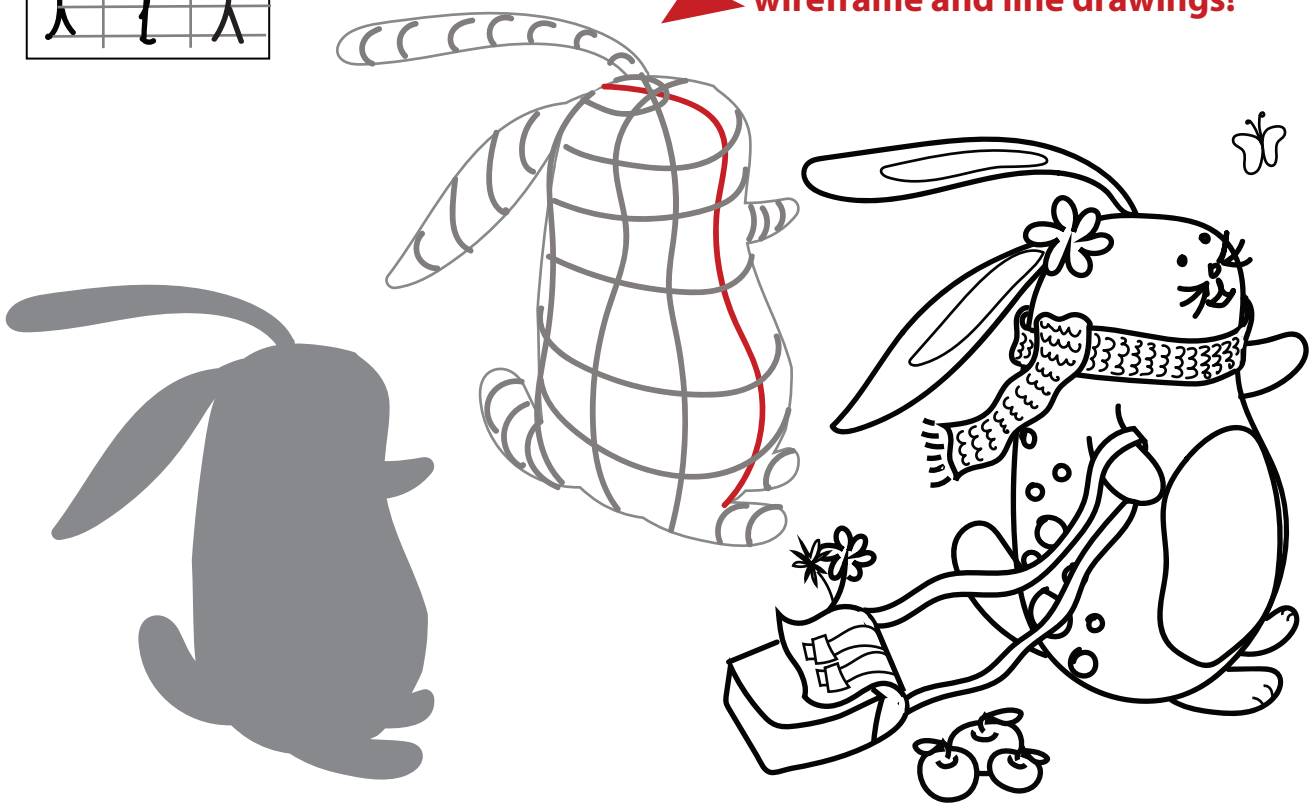
CREATE A TURNAROUND

++You can trace your front to back view and make adjustments needed (backs of hands will be seen, back of head etc – what is on the left will now be on the right.
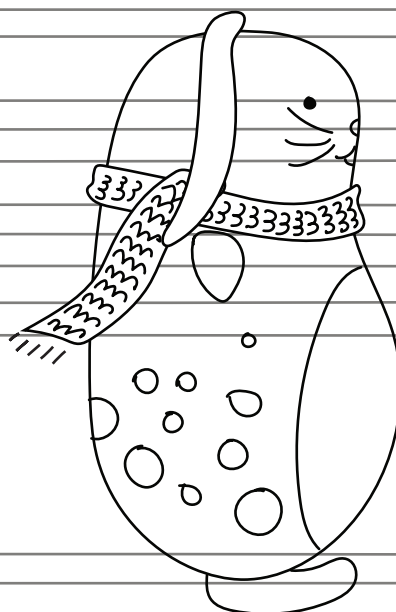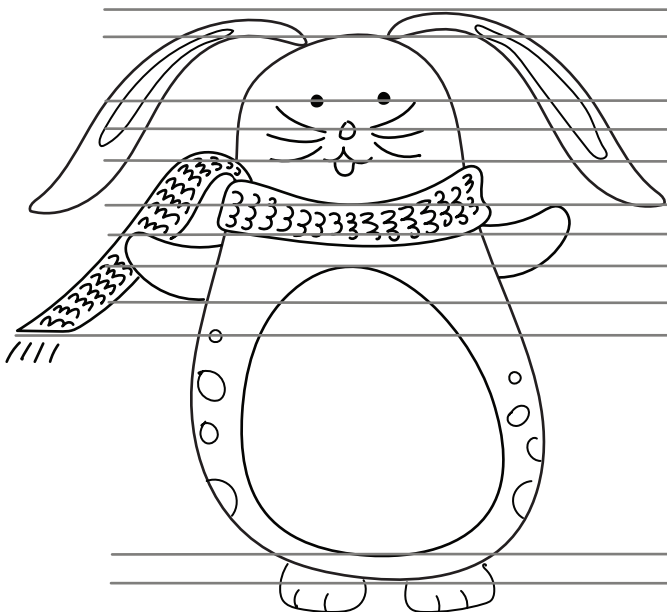
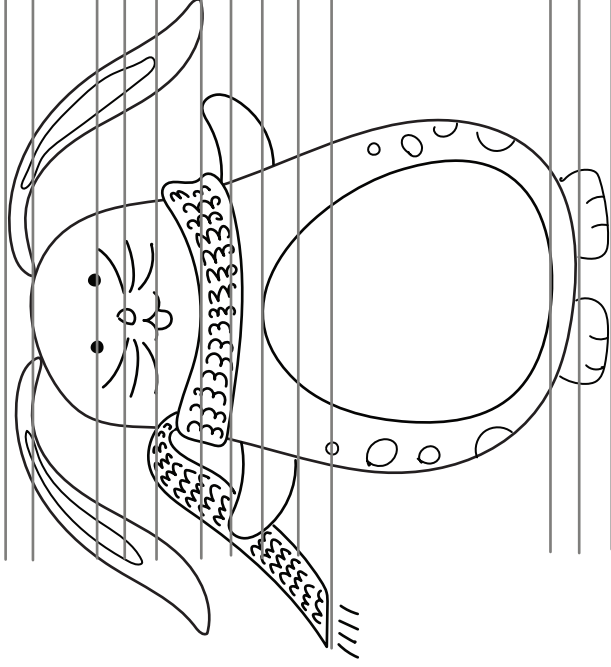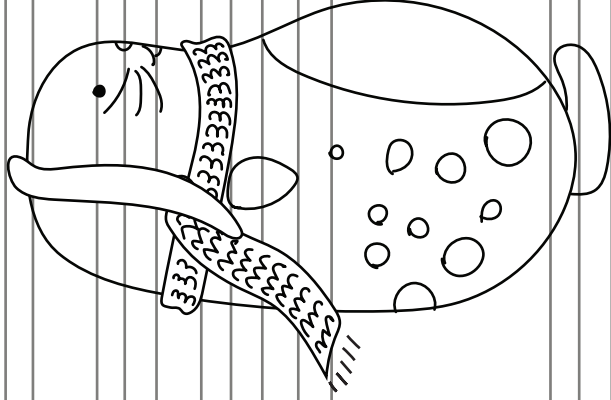**Refer to your silhouette, wireframe and line drawings!**

FRONT VIEW

SIDE VIEW

CREATE A TURNAROUND

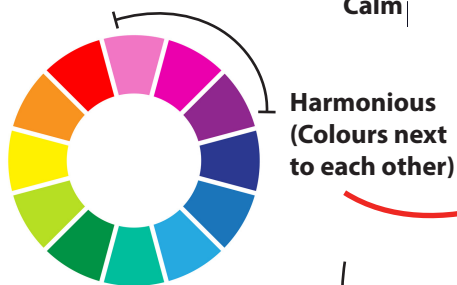**Example**

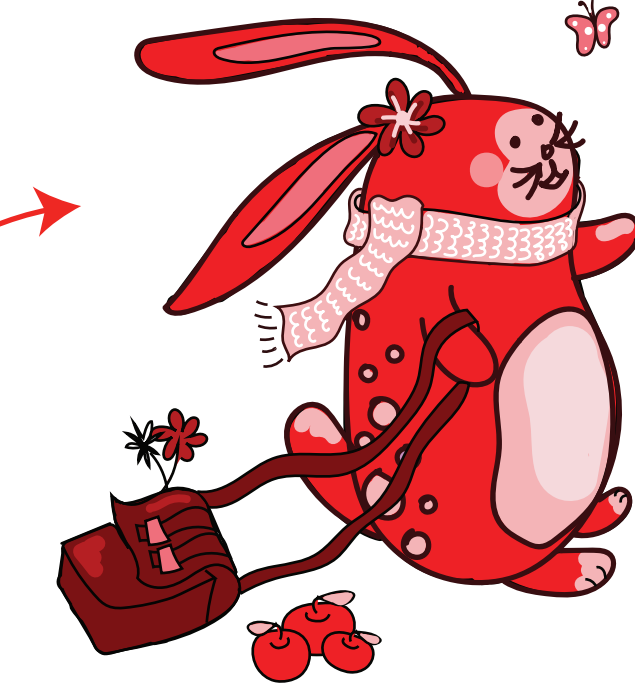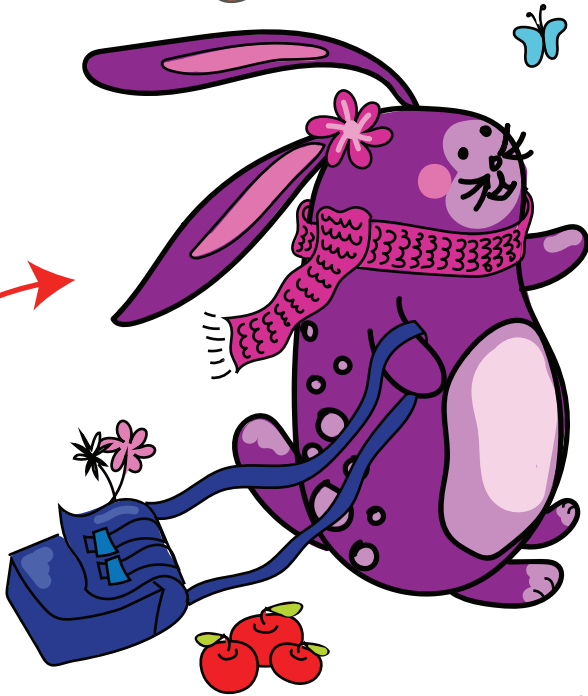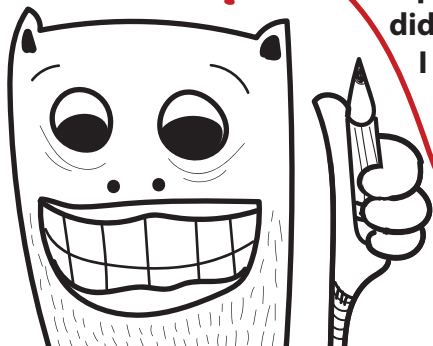**FRONT VIEW**

SIDE VIEW

BACK VIEW
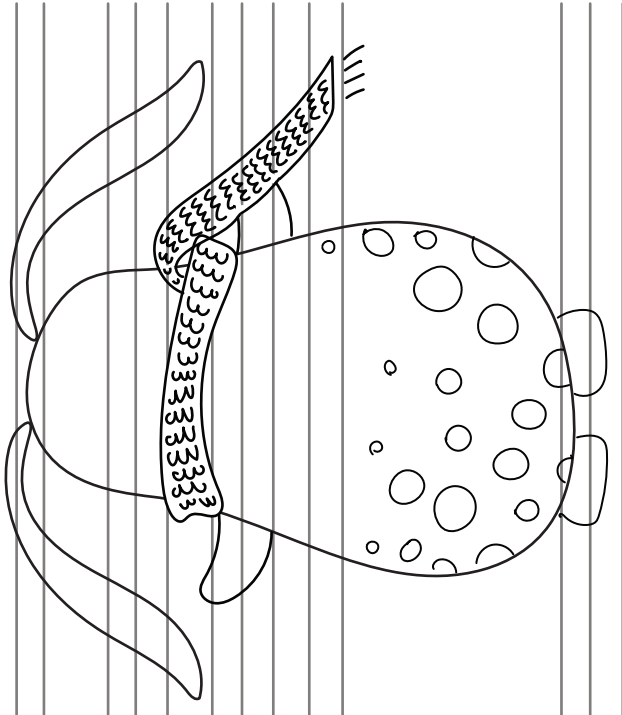
COLOUR!

Now for the super fun part...

Try tracing your line drawing two or three times and trial some different colour schemes that help to enhance your character's personality.

Check out my examples here for some inspiration.

Warm Intense Bold

Happy Cheerful Radiant

Wise Spiritual Important

Cool Relaxed Calm

Harmonious (Colours next to each other)

Complementary Colours (Opposites)

Monochrome (Shades of one colour)
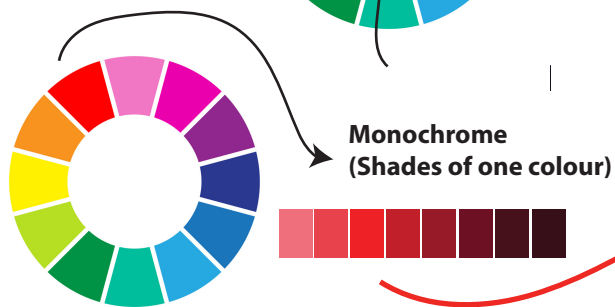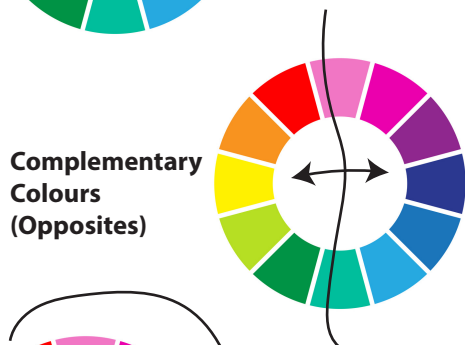
Thought I had disappeared didn't you..? I wouldn't miss this bit!

FINAL DESIGN!

So here we are, **the final design** in all it's glory! I told you you could do it!

I chose the monochrome version to display as my final design. I'd love to see your final character designs! Share (only if you want to)

What next? Well, how about writing a story for your character and brainstorming some illustrations to accompany?
Maybe you can create a mini story book to share with your family and friends while they are at home? Maybe, with some dedication and hard work you might become the next Leigh Hobbs or Alison Lester! The world is your oyster my friends.

SHARE YOUR CREATIVITY WITH US!
#egagcharacterdesign
#creative@home
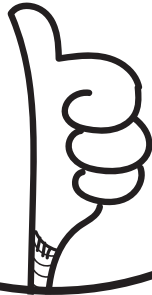
Don't forget to visit us for more creative@home learning experiences

www.eastgippslandartgallery.org.au
/creativeathome

Thank you!