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## Lauren Child



### Who is Lauren Child?

- Lauren Child is the artist who created Charlie and Lola and Clarice Bean.
- She mixes **hand-drawn pictures** with **real-life things**, like fabric or wallpaper.
- She often cuts out shapes and patterns to make **collage-style characters**.
- Lauren sometimes builds **mini sets like dollhouses**, photographs them, and uses the pictures in her books.
- She uses **fun fonts and speech bubbles** to make words part of the artwork

### What her current illustration practice looks like

- **Collage + Mixed Media Magic**  
Lauren blends hand-drawn characters with photographs, fabrics, textures, and patterned prints — from wallpaper scraps to fabric swatches — to build playful, layered compositions.
- **Paper Dolls and Miniature Sets**  
For projects like The Princess and the Pea, she constructs tiny dollhouse-style scenes, stages them, and photographs the end result
- **Expressive Voice and Typography**  
Bold line work and playful fonts make words part of the art.
- **Digital Final Touches**  
After assembling her collages and drawings, Lauren refines layouts, adjusts colours, and prepares her work digitally for publishing

**Why she's special**

Lauren's playful experimentation with collage and everyday materials brings text and illustration to life in unexpected ways. Her stories combine charm, humour, and creativity, encouraging young readers to see the wonder in small things — like patterns, textures, and the art in simple moments.

**Want to try your own Lauren Child-inspired illustration?**

We could start with a collaged character: mix drawings with fabric scraps, old magazine pieces, or wallpaper — then bring it all together on paper or screen.

## Quentin Blake



### Who is Quentin Blake?

- Quentin Blake is the illustrator behind all those funny Roald Dahl books, like *Matilda* and *The BFG*.
- He draws in a **quick, scribbly style** with lots of energy.
- Quentin starts with rough pencil sketches, then uses **ink and watercolour**.
- His characters are full of life – they jump, stretch, and dance across the page.
- He even paints big wall pictures for hospitals and public spaces!



### His Current Illustration Practice

- **Freewheeling ink and watercolour**  
Quentin's style remains loose and spontaneous. He often starts with rough sketches to explore posture, gesture, and layout, and then uses a lightbox to re-draw in ink on watercolour paper in a single, fluid line.
- **Tools and planning**  
He uses waterproof ink with flexible dip pens.
- **Collaborative and adaptive**  
Blake is active across writing, charity projects, and public commissions—working with authors, hospitals, restaurants, and galleries. He adapts his medium—ink, pastel, colour washes—to suit each context
- **Drawing beyond the page**  
His recent work features large-scale installations: murals in hospitals





, prison walls , and other unexpected public spaces. These creations transform spaces for staff and visitors



## Why It Matters

- Quentin's method intertwines planning with a free-flowing approach—letting characters "come to life" on the page.
- His public works show how illustration can transform everyday spaces—not just books.
- By founding a national centre, he's helping elevate illustration into one of Britain's foremost art forms.

## Would You Like to...

- Try his **lightbox method**: start with a sketch and redraw it in ink?
- Make your own **public illustration**: a mural or poster for a community space?
- Learn more about the Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration [Centre for illustration](#)

## Axel Scheffler



### Who is Axel Scheffler?

- Axel Scheffler (b. 1957, Hamburg) is the celebrated illustrator behind picture books such as *The Gruffalo*, *Stick Man*, and *Pip and Posy*.
- After moving to England in 1982 to study at the Bath Academy of Art
- He's illustrated over 150–200 books, most notably in collaboration with author Julia Donaldson

### His Current Illustration Practice

- **Pencil Sketch to Watercolour**  
Axel begins with pencil sketches—multiple versions—to get a character just right. He then uses a lightbox to trace the chosen sketch onto heavyweight watercolour paper
- **Ink, Watercolour & Layers**  
He draws outlines with a dip pen and black ink before adding watercolour washes. Once dry, he layers coloured pencils and adds gouache for touches such as snow
- **Studio & Sketchbooks**  
Scheffler works from a cosy attic studio at home, surrounded by overflowing sketchbooks and original artwork boxes, sorted with his assistant
- **Public Outreach**  
Beyond books, he draws live at festivals like the Barnes Children's Literature Festival, often live-sketching characters.

## Why It Matters

- **Traditional Techniques Meet Modern Publishing:** Axel remains loyal to classic illustration techniques—dip pens, paint, layering—while still adapting to editorial needs and large-scale public work.
- **Character-Driven Success:** His long-term collaboration with Julia Donaldson shows how illustration can transform simple text into vibrant worlds, leading to global bestsellers

## Want to Try Axel's Method?

**Sketch & Trace:** Try pencilling your character ideas, then refine by tracing on watercolour paper (– trace your character, turn the tracing paper over and draw over the lines – this gives you a character on your watercolour paper)

**Layer Artist Tools:** Use ink outlines, watercolours, coloured pencils, and maybe gouache highlights.



## Beatrix Potter



### Who was Beatrix Potter?

- Beatrix Potter created Peter Rabbit and lots of animal characters.
- She used **real animals** and **real places** to inspire her drawings.
- Her pictures are made with **fine pen lines** and **soft watercolours**.
- She loved nature and drew birds, rabbits, mice, and plants very carefully.
- Her illustrations look gentle, peaceful, and full of charm.

### Her Illustration Practice

- **Born to sketch from nature**  
Homeschooled, Beatrix kept sketchbooks from as young as eight. She drew directly from life—animals, plants, fungi—with incredible detail and affection
- **Watercolour + pen & ink**  
She blended soft watercolours with fine pen and ink to capture the delicate textures and life in her subjects—whether a bunny in a shirt or a curious mushroom
- **Scientific precision meets storybook charm**  
Trained in natural history, Potter's drawings of fungi and insects were scientifically accurate—she even corresponded with experts to refine her work
- **Fascination with real places**  
Settings like Mr. McGregor's garden were based on real locations she studied closely, such as Fawe Park in the Lake District



- **Anthropomorphic characters with a heart**

Her stories blend realistic detail with playful traits—clothed rabbits, mice baking pies—bringing warmth and humour to natural scenes



## **Why Beatrix Potter Still Inspires**

- Drawn from nature, her settings feel real and trustworthy.
- Scientific attention makes her illustrations educational
- The mix of detailed backgrounds with whimsical characters is magical
- Her blend of nature, narrative, and science still captivates today



## **Her Legacy Today**

- Original sketchbooks and watercolours are in exhibitions and museums like the V&A, showcasing the roots of her creativity
- Her conservation efforts led her to purchase and donate farmland in the Lake District—Hill Top Farm is now a National Trust museum
- Potter's art continues to influence modern illustrators, especially in natural history and children's books



## **Want to Try It?**

How about a mini project inspired by Beatrix Potter?

Choose an animal or plant you love.

Observe it closely—maybe in your garden or at a park.

Lightly draw it in pencil, then add pen outlines and gentle watercolour washes.

Share your artwork and see what else you notice—textures, shapes, maybe even a fun story!



## Charley Harper



### Who was Charley Harper?

- Charley Harper was an American modernist illustrator celebrated for his simplified yet deeply expressive wildlife art. Charley Harper made pictures of animals using **shapes and patterns**.
- He believed in **keeping things simple** – like a bird made of just circles and triangles!
- His art uses **flat colours** with bold, clean lines.
- It's easy to recognise his style – it's bright, fun, and very clever.
- He loved animals and wanted to show how cool nature could look in a graphic way.
- Born in West Virginia, he studied at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and later taught there.
- Harper coined his style “minimal realism,” capturing the essence of nature with bold shapes, flat colours, and a dash of whimsy

### His Illustration Practice

- **Minimal Realism**

Harper believed in removing unnecessary details. He described it as seeing “exciting shapes, colour combinations, patterns... an ecosystem in which all elements are interrelated”

- **Geometric & Flat Forms**

His wildlife illustrations feature bold, flattened shapes—think semicircles, triangles, and simple curves—to represent birds, insects, and animals with clarity and personality

- **Vibrant Colours with Purpose**

Harper used a limited, vivid palette to focus on the essence of his subjects—bright oranges, deep teals, crisp blacks—making each image pop with life

- **Wildlife & Conservation Message**

His work often appeared in magazines like *Ford Times*, posters for the National Park Service, Cincinnati Zoo, and Cornell Lab of Ornithology—bringing his graphic depictions of animals to wider audiences and underscoring nature appreciation

- **Commercial & Personal Blend**

Harper received commercial commissions (e.g., *Ford Times* covers from 1948–1982), which helped refine his style. A 1954 bird assignment was a turning point, pushing him towards his signature simplified look



## Why It Matters

- **Simplicity with Impact:** Harper's minimalism makes wildlife instantly recognizable and memorable.
- **Bridge of Art & Science:** His work balances aesthetic elegance with biological appeal—no extra detail, just the essence.
- **Legacy of Influence:** His style remains iconic in mid-century modern art and continues to inspire designers, illustrators, and conservationists



## Try It Yourself

**Pick an animal or plant**—observe it, then break it down into simple shapes.

**Draw geometric forms** like circles, triangles, and rectangles.

**Fill with flat, bold colour** and add minimal accents.

**Reflect:** Does it still feel true to the subject? Let go of details that don't add to the overall impression.

## Thomas Bewick



### Who was Thomas Bewick?

Thomas Bewick was an illustrator over 200 years ago!

- He carved **tiny pictures into wood blocks** to print in books.
- His drawings of animals were very detailed, like little black-and-white stamps.
- He loved nature and used real animals and scenes as his guide.
- His wood engravings helped bring books to life for many people long ago.
- He created the first illustrated wildlife book

### His Illustration Practice

- **Apprenticeship & Technical Innovation**  
Apprenticed at 14 to a metal engraver in Newcastle, Bewick pioneered carving into the hard end-grain of boxwood using a burin (engraver's tool), allowing extremely fine lines and durable printing blocks.
- **White-Line Technique & Tonal Effects**  
He innovated the "white-line" method—cutting lines into the surface to print white on dark backgrounds—and lowered background areas so they printed grey, creating depth and atmosphere in his images
- **Meticulous Natural Observation**  
A keen naturalist, Bewick drew birds, animals, and plants from life for his iconic works, *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790) and *A History of British Birds* (1797–1804). Each engraving was based on firsthand watercolour sketches.

- **Tail-Pieces & Humour**

His books include charming “tail-pieces”—small wood-engraved vignettes depicting rural life, often playful or humorous—to fill blank spaces under text.

- **Durable & Integrated Printing**

The hard boxwood blocks he engineered could be used thousands of times without wear and printed directly alongside metal type, revolutionising book illustration



## **Why He Matters**

- **Founder of Modern Wood-Engraving:** Bewick is widely credited with turning wood engraving into a serious, widely used printmaking art.
- **Scientific & Artistic Fusion:** His engravings are accurate, detailed, and expressive—a forerunner to modern field guides.
- **Broad Cultural Impact:** Praised by contemporaries like Wordsworth and Ruskin, his work was poetic and deeply influential.



## **Try It Yourself: Bewick-Style Wood Engraving**

**Observe Nature:** Sketch a plant or animal in detail.

**Transfer to Wood:** Use a pencil to draw lightly onto prepared boxwood (or simulate on cardboard).

**Carve Wisely:** Try cutting white-line effects—cut away background to leave fine lines for lighter details.

**Ink & Print:** Roll ink onto the surface, then press onto paper to reveal your engraving—experiment with grey tone through pressure and carving depth.

This centuries-old technique blends craft, nature, and invention—just as Bewick did!





## Theodor Seuss Geisel



### Who was Dr. Seuss?

- Theodor Seuss Geisel, known as Dr. Seuss, was an American author and illustrator famous for iconic children's books like *The Cat in the Hat*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, and *The Lorax*.
- His drawings are **wobbly, curly, and full of fun** – no straight lines here!
- He used **bold black outlines and bright colours** like red, blue, and green.
- He made **whole worlds** filled with strange buildings, animals, and machines.
- His drawings matched his silly rhymes perfectly – everything is playful!

### His Illustration Practice

- **Pen & Ink with Bold Colour**  
Early in his career, Seuss used pencil shading and watercolour, but most of his famous books from the post-war years feature stark black pen outlines with one or two bold colours—think red and blue—to define characters like the Cat in the Hat
- **Rounded, Wiggly Lines & Organic Feel**  
His art avoided straight lines—even buildings seem to bend! His figures often look soft or droopy, giving them a whimsical and approachable charm
- **Full Creative Control**  
Seuss did every stage himself: rough sketches, line drawings, and final

art. Every part of each page came from his own hand, showing his devotion to both the words and the art

- **Layered Textures & Visual Rhythm**

Some of his art uses full black backgrounds (especially in early works) to help characters pop forward. He also applied repeating patterns and textures in pen to create lively, “bouncy” energy in illustrations

- **Inventive Personal Artworks**

Beyond books, he left behind hundreds of personal drawings, paintings, and even whimsical sculptures. Many were never published but show how playful and experimental his imagination was

## **Why Dr. Seuss Still Matters**

- **Fun Meets Learning** – His bright, rhythmic illustrations supported stories full of sound-play, encouraging kids to read out loud and enjoy the learning process.
- **Inventive Visual World-Building** – His wiggly, unpredictable landscapes and characters shaped worlds where imagination reigned—and still inspire creativity today.
- **Creative Consistency** – Every book reflects Seuss’s singular vision—no assistants or separate illustrators—just his joyful mix of writing and drawing.

## **Try the Dr. Seuss Method!**

Want to create your own Seussian-style art? Here’s a fun way to start:

**Sketch an idea** lightly in pencil—maybe a wobbly house or a silly creature.

**Ink your lines** with a bold pen—remember to avoid straight lines!

**Add one or two bright colours** to make parts stand out.

**Add simple patterns or textures**—like stripes, dots, or squiggles—to fill in spaces.

**Read your creation aloud**—give it a name and a fun rhyme about what it can do!



## E.H. Shepard



- **Who was he?**

Ernest Howard Shepard was a gifted British illustrator best known for bringing A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* to life.

- He studied at London art schools and became one of *Punch* magazine's leading cartoonists.
- He also served in WWI and continued to sketch the front lines
- He drew in **soft pencil and ink**, then added gentle watercolour.
- He visited real forests to help him draw the Hundred Acre Wood.
- His characters look like **real animals with kind eyes and warm smiles**.
- His scenes feel calm and cosy – perfect for storytime.

### His Illustration Practice

- **Sketching from Life & Landscape Study**

Shepard spent time in real places like Ashdown Forest to sketch scenes and textures that would become the iconic Hundred Acre Wood

- **Pencil, Ink & Watercolour Mix**

His illustrations often began in pencil, followed by fine pen and ink lines. He added gentle washes of watercolour—creating calm, detailed scenes with a classic storybook feel

### Why He Matters

His style balances heartfelt characters with softly drawn backgrounds, evoking both emotion and nostalgia.

He influenced how nature and play were visually represented in children's literature.

### ✦ Try a Shepard-Inspired Drawing

Choose an outdoor scene—trees, rivers, animals.

Sketch it in pencil with soft lines.

Add fine ink outlines to define shapes.

Use light watercolour washes to suggest atmosphere.

Include a small character (like a bear or mouse) exploring the space.

## Hayao Miyazaki



### Who is he?

Hayao Miyazaki is the illustrator and filmmaker behind *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Spirited Away*, and more!

- He draws every frame of his movies by **hand**.
- He uses **pencil sketches and soft watercolours** to build magical worlds.
- His drawings are full of **movement, nature, and emotion**.
- He loves quiet moments, like leaves blowing or someone thinking.

### His Current Illustration & Drawing Practice

- **Hand-Drawn Storyboards & Frames**  
Miyazaki draws every frame and storyboard by hand, often using oversized paper to keep pace, later resizing to standard formats
- **Pencil Sketches to Watercolour Backdrops**  
He begins with pencil sketches—simple but expressive—then refines character and background art with delicate watercolour washes, capturing light, seasons, and atmosphere
- **Deep World-Building in Art**  
Miyazaki designs complete worlds, not just characters. He meticulously explores settings—architecture, nature, weather—to shape immersive environments
- **Field Research & Real-Life Inspiration**  
He's known to study animals, architecture (e.g., in Tokyo open-air museums), eels' movements for dragon design, and influences from personal experiences and family

- **Balancing Hand-Drawn & Digital**

Though he embraces minimal computer use, most of Miyazaki's art remains traditional—hand-drawn, hand-painted, carefully scanned when needed



### **Why It's Special**

- **A Hero of Handcraft:** Even in a digital era, Miyazaki champions human touch, believing it's faster and more expressive.
- **Powerful Visual Storytelling:** His layered art—characters, setting, season—invites exploration and emotion.
- **Influence & Legacy:** Recent films like *The Boy and the Heron* reinforce his masterful craft; he remains a global icon and Oscar-winning creator



### **Try a Miyazaki-Inspired Drawing**

**Pick a small scene**—a tree, creature, or doorway.

**Sketch lightly** in pencil, paying attention to gesture and mood.

**Add simple watercolour washes**—convey time of day or weather.

**Consider atmosphere**—is it rainy, sunny, foggy?

**Develop your world**—what lies beyond the frame? Imagine a story.

## Arthur Rackham



### Who was he?

Arthur Rackham was a leading illustrator during the Golden Age of British book illustration. Born in London, he gained fame for his pen-and-ink drawings enhanced with delicate watercolour washes, bringing to life fairy tales and classic stories like *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, *Rip Van Winkle*, and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*.

### His Illustration Practice

- **Pen, Ink & Pale Watercolour**

Rackham started with a light pencil sketch, then used India ink to create expressive, twisting lines. He finished with thin watercolour washes to build a dreamlike atmosphere, sometimes re-inking lines after colouring to maintain clarity.

- **Fusion of Styles**

His style blends Northern European motifs—with hints of Japanese woodblock influence—and the sinuous grace of Art Nouveau, especially visible in tree forms and fairytale creatures.

- **Colour Printing Innovation**

Rackham's 1905 *Rip Van Winkle* marked a breakthrough in colour-print reproduction for books. He embraced trichromatic printing to preserve his muted tones and fine lines, then often enhanced these prints with additional inking.

- **Narrative & Mood**

His illustrations mix whimsy with a subtle darkness, often featuring twisted trees, shadowy woods, and eerie landscapes. He had a magical knack for capturing both the gentle and uncanny sides of folklore.

- **Silhouette and Shadow Work**

In later years, he experimented with silhouettes in *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*, using stark black shapes to dramatic effect.



### **Why His Work Matters**

- **Pioneering Craftsmanship:** Rackham's work helped define the Golden Age of illustration, combining technical mastery with emotional resonance
- **Inventive Storytelling:** His intimate understanding of texts allowed him to create memorable, moody interpretations of fairy tales and legends
- **Lasting Influence:** His distinctive style—especially trees with whimsical faces and shadow-laden compositions—has influenced modern fantasy illustrators like Brian Froud and inspired visual storytelling across media



### **Try an Arthur Rackham–inspired illustration**

**Choose a story:** Think fairy tales, myths, or mysterious scenes.

**Light pencil layout:** Sketch twisted trees, characters, and dramatic composition.

**Ink with flair:** Use dark, flowing ink lines to define form and mood.

**Wash with transparent colour:** Apply muted browns, greys, and sepias lightly.

**Add depth:** Re-ink key parts for contrast; explore silhouette shapes.

**Play with light and shadow:** Let shadows tell half the story.

