

Using Sketchbooks

To develop pupils' confidence to play, experiment and develop ideas visually, provide each member of your class with their own sketchbook or 'visual diary'.

You could make and decorate your own sketchbooks or journals as a class project, using simple book-making techniques, or by simply attaching several sheets of paper together. Visit the AccessArt website for some simple ways to construct a sketchbook: www.accessart.org.uk/sketchbookspace/

Sketchbooks or journals can be used as a personal space to play imaginative drawing games like the Shape Game, as well as for artistic exploration - sketching, doodling, experimenting with different art materials, or collecting interesting images – a space where anything is allowed and risks can be taken. Encourage children to make a mess, put unexpected things together, let their imaginations run wild and

escape from conventional methods and approaches.

Sketchbooks can be used to plan and develop ideas in class, but also encourage pupils to use them at home and in their own time, to play and develop their own ideas. Using individual sketchbooks or journals is an effective way to help children become autonomous learners and to develop the ability to work independently.

Provide different ideas for sketchbook activities which pupils can choose from. For example: decorate the cover; fill a page with doodles; play the Shape Game with a friend; draw your pet; stick in a found object; draw what you can see from your bedroom window; cut or tear a hole in the page and invent a drawing around or beneath it; draw your favourite food; make a collage of ephemera collected from a trip or holiday. For more suggestions try artist and illustrator Keri Smith's list of '100 ideas': www.kerismith.com/popular-posts/100-ideas/

More fun and playful ideas for using sketchbooks

Artist and illustrator Keri Smith's website www.kerismith.com

AccessArt's Sketchbooks in Schools www.accessart.org.uk/sketchbook/

The Big Draw's Travelling Moleskine collaborative sketchbook project www.flickr.com/groups/travelingmoleskine/

TeachersTV - Using Sketchbooks film www.teachers.tv/videos/using-sketchbooks

Urban Sketchers - a blog featuring sketchbooks from artists all around the world www.urbansketchers.com

The Sketchbook: A Creative Diary - tips and useful information from an artist about how to use a sketchbook or visual diary www.squidoo.com/sketch-book

