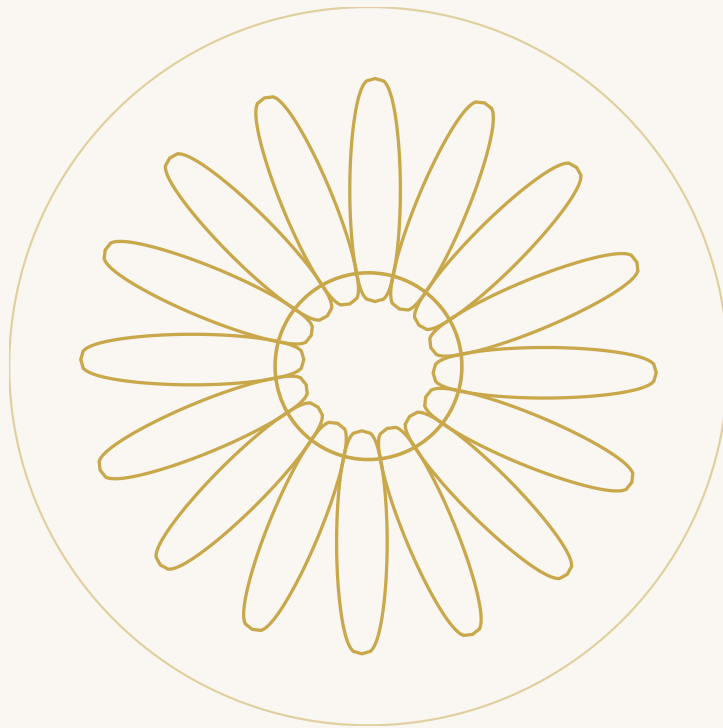


A Garden of Words

One flower. One class. One message worth keeping.



A whole-class collaborative artwork for Foundation to Year 6. Every child writes one message on one petal. Together the petals become a single flower, large enough to fill a wall and personal enough to keep.

FREE DOWNLOAD

Aligned to the Australian Curriculum v9.0 · Includes stimulus works and a SEEU™ looking sequence

How it works

A class card usually means one child's handwriting and twenty-five signatures. This turns the same twenty minutes into an artwork, a piece of real writing, and a lesson in how images carry meaning.

OCCASIONS IT SUITS

A teacher on extended leave or recovering from surgery. A staff farewell or retirement. A thank you to a volunteer, librarian, groundsperson or teacher aide. A get well card for a classmate. A welcome for a new student. Harmony Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, a grandparents' morning tea.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- A4 paper or light card in a choice of colours, plus white paper for comparing colour with black, white and grey
- One sheet of A2 card in a strong contrasting colour. Royal blue works beautifully against fluoro
- Scissors, glue sticks, lead pencils, fine black markers
- Optional: adhesive gems for a border, ribbon for the tag

PRINTING

- Petals, pages 7 to 11. Seven per sheet. Use up to 29 petals per flower. Make two flowers for a larger class.
- **Page 11 is unprompted** so you can write your own sentence starter, or leave the writing open
- **Centre, page 12**, on yellow or lime. **Stem and leaves, page 13**, on green
- **Letters, pages 14 and 15**, on white or yellow. A full alphabet, so you can spell any message
- Print everything at 100%. Do not select "fit to page"

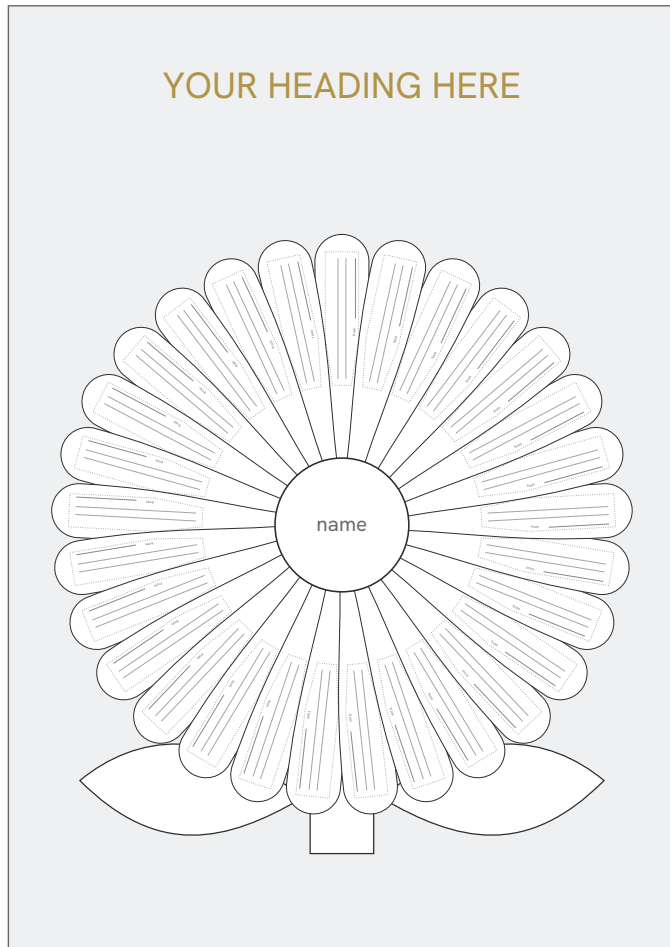
LESSON SEQUENCE, ABOUT 45 MINUTES

1. Look first, 10 minutes. Use the four SEEU™ filters on page 4 with one stimulus work on page 5. Invite every child to notice, share and explain an idea. Ask what a flower might communicate in this context.
2. Talk, 5 minutes. Who is our flower for? What do we want to communicate? Which petal colour could express that mood or feeling, and why? Share ideas before writing.
3. Draft, 10 minutes. Write in pencil inside the dotted writing area. Keep the plain edges clear.
4. **Trace, 5 minutes.** Over the pencil in black marker so the writing reads from a distance. This is the step most often skipped and most worth keeping
5. **Sign.** Every child writes their own name on the line at the wide end
6. Photograph the petals before assembly. Include children only where school consent and privacy procedures allow.
7. **Assemble** using page 3, or hand assembly to a small group at lunchtime

Differentiation. Children who find writing difficult can draw their idea and dictate the sentence to an adult or a buddy, who scribes it faintly for tracing. Early finishers move to the booklet page, the heading letters, or the stem. In a composite class, older students can scribe for younger ones, which is worth more to both than another worksheet.

Jobs beyond the petals. Four children on heading letters, two on the stem, two on the leaves, two on the centre, one or two on the tag. Nobody sits and watches.

Putting it together



A2 card, 420 x 594 mm, shown at 21%. All 29 protected writing areas remain visible. The flower is 366 mm across.

1. On A2 card, mark the centre of the flower 210 mm across and 267 mm up from the bottom. Its widest tips will sit 27 mm from the side edges.
2. Cut along the solid outlines, keeping the small glue tabs attached. The dotted line marks the writing area. Do not cut it.
3. Write the message and name inside that dotted area. Leave the plain shoulders and narrow end free of writing.
4. Arrange all petals without glue. Space the tips evenly around the centre. The inner ends of the tabs sit about 13 mm from the centre point.
5. Overlap only the plain edges. Check every dotted writing area is visible before gluing. Do not bunch petals together.
6. Glue the tabs in place. Add the stem and leaves, then cover the tabs and joins with the centre circle from page 12.
7. Add the heading letters and the tag. Read each message once more to check nothing has been covered.

KEEP THE MESSAGE CLEAR

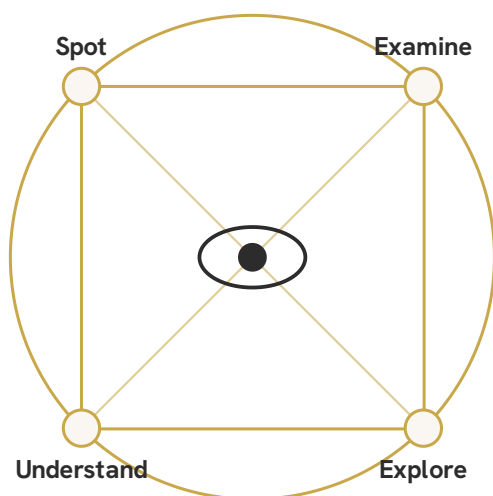
Each petal has a separate 20 mm glue tab and a protected writing area. The plain shoulders may overlap. The dotted area must stay visible.

Class size. Use up to 29 evenly spaced petals per flower. For 30 or more children, make two flowers. Keep the templates at full size for smaller classes.

No A2 card? Join two A3 sheets along their long edges, with tape on the back.

The SEEU™ Method in ten minutes

SEEU™ is four filters, not four steps. Children move between them freely. Understanding something often sends you back to spot what you missed.



Geometry after Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, c. 1490.

THE FLOWER AS A SYMBOL

A flower can be used to communicate care, gratitude, growth, remembrance or belonging. Ask: "What mood or feeling do you want your petal to communicate? Which colour would you choose, and why? What would happen if our flower had no colour, only black, white and grey? Would its mood or message change?" Invite different interpretations and ask students to explain how colour, shape and words contribute to the flower's message.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Make it clear that everyone can engage with art. Begin with students' observations, allow time to think or talk with a partner, and ask what they can see that supports their idea. Introduce vocabulary alongside their ideas, so the words help them explain what they see.

Acknowledge thoughtful contributions and invite students to reconsider: "Has someone else's idea helped you notice something new?"

S Spot

Slow down and notice before deciding what it means.

What do you notice first? What almost escaped you? How many flowers can you count? What colours are here, and which colour is missing?

E Examine

Every image is built from choices. Nothing arrives by accident.

How was this made, and what with? Are the flowers fresh, or drooping? Why might the artist have chosen that moment? What has been left out?

E Explore

Images belong somewhere. Where you meet one changes what it says.

Where would you see this? Who made it, and who was it for? Was it a gift? Where do we see flowers in our own lives, and what are they usually saying?

U Understand

Meaning is made between the image, its context and the viewer.

What is this flower really saying? If we made one, what would we want ours to say, and who would we want to say it to?

WORDS FOR TALKING ABOUT ART

Symbol: something that stands for an idea.

Symbolism: using symbols to communicate meaning.

Communicate: share an idea or feeling.

Context: the setting, occasion or circumstances.

Interpretation: a meaning you explain using what you notice and learn.

Try: "I think this flower suggests ... because ..."

Works, stories and poems

Choose one work for the looking sequence. Three are offered here, each carrying a different idea about what flowers do.

ARTWORKS

Vincent van Gogh, Sunflowers, 1888

The National Gallery, London

Van Gogh painted his sunflowers to decorate a bedroom for a friend who was coming to stay. They were made as a sign of welcome and friendship, which is precisely what your class flower is for. Ask children why he chose yellow, and why some of the flowers are past their best.

nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/vincent-van-gogh-sunflowers

Henri Matisse, The Snail, 1953

Tate, London

When illness stopped Matisse painting, he began cutting shapes from painted paper with scissors, often from his bed. He called it drawing with scissors. Children using scissors and coloured paper are working in the same way he did, which is worth telling them.

tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/henri-matisse-cut-outs

Emily Kam Kngwarray, Anmatyerr people, Yam awely, 1995

National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra

Kngwarray painted the plants, seeds and seedpods of her Country, Alhalker, and the markings of awely, women's ceremony. Not a picture of a flower, a record of knowledge and belonging. Use the Gallery's own education material, and follow your school's protocols and local advice when teaching First Nations content.

nga.gov.au/exhibitions/emily-kam-kngwarray

STORIES AND POEMS

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge

Mem Fox, illustrated by Julie Vivas, 1984

A small boy helps an elderly friend find her memories again. The best possible lead-in to writing "my favourite memory is". Australian, and short enough to read twice.

The Land of Counterpane

Robert Louis Stevenson, from *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885

A child spends the day in bed and turns the bedclothes into a landscape. Useful when the card is for somebody unwell, because it puts the children inside that experience instead of feeling sorry from a distance. Public domain, available through Project Gutenberg.

The Dot

Peter H. Reynolds, 2003

For the child who says they cannot draw or cannot write. Read it before the lesson rather than during.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie

May Gibbs, 1918

Australian bush flowers as characters. Pairs well with a walk around the school grounds to look at what is actually flowering before anyone draws a generic daisy.

A note on sources. Links were correct at the time of publication. Gallery pages move. If one fails, search the artist and title on the gallery's own site rather than an image aggregator, so children see the work with its proper credit line.

Australian Curriculum v9.0

This activity sits across two learning areas. The making and the looking are Visual Arts. The message on the petal is a short text written for a real, named audience, which is the Creating texts sub-strand of English.

THE ARTS, VISUAL ARTS

FOUNDATION

AC9AVAFE01 explore how and why the arts are important for people and communities

AC9AVAFD01 use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas

AC9AVAFD01 create arts works that communicate ideas

AC9AVAFP01 share their arts works with audiences

YEARS 1 AND 2

AC9AVA2E01 explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts

AC9AVA2D01 experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials

AC9AVA2C01 use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks

AC9AVA2P01 share artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings

YEARS 3 AND 4

AC9AVA4E01 explore where, why and how visual arts are created and/or presented across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts

AC9AVA4D01 experiment with a range of ways to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials

AC9AVA4C01 use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

AC9AVA4P01 share and/or display artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings

YEARS 5 AND 6

AC9AVA6E01 explore ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in visual arts across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts

AC9AVA6C01 use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

AC9AVA6P01 select and present documentation of visual arts practice, and display artworks in informal and/or formal settings

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ENGLISH, LITERACY, CREATING TEXTS

FOUNDATION

AC9EFLY06 create and participate in shared editing of short written texts to record and report ideas and events using some learnt vocabulary, basic sentence boundary punctuation and spelling some consonant-vowel-consonant words correctly

YEAR 1

AC9E1LY06 create and re-read to edit short written and/or multimodal texts to report on a topic, express an opinion or recount a real or imagined event, using grammatically correct simple sentences, some topic-specific vocabulary, sentence boundary punctuation and correct spelling of some one- and two-syllable words

YEAR 2

AC9E2LY06 create and edit short imaginative, informative and persuasive written and/or multimodal texts for familiar audiences, using text structure appropriate to purpose, simple and compound sentences, noun groups and verb groups, topic-specific vocabulary, simple punctuation and common two-syllable words

YEAR 3

AC9E3LY06 plan, create, edit and publish imaginative, informative and persuasive written and multimodal texts, using visual features, appropriate form and layout, with ideas grouped in simple paragraphs, mostly correct tense, topic-specific vocabulary and correct spelling of most high-frequency and phonetically regular words

YEAR 4

AC9E4LY06 plan, create, edit and publish written and multimodal imaginative, informative and persuasive texts, using visual features, relevant linked ideas, complex sentences, appropriate tense, synonyms and antonyms, correct spelling of multisyllabic words and simple punctuation

First Nations content. The Kngwarray resource can support relevant First Nations content descriptions when explicitly taught. Check your year-level requirements and use your school's cultural protocols and local community advice.

General capabilities. The task draws on Personal and Social capability, particularly recognising and expressing emotions and understanding relationships, and on Literacy and Critical and Creative Thinking through the SEEU™ sequence.

Write inside the dotted area. Overlap only the plain edges. Cut the solid outline.

GLUE

Thank you for ...

from

GLUE

I love it when you ...

from

GLUE

You taught me ...

from

GLUE

My favourite memory is ...

from

GLUE

I hope you ...

from

GLUE

The best thing about our class is ...

from

GLUE

I will remember ...

from

Write inside the dotted area. Overlap only the plain edges. Cut the solid outline.

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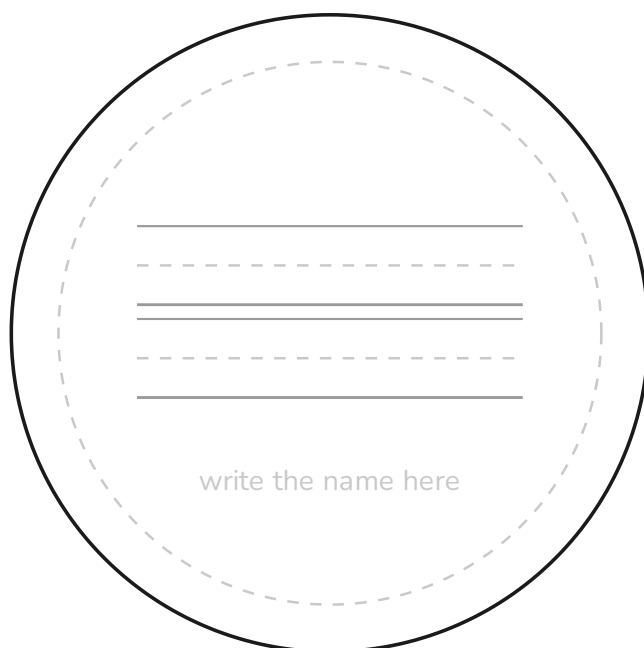
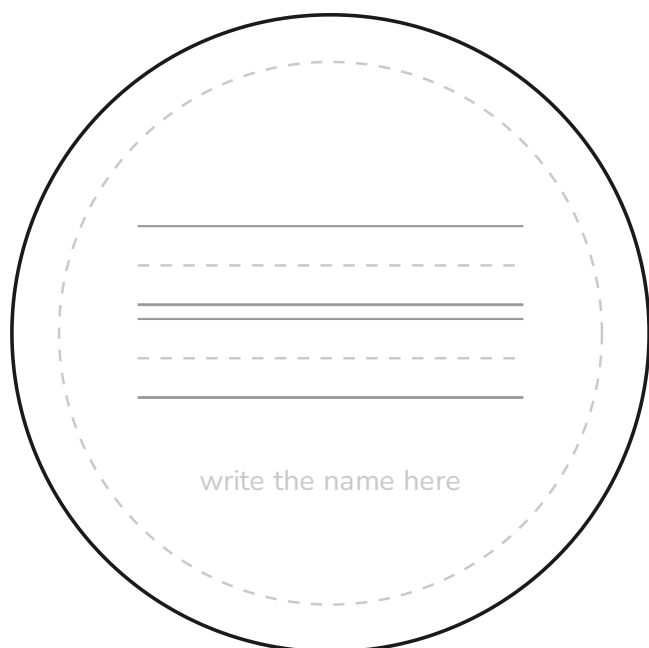
GLUE

from

THE CENTRE

Cut one, keep one spare

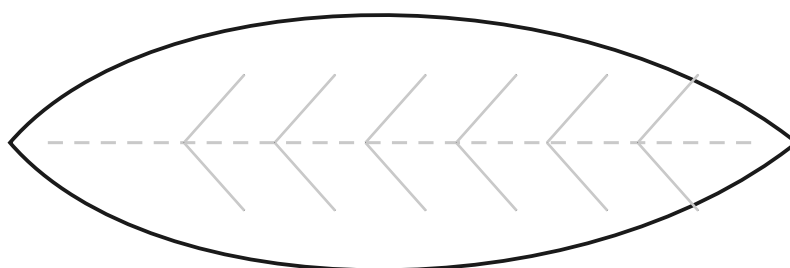
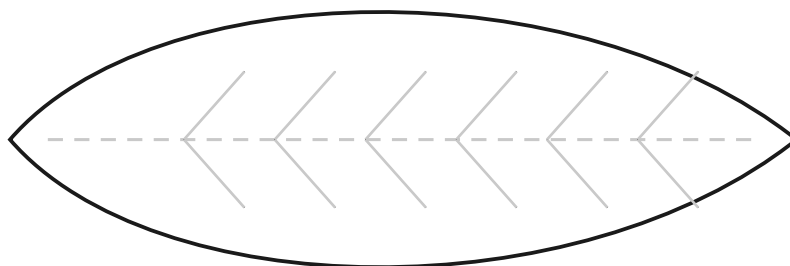
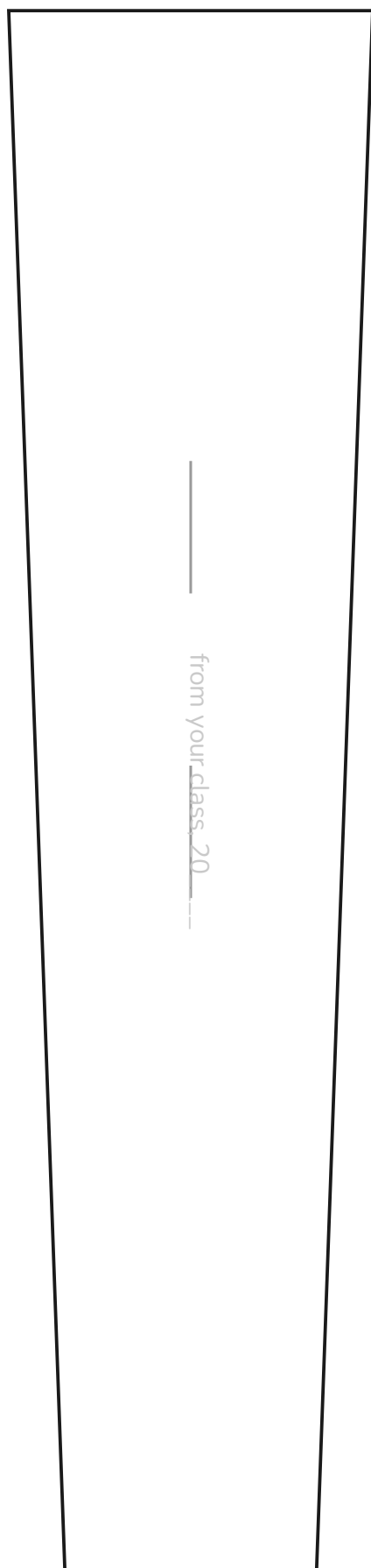
Print on yellow or lime. The name of the person the flower is for goes here, on the dotted thirds, in black marker. Two children can letter and colour these while the rest of the class writes. The dotted ring is a guide only, do not cut along it.



Tip. Write the name in black marker first, then colour around it. Colouring first makes the marker bleed and the name hard to read from across a room. If the name is long, use the top line for the title and the lower line for the name.

STEM AND LEAVES

Print on green



The stem. A child letters the sender line in black marker over the faint guide, for example "from your Year 2 class, 2026". Cut the solid outline only. The stem is longer than the gap beneath the flower on purpose, so slide the wide end up under the centre circle and the join disappears.

The leaves. The dashed veins are colouring guides, not cut lines. One leaf either side of the stem, angled slightly upwards, sits best.

HEADING LETTERS

Alphabet sheet 1 of 2

A full alphabet, so you can spell whatever your class needs: GET WELL SOON, THANK YOU, WE WILL MISS YOU, WELCOME BACK, HAPPY RETIREMENT. Children colour each letter, then cut around the outside of the outline. The dashed box is a spacing guide only. Print a second copy for repeated letters.

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

HEADING LETTERS

Alphabet sheet 2 of 2

Letters at this size read clearly from across a room. If you would rather hand-letter the heading yourself in black marker, skip both alphabet sheets and give those children the stem, the leaves and the tag instead.

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

X

Y

Z

!

?

THE MESSAGE

Tags for the finished card

Choose one. Punch the marked hole and tie it to the stem with ribbon, or glue it to the lower corner. The dashed line on the left is a fold guide if you would rather make it a small folded card and have the children sign inside.

Thank you, from all of us

Thank you for helping us learn and grow.

We noticed. Every one of us noticed.

With love from your class

A little garden of get well

We are all thinking of you.

Now it is your turn to rest, heal and grow stronger.

We cannot wait to see you again.

Love from your class

Write your own

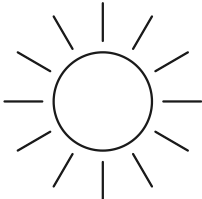
Handwriting practice lines for writing a message. Each line set consists of a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

THE COMPANION BOOKLET, PART ONE

The flower is for the wall. The booklet is for the armchair. Each child gets one page to draw on and write, which is where the longer message goes. Cut along the outer line and bind at the left edge.

A LITTLE BOOK FOR

A Pocket Full of Sunshine



Small things to make you smile,
collected by your class

20

Our class

Mount the class photograph here, 6 x 4 inch

We were all holding our flowers for you.

THE COMPANION BOOKLET, PART TWO

Photocopy this page half as many times as you have children, two pages per sheet. Bind with staples, ribbon through two punched holes, or a comb bind from the office. Put the class photograph page at the back.

Something to make you smile . . .

draw it here

from _____

Something to make you smile . . .

draw it here

from _____

Understanding Art™

Most people believe they do not know enough about art. The truth is that they have simply never been shown how to look.

Understanding Art™ is an Australian visual arts education practice founded on that idea. It publishes the SEEU™ Method, a visual literacy framework of four filters, alongside classroom resources, a Journal, and advisory work for schools and cultural organisations.

This resource is free. Use it in your classroom, share it with your staff, adapt the wording to suit your school. Please do not resell it or strip the credit line from the printed sheets.

Angela McCormack

Director, Understanding Art™

WHERE TO GO NEXT

The SEEU™ Method

The four filters in full, with a worked example. Free quick-start guide available on the site.

The Field Guide

A regular publication on visual culture, from advertising to AI images.

Resources

Classroom material for primary and secondary visual arts.

Advisory

Curriculum consultancy and professional learning for schools.

understandingart.com.au
understandingart.substack.com

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