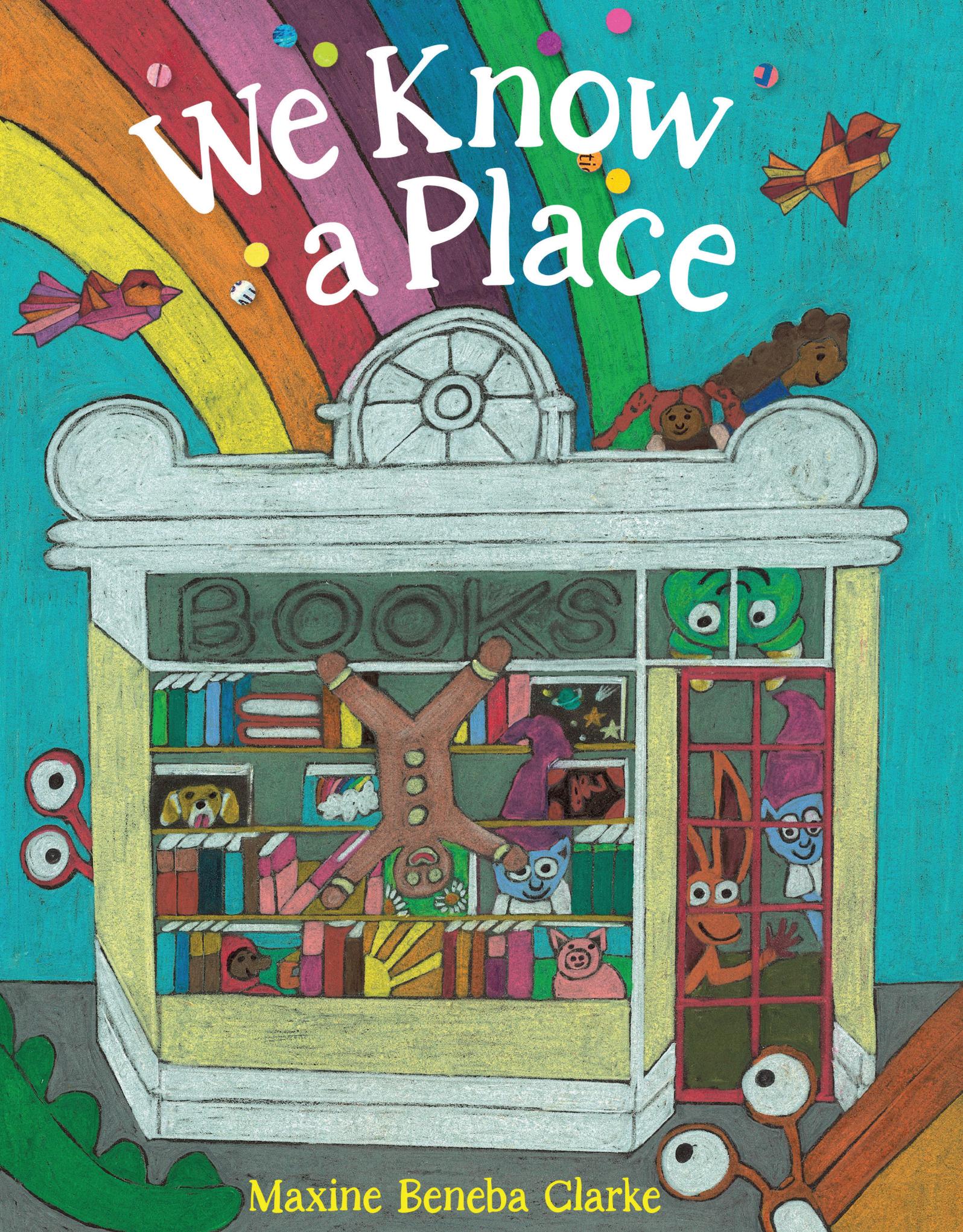


We Know a Place



Maxine Beneba Clarke

TEACHERS RESOURCES

We Know a Place

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Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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INTRODUCTION

We Know a Place is a joyous illustrated tribute to bookshops everywhere, and the special place they hold in children's hearts and minds, from one of Australia's most beloved writers.

*We know a place that's mysterious-magic,
a window to lives you can't even imagine.
We know a secret world-wakening secret,
a brain-boggling secret, on Ballarat Street.*

Every Saturday, when the chores are done, two children set out on a journey to their local bookshop, a magical place where sneaky stories escape as you peep in the door and there's plentiful magic for each and for all. Monsters, giants, trolls and pirates ahoy! But what happens when some cheeky creatures follow the children home one day?

This is a playful love letter to those wondrous places where secrets and magic live around every corner and between every cover.

Written and illustrated by the award-winning Maxine Beneba Clarke as a celebration of the joy of reading, the magic of community and her own favourite bookshop – the 'bold little bookshop on Ballarat Street' – this book is an absolute joy.

THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book which might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes and topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area:
<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>

BOOKSHOPS AND COMMUNITY

Discussion Point: Bookshops can be community hubs. What role does any bookshop play in your community? Write a list of the things that you love about your bookshop. Why is it considered a community hub?

Activity: Draw a picture of the bookshop and some of the activities which take place there.

Discussion Point: What other 'bookish spaces' do you visit? For example, public libraries, school libraries.

Discussion Point: What other community hubs are there in your community? For example, sporting facilities, community centres, etc.

Discussion Point: What did the pictures in this book reveal about this community?

Discussion Point: This book depicts a family of readers. When we first see the parents (on the third double page spread) they are reading together on a couch while the children are outside

doing their chores. They all visit the bookshop together. How important is it for every member of a family to value reading? Do you share your books with your parents, siblings or carers? Do your grandparents also read to you? Do you read to your younger siblings?

IMAGINATION AND STORY

Discussion Point: ‘Get a **book** about flowers, origami or stamps. No more wizards or dragons or **wild** things that dance’. What sort of books do you enjoy most? Fiction or non-fiction? Do you have a favourite ‘genre’ of story? Do you like animal stories, fantasy, humour, or some other type of story?

Discussion Point: What do stories and books mean to you? Write a summary of your feelings about books, in prose or poetry.

DIVERSITY

Discussion Point: Maxine Beneba Clarke is of Afro-Caribbean descent, and is a writer, poet and illustrator. Her family lived in the UK before migrating to Australia where she grew up. The book doesn’t refer in the written text to her origins but the images do. Discuss with students the value of seeing people from a wide range of cultures and ethnicities in their books. Read her earlier work *When We Say Black Lives Matter* (2020) together and discuss it as well.

Discussion Point: Read other picture books which depict children from a variety of cultures and discuss them as well.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following aspects:

Activity: This text contains several words made up of unusual, hyphenated combinations of other words, for example, ‘world-wakening secret’; ‘wonder-what wow-ical secret’; ‘brain-boggling secret’; ‘hard-to-keep secret’. Encourage students to combine words like this in interesting ways.

Activity: There are several ‘doing’ or ‘action’ words in this text, for example, squeeze, trot, fly, skip. What other ‘doing’ words do you know?

Activity: Invite students to write a story or a poem about visiting a favourite bookshop and what they might find there.

Activity: Test your students’ comprehension by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author/Illustrator’s Notes** below.]

Activity: Share with students some of the contemporary texts recommended in the ‘Kids’ Reading Guide 2022–23’ *Book People*: <<https://www.kidsreadingguide.com.au/>> Then discuss the texts and conduct some extension activities based on them.

Discussion Point: Discuss the making of books and the names for parts of books with students, for example, endpapers, title page, cover etc. Use texts such as Frances Watts’ *Parsley Rabbit’s Book About Books* Ill. by David Legge (ABC Books 2018, 2007) and Libby Gleeson’s *Look, a*

Book! Ill. by Freya Blackwood. (Little Hare Books, 2011) to make the task more interesting.

VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

Activity: The **cover** depicts the bookshop frontage with fairy tale characters playfully looking the reader through the window. Invite students to create a bookshop window depicting some of their favourite book characters. Then give your imagined bookshop an inventive name. [See **Worksheet 1.**]

Activity: The **front endpapers** depict a child reading beside a shelf of books. The **back endpapers** depict a bookshop delivery bicycle. What other endpapers might this book have had? Create some of your own.

Discussion Point: The **title page** depicts two children about to leave home to visit the bookshop as they do on each Saturday. Do you visit a bookshop or library regularly?

Discussion Point: The first double page spread depicts windows through which intriguing patterns can be seen. Invite students to draw and colour their own windows.

Discussion Point: The pictures in the book include various fairy tale characters. See if you can identify them all. For example, find the Gingerbread Man or Little Red Riding Hood. [See **Worksheet 2.**]

Discussion Point: Tiny creatures with eyes projecting like antennas also appear in these images. What do they represent?

Discussion Point: Giant feet appear in several double page spreads. What do they suggest?

Activity: In the final double page spread (before the final single page) there are several fairy tale characters lurking. Name each one of them. [See **Worksheet 2.**]

Activity: 'The illustrations were drawn with watercolour pencil and soft lead pencil on heavily textured cardstock.' [See **Author/Illustrator's Notes** below.] Take note of Maxine Beneba Clarke's comment that she likes to start with a coloured page before she begins to draw. Encourage students to experiment with this technique when drawing with watercolour pencil as well.

Discussion Point: The **colours** used in this book are 'warm, dreamy, fairy tale colours' as described by the artist. [See **Author/Illustrator's Notes** below.] Use these colours when creating your own artwork for this unit.

Activity: Invite students to draw, paint, or collage a scene to accompany the story they wrote above, about visiting a bookshop. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1** below.]

CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Design a Book Nook** for your ideal bookshop – a cosy corner where people can examine

books before they buy them. What would you have in a book nook? For example, draw some interesting chairs or couches for people to sit on; how would the bookshelves be decorated? What colours would you use?

2. Make a Book Bag from fabric, in which you can carry a book to protect it. Make the bag the size of a larger paperback. Cut fabric for a 24 (H) x 20 (W) cm bag by adding enough to hem the bag inside. That is, 28 x 24cm. Then turn it out to the right side, and sew a ribbon to the top two sides so that they can be tied into a bow to ensure that the book doesn't fall out when you remove it from your backpack or tote bag. Tip: Use fabric which has 'bookish' images on it.



3. Or you could Create individual Fabric Book Covers for each of your favourite books. See 'Fabric Book Covers (Without any Sewing)' *Driven By Decor*: <<https://www.drivenbydecor.com/easy-no-sew-fabric-book-covers/>>

4. Design a Poster to advertise the value of local bookshops, libraries and reading. (The CBCA theme for Children's Book Week 2023 is 'Read Grow Inspire' so students might observe the artwork for that done by the brilliant Matt Ottley, as an example of how such a poster might be designed.)

5. Create a Diorama of a Bookshop using a cardboard box, craft paper and other materials. [See **Bibliography**.]

6. Design a Bookmark. [See **Worksheet 3**.]

LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Activity: Research the topics above online.

Activity: Research the author/illustrator online.

MATHEMATICS

Activity: Have fun counting things in this text, for example, how many cheeky trolls can you find in these pages?

FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Maxine Beneba Clarke. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other cumulative picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

CONCLUSION

This warm and lively picture book is a celebration of books and reading which will engage young readers both via the written words and the visual text.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

We Know a Place is a story based on my love for bookshops, and also the love I've seen my kids display towards bookish spaces while growing up. The right kind of book can bring a whole other world to life for the right reader, and that's what I wanted to try and capture in this story. If you look closely among the pages of *We Know a Place*, you will find fairytale characters you may recognise from other stories, including a runaway gingerbread man, Rapunzel, Little Red Riding Hood, one of the Three Bears from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, pirates, monsters and more. I have many, many favourite bookstores across Australia and the world, but the outside appearance of the bold little bookshop on Ballarat Street is based on my current local kids' bookstore in Melbourne.

Books can be very expensive to buy, so it was important to me to show the children in the story working around their home to earn money to go to the bookstore, and carrying their piggy bank to the store (although if you look closely, you will see that one of them cheekily decides to have a swing on the clothesline while she is supposed to be hanging out the clothes at chores time!).

The main colours I used for the illustrations of *We Know a Place* are warm, dreamy, fairytale colours: blues, pinks, yellows, oranges and purples, to help give the feeling of magic unfolding and creeping across the pages. The illustrations were drawn with watercolour pencil and soft lead pencil on heavily textured cardstock. As an illustrator, I always like to start with a coloured page, rather than a white page, as it means there is already a 'mood' on the page. This is why you will rarely see white backgrounds in any children's books I have illustrated.

Floating across the illustrations in *We Know a Place* are tiny 'confetti' circles in different colours and patterns. Some of the 'confetti' pieces contain letters or parts of words, to symbolise the magic spell cast over us when we open the cover of a book, or enter a bookstore to choose something.

I loved being able to create a world in *We Know a Place* where anything could happen: origami birds could take off into the sky, dinosaurs could come back to life, trolls could climb out of storybooks and be squashed back in, and giant books could fly!

I look forward to seeing and hearing what kinds of creatures little readers think might follow them home from their own local bookstore.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

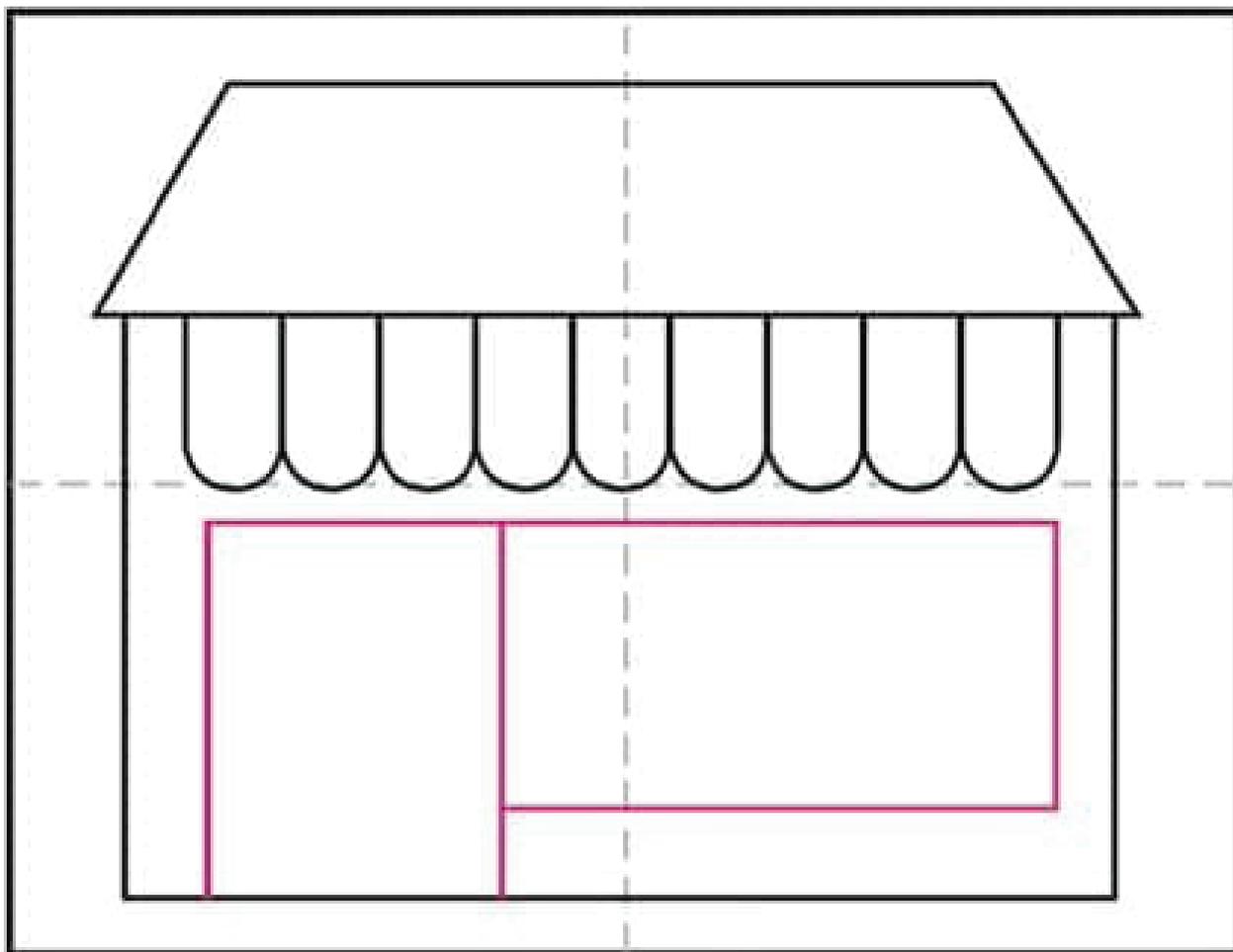
Maxine Beneba Clarke is an Australian poet, writer and illustrator of Afro-Caribbean descent. She is the ABIA and Indie award-winning author of *Carrying the World* (2016), *Foreign Soil* (2017), *The Hate Race* (2018), *The Saturday Portraits* (2019) and *How Decent Folk Behave* (2021). She is the author of five books for children, including the CBCA and Boston Globe/Horn Prize award-winning picture book *The Patchwork Bike* (2016, illustrated by Van T Rudd), and the critically acclaimed *Wide Big World* (2018, illustrated by Isobel Knowles). Maxine is the author-illustrator of two picture books, *Fashionista* (2019) and *When We Say Black Lives Matter* (2020). She also illustrated the picture book *11 Words for Love* (2022), written by Randa Abdel-Fattah. *We Know A Place* is the third picture book she has both written and illustrated. In December 2022 Maxine Beneba Clarke was appointed as the inaugural Peter Steele Poet in Residence by the University of Melbourne. In June 2023 her first collection of poetry for children *It's the Sound of the Thing* will be released.

See her interview: 'Writing Children's Books with Diverse characters' *ABC Art Works* on *YouTube*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dA2MDanoTQ>

WORKSHEETS

WORKSHEET 1. BOOKSHOP COLLAGE

Draw and then make a collage to include some of your favourite book characters in this window and then give the bookshop an original name.



WORKSHEET 2. FAIRY TALE CHARACTERS

Write a brief description of how each of these characters appears in a story you have read.

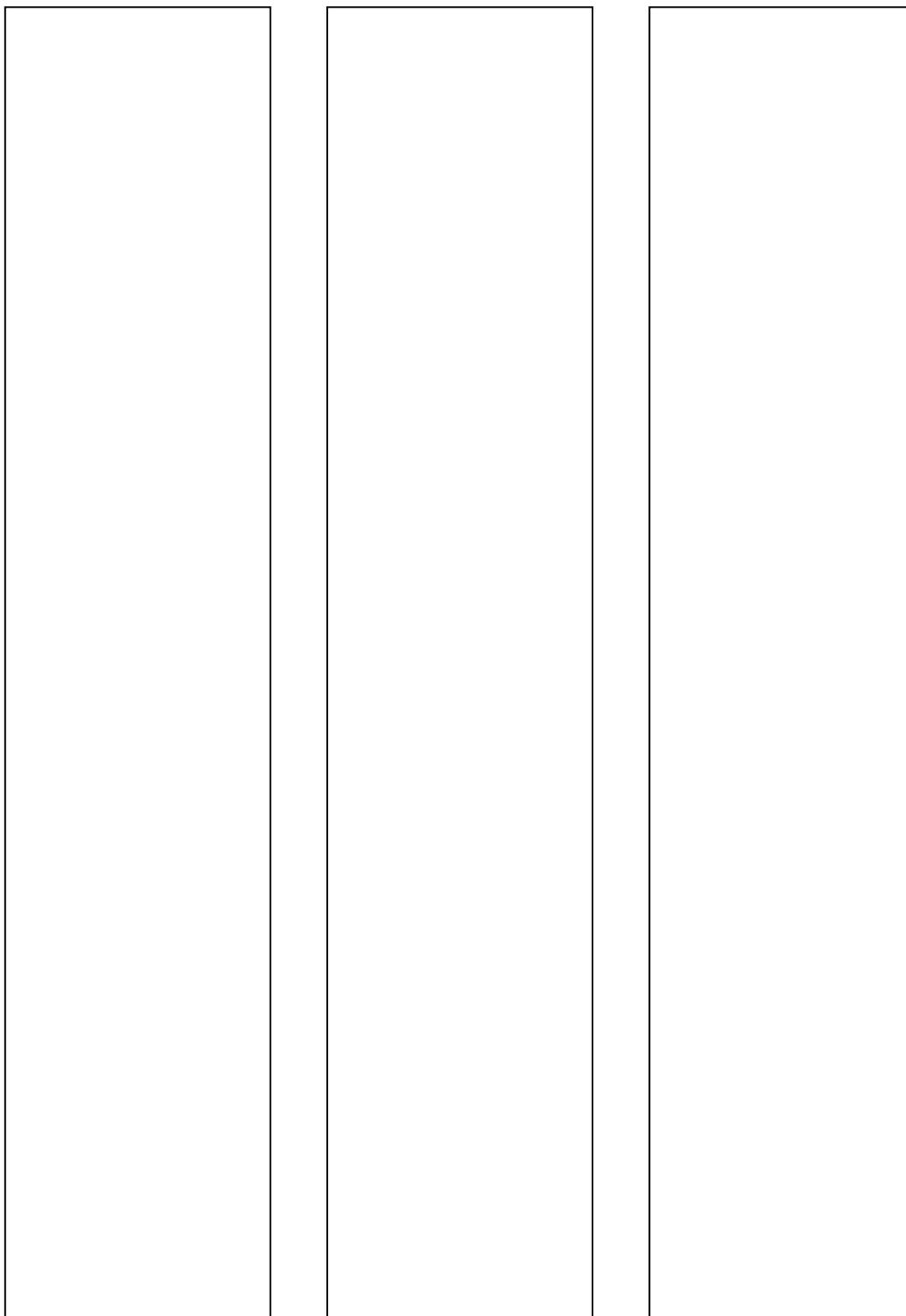
Troll	
Dragon	
Pirate	
Giant	
Wizard	
Gingerbread Man	
Little Red Riding Hood	
Rapunzel	
Bear	
Goose	
Rabbits	
Pig	
Monster	

Then make a list of other fairy tale characters that you know about.



WORKSHEET 3. DESIGN A BOOKMARK

Design a bookmark using this template. You may be able to copy it onto a sturdier stock of paper before you begin drawing and decorating.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011 she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a member of the Order of Australia.

