



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: The Art of Words
Author: Robert Vescio
Illustrator: Joanna Bartel
Publisher: EK Books
Price: ANZ \$24.99 | USA \$18.99 | CA \$24.99 | UK £10.99
ISBN: 978-1-925820-84-3
Publication date: Mar 2021
Audience age: 4-8 years
Key Curriculum Areas: English, STEM-Science, Visual Arts, Health and Physical Education



SYNOPSIS:

Words are everywhere! Come on this lively adventure to learn more about how they can be shortened, extended, and even switched around. Meet ugly words, colourful words, and words that just need a friend.

The Art of Words is a unique, fun and interactive story about the magic of words. Two children and their adorable dog are illustrated playfully interacting with letters and words, and discovering myriad word functions and capabilities. Typography is a major feature and each page shows words that are scaled, coloured, and positioned to enhance their meaning and reflect the interplay of their verbal and visual aspects.

At only 100 words, this 'language through adventure' book is intended to excite young children about language, especially the joy of words and their capabilities. Visually, it depicts an imaginative natural world with abundant greenery, stars, animals and flowers, and children engaging in sports, adventure and STEM! The illustrations aim to embrace and depict diversity in gender and race and cater to varied literacy levels. The font choices are simple and clear, to ensure beginning readers can engage confidently.

THEMES:

Words and Literacy. Friendship. Adventure. STEM. Physical Wellbeing. Natural World.

SELLING POINTS:

- A unique, quirky guide to the magic of all the different words there are that will delight young readers and teach them how stories are made.
- Will appeal to children, parents, carers and teachers due to its dual entertaining and educational aspects.
- Despite its focus on how we use words, *The Art of Words* is only 100 words long because it takes time to explore words through imaginative imagery, making it perfect for beginning readers.



WRITING STYLE:

Creative writing. Fun and quirky.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

I wrote the story to show children that books like *The Art of Words* can be fun and deserve a place on the shelf with all their favourite picture books.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Robert Vescio is a full-time children's author and a Books in Homes role model, with an aim to inspire children to read, write, and use their imaginations. His previous picture books with EK Books are *Finn and Puss*, *The Voyage* and *The Box Cars*.

Joanna Bartel is a designer and illustrator with experience in Arts education, design, teaching and creative marketing. She particularly loves character design and creating imaginative and playful images to engage children and enhance imaginative learning.

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

I wanted to write a story to help children focus on the power of the written word by using their imagination. *The Art of Words* is unlike any other book I've written. The words that appear on the page display a creative effect. The book carries a strong message about the power of words – something valuable for children as they start to read and write their own stories. *The Art of Words* is an opportunity to discuss the playfulness of words while encouraging children to use their imagination and creatively express themselves. It reveals how much power words actually have.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

It was so rewarding to see the words come to life on the page – the fun is in the words. This is a unique concept that helps children to focus on the power of the written word. The pictures help to engage and amuse the reader. With stylish quality, Joanna, the illustrator, demonstrates the meaning of words with neat illustrations to capture the beauty of words and the wonder and magic they share. A visual treat!

What was the most challenging part of this project?

The challenging part was to make sure the story gets children thinking about language, and to help them to build and maintain a positive attitude towards literacy. *The Art of Words* is sure to inject the joy of reading in children instead of viewing reading as a chore. This is something that should be essential in all reading experiences. *The Art of Words* will show children how to use their imagination to transform a word into an adorable illustration, playing around and experimenting with their favourite word.



ILLUSTRATOR

What media do you use to create your illustrations? Briefly describe your process.

I use a mixture of traditional and digital media. I begin with sketching in pencil and do all my rough drawings this way. I then scan these drawings and add colour and texture on the computer using a tablet pen.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

It was so rewarding to illustrate a book that will teach children about the joys of language. I loved the challenge of communicating different words and thinking about how to show each one in a fun and engaging way. It was also very rewarding to collaborate on the illustrations with the author and publisher and reflect on their feedback.

What was the most challenging part of this project?

Finding quiet time to work on the book whilst also juggling being a Mum to young kids and navigating the stresses of coronavirus.



TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students.

Discussion:

Before Reading

- Look at the cover of *The Art of Words*. What do you see?
- What might the title tell you about the story?
- In what ways can words be arty? In what ways can you 'play' with words?
- Make a list of all the places you might see words.
- Discuss the different purposes of words, or strings of words.

After Reading

- What did you learn about words?
- Can you add more places to the list of where words are found?
- What do you call words that have similar meanings to one another?
- What kinds of activities are the children engaging in throughout the illustrations?
- How are they using or playing with the words?
- What do you think the author means by 'Sometimes they need a friend'? Can you point to some of the punctuation marks, including question marks, exclamation marks, commas and full stops that you see in the story, or other books?
- How do you think the characters are feeling on different pages of the story?
- What was your favourite page? Why?
- What is your favourite word? Why?
- How many ways can you think of to use a word?

Activities:

ENGLISH

Foundation Curriculum Links

Language for interaction: Understand that language can be used to explore ways of expressing needs, likes and dislikes ([ACELA1429](#))

Text structure and organisation: Understand that texts can take many forms, can be very short (for example an exit sign) or quite long (for example an information book or a film) and that stories and informative texts have different purposes ([ACELA1430](#))

Expressing and developing ideas: Recognise that texts are made up of words and groups of words that make meaning ([ACELA1434](#))

Phonics and word knowledge: Recognise and generate rhyming words, alliteration patterns, syllables and sounds (phonemes) in spoken words ([ACELA1439](#))



Know how to read and write some high-frequency words and other familiar words ([ACELA1817](#))

Responding to literature: Share feelings and thoughts about the events and characters in texts ([ACELT1783](#))

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating: Use comprehension strategies to understand and discuss texts listened to, viewed or read independently ([ACELY1650](#))

Creating texts: Create short texts to explore, record and report ideas and events using familiar words and beginning writing knowledge ([ACELY1651](#))

Years 1 and 2 Curriculum Links

Text structure and organisation: Recognise that different types of punctuation, including full stops, question marks and exclamation marks, signal sentences that make statements, ask questions, express emotion or give commands ([ACELA1449](#))

Expressing and developing ideas: Understand the use of vocabulary about familiar and new topics and experiment with and begin to make conscious choices of vocabulary to suit audience and purpose ([ACELA1470](#))

Phonics and word knowledge: Understand how to spell one and two syllable words with common letter patterns ([ACELA1778](#))

Recognise and know how to use simple grammatical morphemes to create word families ([ACELA1455](#))

Understand that a sound can be represented by various letter combinations ([ACELA1825](#))

Responding to literature: Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences ([ACELT1582](#))

Examining literature: Discuss the characters and settings of different texts and explore how language is used to present these features in different ways ([ACELT1591](#))

Creating literature: Innovate on familiar texts by using similar characters, repetitive patterns or vocabulary ([ACELT1832](#))

Creating texts: Write using unjoined lower case and upper case letters ([ACELY1663](#))

Synonyms and Antonyms

- Synonyms: Find similar meanings for big / little, colourful / ugly, brilliant / plain, shortened / extended.
- Antonyms: The above pairings are opposites. Find other opposite words for actions seen in the book, such as hide, rest, pull, rise, etc.
- Word Tree Task – sort your synonyms and antonyms into separate groups, write them on leaf shapes and create a visual 'word tree' (sorted by colour).

Homophones

Homophones: Words that sound the same with different spelling and meaning.

Examples: here / hear, there / their / they're, where / wear / ware, plain / plane.

- Torch-Shape Homophone Puzzles – on a torch-shaped piece of paper, write the homophone pairs / triples along the handle. Cut in between each word to create a homophone puzzle. See BLM 1.

Palindromes

Palindromes are words that are spelt and read the same forward and backward.

- The word 'WOW' is used in the story. Can you think of any more palindromes? Write your list in the mirror (BLM 2).

Similes

Similes are a figure of speech comparing two different things in an interesting way, using the word 'like' or 'as'. *Example: "Words string together like droplets of dew on a silky web."*

- Make a list of common similes. Innovate on some common similes to create your own interesting sentences. Illustrate.

Comprehension – Vocabulary Match

- Complete a 'word web' graphic organiser, matching the words in *The Art of Words* with an accompanying picture. See BLM 3.

Rhyming Words

- "*Here. There. Everywhere.*" List more rhyming words for 'there' and 'everywhere', and other words in the story, such as big, plain, heart.

Punctuation

"Sometimes they need a friend. A ? for words that ask. An ! for words that shout. A , for words that pause or list and a . for words that end or abbreviate."

- Find the different punctuation marks in the book. What do they represent?
- Make punctuation stick puppets to use with your own sentences. Where would you put a **question mark, exclamation mark, comma and full stop**? Read your sentences aloud with intonation and expression!

Creative Writing

Acronyms are words that are abbreviated from the initial letters of other words, such as STAND (Simply Trust And Never Doubt).

- *Acrostic Poems* – Using one of the words found in *The Art of Words*, write an acrostic poem, or acronym, about something meaningful to you.

Spelling

- Words are “free to collect”! Grab a jar and collect some words you find in the book, *The Art of Words*, or in your surroundings. You might like to choose a particular ‘rule’ to follow, such as double letters (brilliant, little, collect), digraphs (‘ai’ as in ‘plain’, ‘ow’ as in ‘wow’), phonics (words beginning with ‘c’), and so on. These words can be written on strips of paper and ‘collected’ in your jar.
- It might be fun to add paper clips to the word strips and fish the words with a magnetic fishing rod!

Types of Texts

- Explore a range of texts with different kinds of language. Some examples are storybooks, fairy tales, information texts, guides, maps, news reports, magazines, videos, and so on.

Fun with Words

- Create a wordsearch with the words from *The Art of Words* (i.e. here, there, everywhere, big, little, colourful, ugly, create, collect, brilliant, plain, heart).
- Create a crossword with clues for the above words.
- Unjumble the words (i.e. CFROULOU – COLOURFUL / YGUL – UGLY).
- Fill in the letter gaps (i.e. PL_ _ N – PLAIN / BRI_ _ IANT – BRILLIANT).
- Create words with a range of media (i.e. paint, pencils, chalk, pastels, pens, whiteboard markers, etc).
- Create words with a range of materials (i.e. Lego, playdough, tissue paper balls, writing in sand, natural materials like sticks, rocks, flowers, grass, etc).

VISUAL ART

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks ([ACAVAM107](#))

Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience ([ACAVAM108](#))

The Art of Drawing Words

- Turn a written word into an artwork! How can ‘Dog’ look like a dog? Can you draw an umbrella with the word ‘umbrella’?
- Find inspiration from this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DlrmQRS7xuY>

STEM – SCIENCE

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Biological sciences: Living things have basic needs, including food and water ([ACSSU002](#))

Living things have a variety of external features ([ACSSU017](#))

Chemical sciences: Objects are made of materials that have observable properties ([ACSSU003](#))

Different materials can be combined for a particular purpose ([ACSSU031](#))

Physical sciences: Light and sound are produced by a range of sources and can be sensed ([ACSSU020](#))

A push or a pull affects how an object moves or changes shape ([ACSSU033](#))

Questioning and predicting: Pose and respond to questions about familiar objects and events ([AC SIS014](#))

Processing and analysing data and information: Engage in discussions about observations and represent ideas ([AC SIS233](#))

Nature and development of science: Science involves observing, asking questions about, and describing changes in, objects and events ([AC SHE034](#))

Planning and conducting: Use informal measurements to collect and record observations, using digital technologies as appropriate ([AC SIS039](#))

Evaluating: Compare observations with those of others ([AC SIS041](#))

Communicating: Represent and communicate observations and ideas in a variety of ways ([AC SIS042](#))

Forces – Simple Machines: Pulleys

- Like the rock climber and the fisher child in *The Art of Words*, children can explore the physics behind forces and how pulleys work. For this experiment you will need cardboard tubes, a ribbon spool, straw or pencil, string, tape and scissors.
- Add a basket (made of cardboard) to the end to crank up your favourite ‘words’!
- Find instructions here:

<https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/build-a-winch-simple-machine-recycled-stem-activity>

Colourful Splashes – Magic Milk

- Observe the science around how dish soap breaks up the fats in milk and ‘chases’ the food colouring around your plate! You will need a plate or container, milk, liquid food colouring, dish soap and cotton swabs.
- Find the details of the experiment at:

<https://funlearningforkids.com/magic-milk-science-experiment-kids>

Colourful Chemical Reactions – Fuzzy Rainbows

- Predict and observe the chemical reaction of combining vinegar with baking soda, which results with the substance of carbon dioxide. You will need several jars, white vinegar, dish soap, baking soda, food colouring and a spoon.
- Find the details of the experiment at:
<https://buggyandbuddy.com/science-for-kids-chemical-reactions-using-baking-soda-and-vinegar>

Light and Reflections – Mirrors

Explore the science around mirrors and reflections.

- Two mirrors: See what happens when two mirrors face each other.
- Mirrors and words: Write some words on paper and hold it in front of the mirror. What do you observe?
- Properties of light: Discuss the science of reflection, absorption, transparency and colours with magnetic opaque tiles (or cellophane), a torch and a mirror. Place your tile building (or cellophane creation) in front of a mirror in a dark room. Shine the torch through it and observe its colours, reflection and light in the mirror.

Nature Studies – Australian flora

Discover and study a range of different flora in your natural surroundings.

- Colour Scavenger Hunt: Find natural materials in all the different colours of the rainbow!
- Symmetry in Nature: Using your knowledge from the ‘Light and Reflections – Mirrors’ activity, use a mirror to discover symmetry (a combined science and maths exploration) with a range of shapes and patterns in nature.
- Nature Words: Create words using the natural materials you have found.
- Green thumbs: Plant your own seeds or seedlings and observe their growth over time. Find out more about how to care for your chosen plant.



HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Foundation to Year 2 Curriculum Links

Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing: Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others ([ACPPS004](#))

Contributing to healthy and active communities: Participate in play that promotes engagement with outdoor settings and the natural environment ([ACPPS007](#))

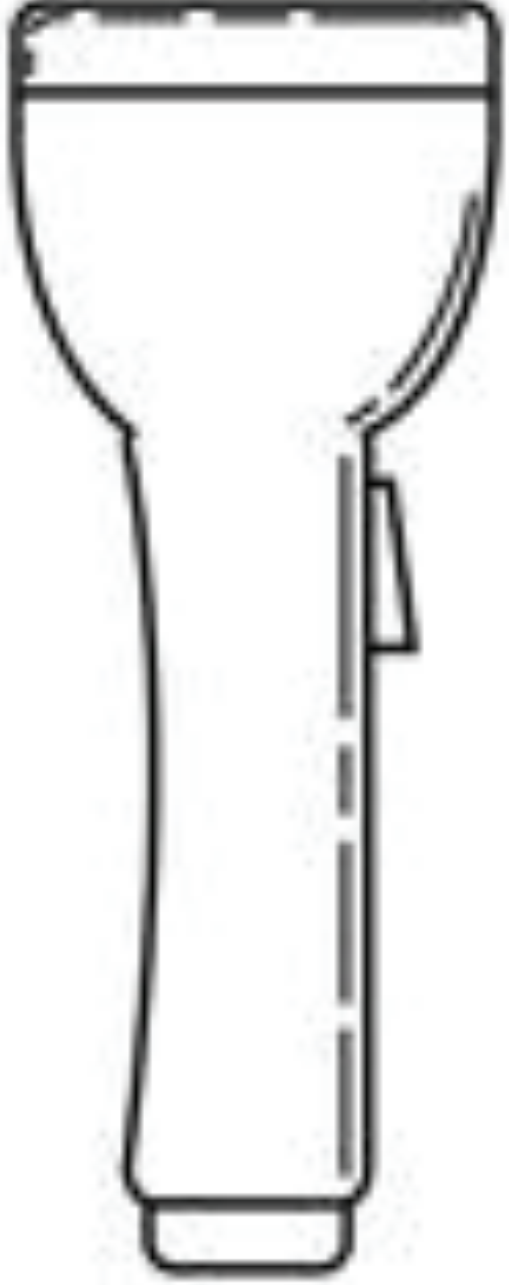
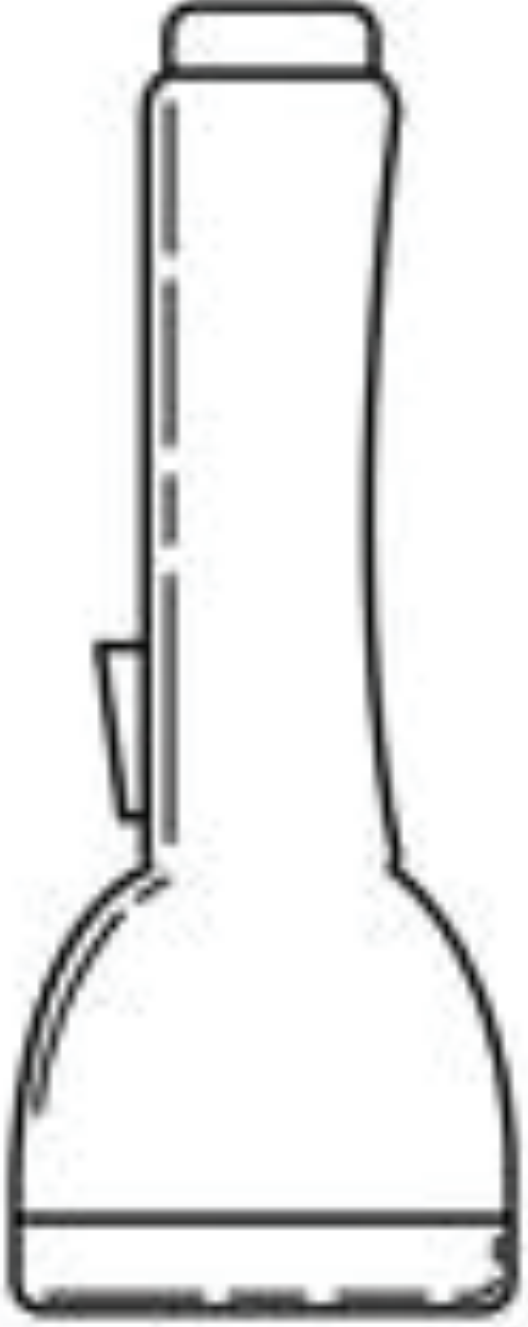
Identify and explore natural and built environments in the local community where physical activity can take place ([ACPPS023](#))

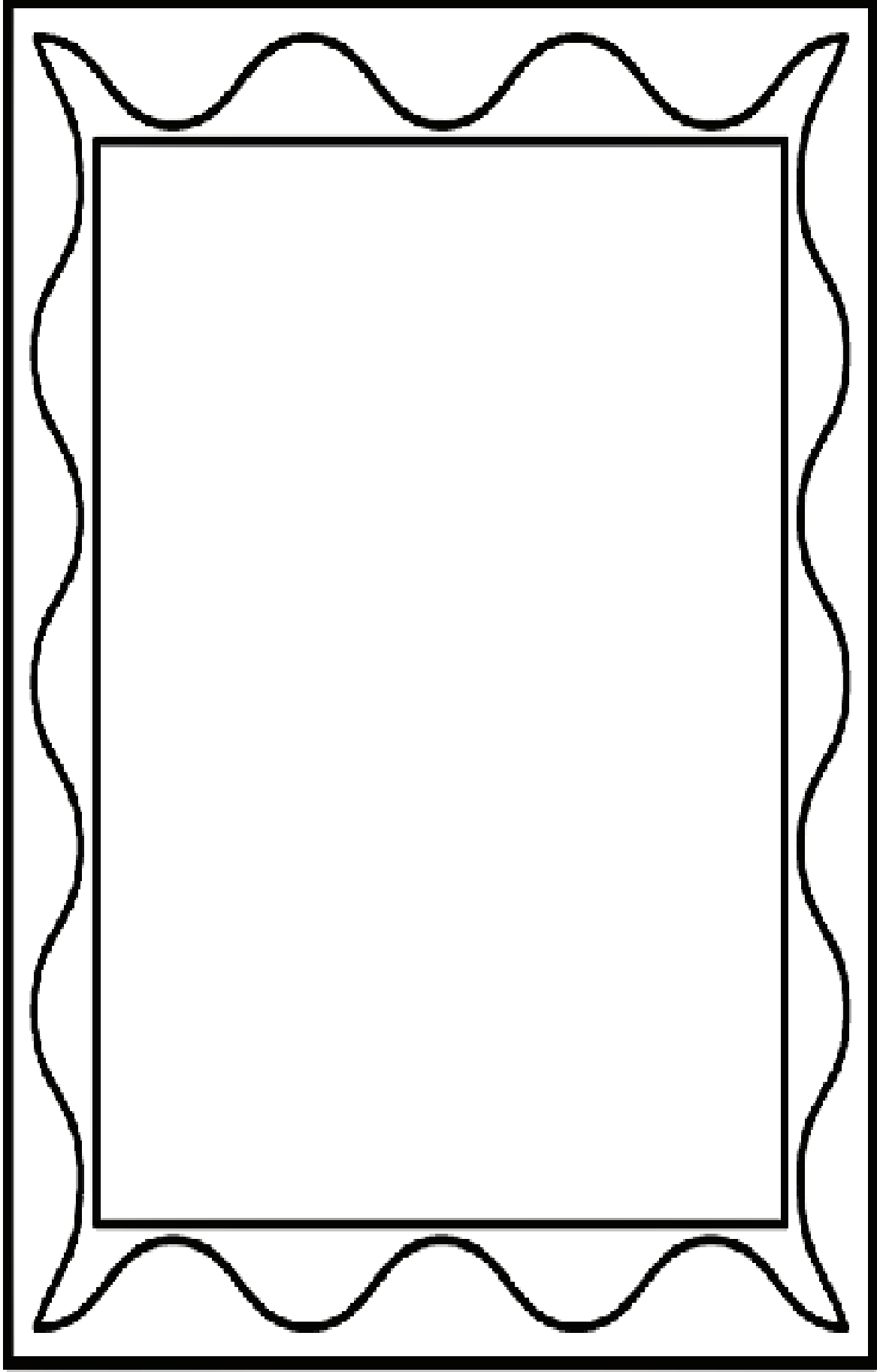
Moving our body: Practise fundamental movement skills and movement sequences using different body parts ([ACPMP008](#))

Learning through movement: Propose a range of alternatives and test their effectiveness when solving movement challenges ([ACPMP031](#))

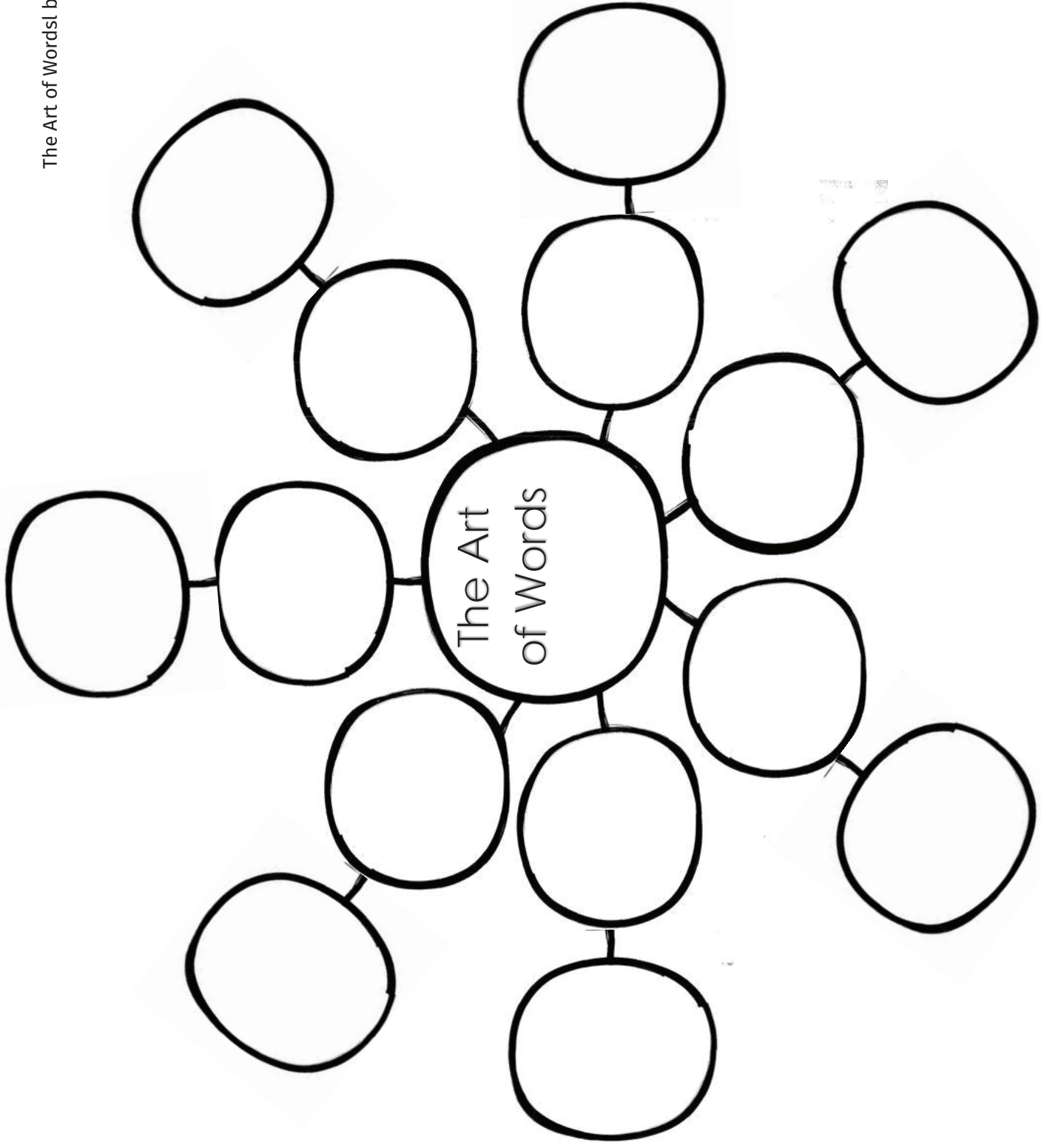
Fun Ways to Explore Physical Activity in Nature

- Go for a bike ride.
- Climb a tree. Read a book in a tree.
- Explore playground equipment like swings, slides, climbing frames, etc.
- Roll down a hill.
- Dance in the flowers. Dance in the rain.
- Watch the clouds float by.
- Engage in gardening – pruning, planting, etc.
- Play outdoor sports, like footy, rock climbing, fishing, etc.

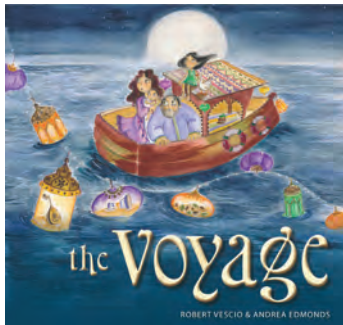




big
little
colourful
ugly
brilliant
plain
collect



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