

## Imagination: The Lost Thing

### In this activity sheet students will:

- read the beginning of *The Lost Thing*, by Melbourne author-illustrator Shaun Tan on the Mirror of the World website.
- learn how Shaun Tan came up with his idea for *The Lost Thing* as well as some of the techniques he used to create the illustrations.
- interpret and infer meaning from the text.
- analyse the illustrations and collage for further levels of meaning.
- draw their own lost thing.

### Answers to question time

1. Students can discuss their personal reactions to encountering something large and unfamiliar if they were all alone and had to rely on their own wits.
2. 3. & 4. Discuss in class after students have written down their answers.
5. Students might offer suggestions such as: the boy's world is very dark, the people look very bored, and their faces are emotionless. There are no trees or plants. The boy thinks the lost thing is the most interesting and unique thing in this world.

### Additional activities – The Lost Thing landscape

- Shaun Tan created most of his landscapes for *The Lost Thing* from old books. Students can create their own lost thing landscape, just like Shaun.
- Give students some old magazines, newspapers or telephone directories. They can cut out some interesting words, headings and pictures and paste them onto a piece of paper to make collage/landscape.
- Students can also draw over their collage.
- When students have completed their collage, they can colour in the lost thing that they made earlier, cut it out, and paste it into their collage world.

### Additional reading

Shaun Tan has a great website where he discusses his approach to writing and illustrating books:  
<http://www.shauntan.net>

Some other picture books written and illustrated by Shaun Tan include:

*The Arrival*, 2006, Lothian Books, South Melbourne.  
*The Red Tree*, 2001, Lothian Books, South Melbourne.

He has also illustrated many other books, including:

John Marsden & Shaun Tan, 2000, *The Rabbits*, Lothian Books, South Melbourne.  
Steven Paulsen; [illustrated by] Shaun Tan, 1996, *The Stray Cat*, Lothian Books, South Melbourne.  
Terry Dowling, illustrated by Shaun Tan, 2003, *The Man Who Lost Red*, MirrorDanse Books, Parramatta.

### Sources consulted

Tan, Shaun, 2000, *The Lost Thing*, Lothian Books, South Melbourne.

