

Emotional Connections

In this activity you will explore emotions and how illustrators express them.

Taking inspiration from the work of David Foldvari, Asia Alfasi and Kate Evans, children will think about the different emotions refugees experience and work with charcoal and chalk to create images expressing an emotion of their choice.

Before you begin you may wish to use the [Getting It Right For Your Class teachers' notes](#) to think about how exploring emotions might be received by children with different abilities and lived experiences.



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Introduction

Illustrators can make powerful images to record or communicate current events. They can do this in situations where photography might not be allowed.

Take a look at how different illustrators express the emotions of their subjects in these images. This can be done through facial expression but also through body language, the medium (art material) they choose, how they use that medium and their colour choices.

Discuss the following examples...



Kate Evans

page from Threads, 2016

Coloured pencil and ink on paper

- What are the people in the car feeling?
- How can we tell?
- Does the rest of the picture help convey that feeling?
- How does the composition (how all the elements of the image have been arranged) help create that feeling? (small in the bottom corner with large amount of empty landscape almost closing in...).



Asia Alfasi
Extract from Childhood is Hope,
2016 Ink on paper

- What different emotions are shown in this illustration?
- Why are the children smiling?
- Who is the woman and what emotions is she feeling?

David Foldvari

Memories, 2015

Mixed Media and Digital

- Which words describe this image best? Loneliness/ sadness/ tiredness/any others?
- These images are made using different materials which are then scanned into a computer and changed to create a digital image. That means these pictures could include any colours. How do the colours that have been chosen help communicate the feeling of the people?



"I HAVE NO GOOD MEMORIES OF HOME."

Reflection

How might you feel if you had to leave your home?

Activity



Materials:

- A4 white paper
- A4 coloured paper - a range of different colours is needed so participants have a choice
- White chalk
- Conté crayons (compressed charcoal) or charcoal
- Scissors
- Gluesticks
- Some print-outs of people expressing very different emotions through body language (optional). This could be photos of the children acting out the emotions in the warm up activity.



Warm up

To prepare for making the illustrations everyone should try to 'act out' a wide range of emotions.

Think about how to express that emotion with your face, then your whole body and each time perform a little 'freeze frame' for each emotion.

fear

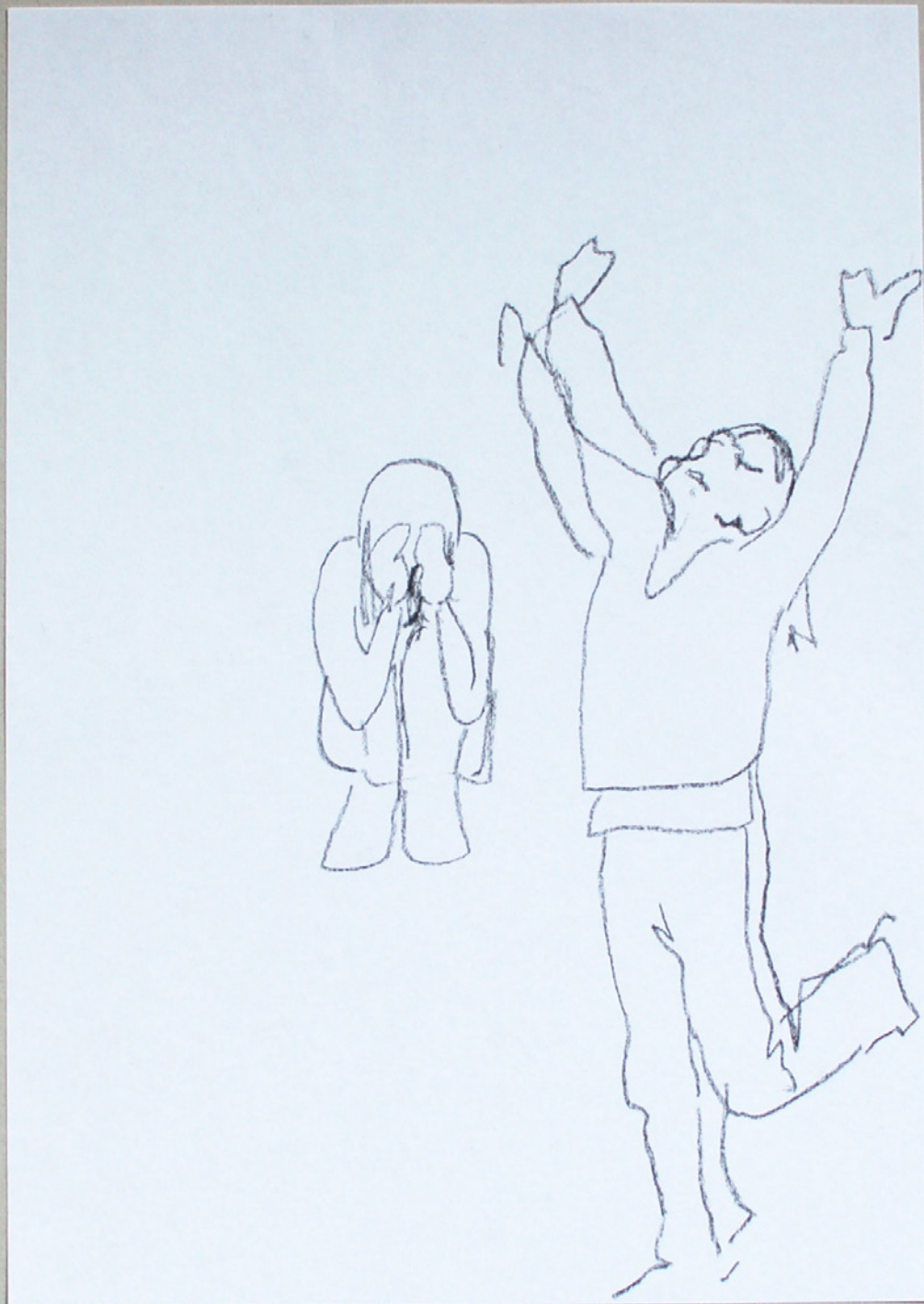
calmness

excitement

Sadness

anger

joy



As a warm up, ask a volunteer or two to pose for one minute in the middle of the class while everyone else has one minute to try and capture their pose on a piece of paper with charcoal.

Repeat the exercise with a number of the emotions.

Remember that you don't need to draw everything in that time and it is just a warm up so it doesn't need to be 'right'.

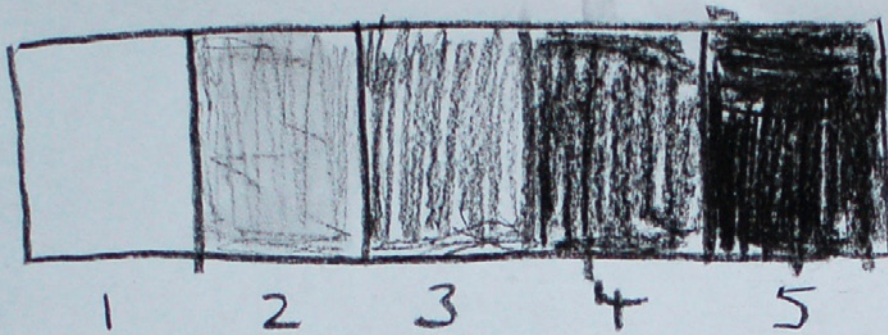
Spend most of the time looking at the person you're drawing and hardly any time looking at the paper at all.

Instructions

When using Conté or charcoal it is hard to be very 'neat'. Lines can be smudged and tones can be built up by pressing harder or lightened by using a rubber.

If you have time try making a range of different tones labelled 1-5 which can be really useful as a reference tone.

(Eg. If you have lots of 1 and 5 in your picture but not any 3 or 4, can you try and get those tones in too?)



Moving on to the final illustration, choose whichever emotion you would like to convey.

The first step is to draw a figure/person expressing that emotion in conté/charcoal on a piece of white A4 paper.

Try to draw the figure in the middle of the page not quite filling the page. (The exact size is not too important but it is better not to work too small.)

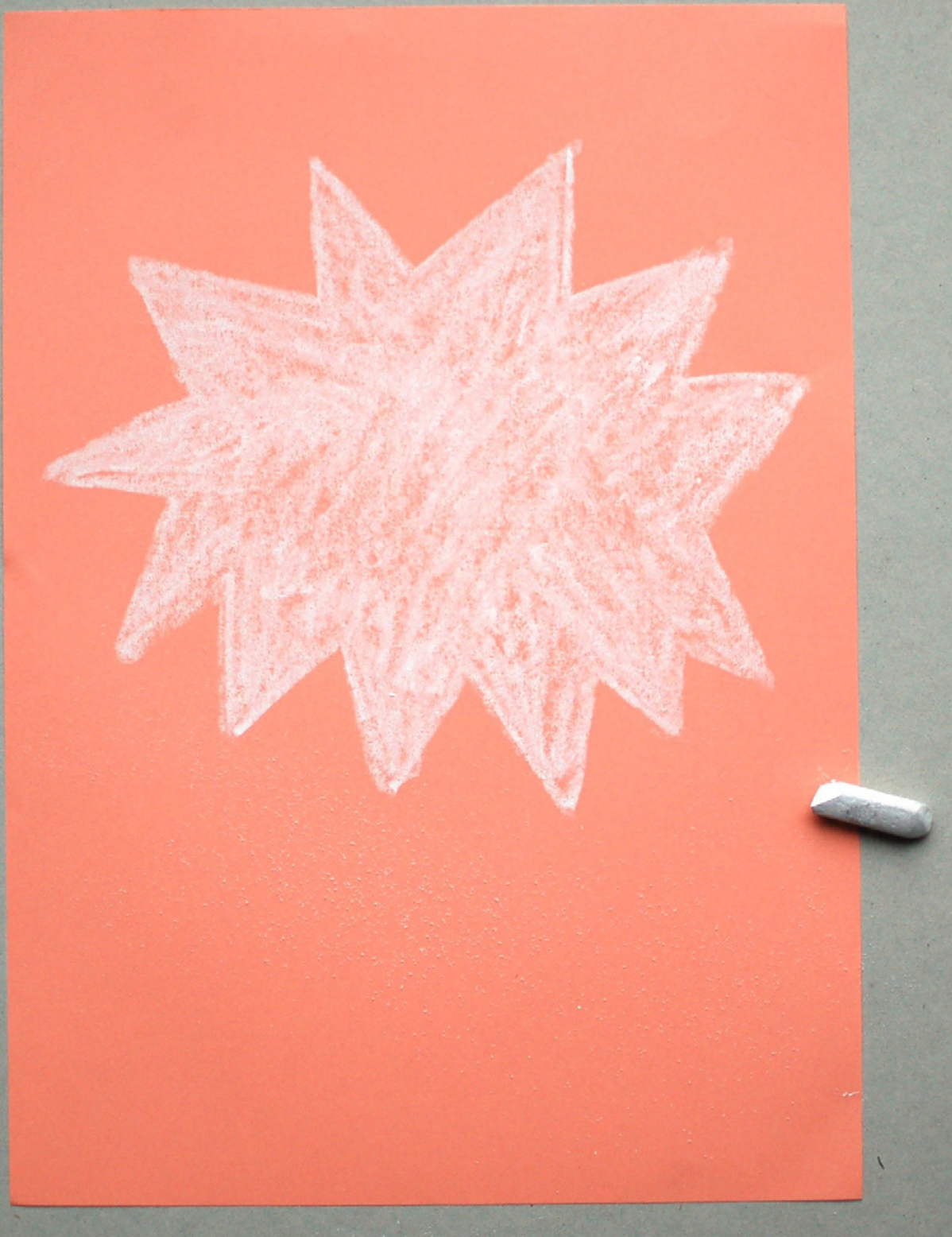
Think about expressing the emotion through the whole body of the person and also their facial expression.

Use the conté/charcoal to create lots of different shades or tones and textures, not just outlines.



When the drawing is finished, cut the figure out as neatly as possible.





Choose a coloured background that will help convey your choice of emotion. Think about which colours you might associate with different feelings, but remember different people will have different associations so your colour choice cannot be wrong.

Looking back at the inspiration image, Foldvari has chosen the shape of a bleached out sun/moon setting or rising to help create a poignant feeling. What shape could you choose to help convey your choice of emotion?

Using white chalk, draw your chosen shape onto your coloured background paper.



Once cut out, play around with the composition or layout of the final image by moving the cutout figure around on the background. Does it look better right in the middle of the page or slightly to the side/top/bottom?

When happy, glue your figure
down into place.





Make a display of the whole class's work and discuss all the different emotions that are expressed.

Extension ideas

Exploring emotions can help develop empathy and can support any wellbeing focus.

A collection of short films on the NUT website focus on the experiences of refugee children starting school in the UK and what schools and fellow students can do to be welcoming.