

Imagination: The Lost Thing



The Lost Thing

In this activity sheet you'll learn about the children's book *The Lost Thing*, which is featured in the Mirror of the World website. There's a range of activities, including turning the pages of a virtual version of the book, answering questions and creating your own lost thing.

In the spotlight

The Lost Thing

Shaun Tan

2000

Words to know

Collage, mural

Pages to visit

http://www.mirroroftheworld.com.au/imagination/begins/the_lost_thing.php

Making The Lost Thing

The author of *The Lost Thing*, Shaun Tan, was born in 1974 and grew up in Perth, Western Australia. He studied English and Art at university, and then started writing and illustrating his own picture books. He has also made a huge **mural** (as big as a wall!) in a library in Perth, Australia.

Have you ever wondered where writers get their ideas from? Shaun Tan first got his idea for *The Lost Thing* by sketching in a notebook. The sketch was of a giant crab at the beach and next to the crab he drew a man. He drew the man to show how big the crab was. Shaun then asked himself: "What is this creature? Where does it come from? Why is the guy talking to it instead of running away? And what would I do if I was that guy?"

Most of the settings in *The Lost Thing* are painted in dark colours and it is the lost thing itself that is painted in the brightest colours. In the background of each page are hundreds of tiny bits of writing and maths and diagrams. They have been pasted together in a **collage**. Some of them were made by Shaun, and some were collected from old schoolbooks.

Activity 1 – Get interactive!

Go to *The Lost Thing* webpage on the Mirror of the World website.

http://mirroroftheworld.com.au/imagination/begins/the_lost_thing.php

Click the Turn the Page link on the left-hand side of the page. Now explore *The Lost Thing*. Take your time to look at the words and pictures very carefully. Please note: this display of *The Lost Thing* only features a few selected pages from the book.

Question time

1. What do you think you would do if you met a lost thing like this?

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2. Make a list of six questions you would ask the lost thing if you met it in the street.

What

Where

When

Why

Who

How

3. What do you think the lost thing is? Where do you think it came from?

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4. Shaun Tan has included lots of tiny details in his pictures. Look at page four of the interactive and make a list of some of the words and things that you can see in the background collage.

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5. Sometimes pictures say more than words! What do the pictures in *The Lost Thing* tell us about the world that the boy lives in? Describe this place and the people in it.

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Activity 2 – Write about your own lost thing

Before you start drawing, choose some words to describe your lost thing.

You can use some of the words below and later write some of the words in the lost thing's stomach. If you're not sure what they mean, look them up in a dictionary, or ask your teacher.

playful, grateful, happy, cheerful, sad,
brave, friendly, shy, funny, cautious, quiet,
affectionate, loving, angry, insecure,
frightened, cross, strong, confused, upset

Now write some sentences to explain why your lost thing feels that way.

For example: My lost thing is **upset**, because **it doesn't know how to get home**.

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Activity 3 – Draw your own lost thing

Now you are ready to draw your lost thing. What does it look like? How many eyes / arms / legs does it have? Does it even have arms and legs? Don't forget to leave some space in its stomach to write the describing words.

My Lost Thing



