

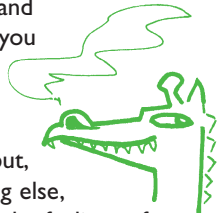


In the first of a series on drawing for the classroom, **Mark Fletcher** turns stick figures into characters.

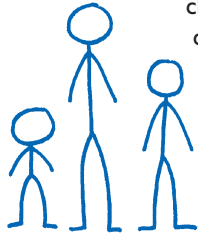
DIY Picasso

Quick and easy sketches are very useful for clarifying vocabulary, setting a context for stories, cueing games, practising pronunciation, and generally adding lively, personal touches to board work, posters and worksheets. If you want to Do-It-Yourself, here are some Golden Rules:

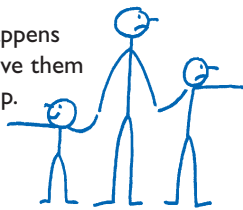
- 1 The first one is, of course, try! Your students will love your efforts – and anyway, laughter is good for class rapport!
- 2 Think minimalist. What is the very least I need to do to achieve my purpose? What is the line which makes the difference?
- 3 Work fast. Avoid anything which means turning your back on the class for more than 10 seconds. (Not as difficult as it sounds, if you remember Rule 2 and do some practice.)
- 4 Encourage the class to feed you ideas (*What's the weather like? What are they wearing?*). That way they take a lot of interest in, and some responsibility for, what finishes up on the board.
- 5 Build up a set of stock characters which you can draw quickly and well. Use them a lot – a wider range will develop naturally from them.
- 6 Avoid nostrils and teeth – unless you are drawing dragons!
- 7 Exaggeration adds humour but, as with anything else, be sensitive to the feelings of individuals in the class.
- 8 You can get a long way by scribbling. (The Polish artist Felix Topolski made a career out of it.)
- 9 We generally see what we expect to see, so make use of stereotypes.



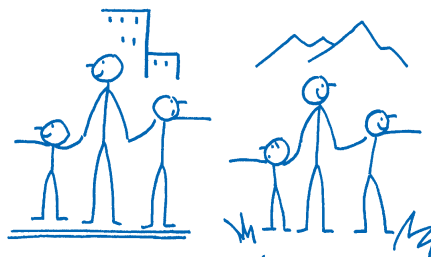
Try these practice exercises. Copy these three stick figures. The relative heights tell you that one is a small child, one an older child and one an adult. (Notice that the size of the head is the same for each, but different in proportion to the body.)



See what happens when you give them a relationship.



Ask the class to suggest where they are ... in town ... in the country ... on the moon.



Ask the class to tell you what the weather is like ... sunny ... snowy ... rainy ... day/night.



Next, I'd like to introduce you to a very useful woman, Miss Scribble. Start with a basic stick figure. Scribble over the top to add clothes, hair and accessories. Here she is ...



... on her way to the office,

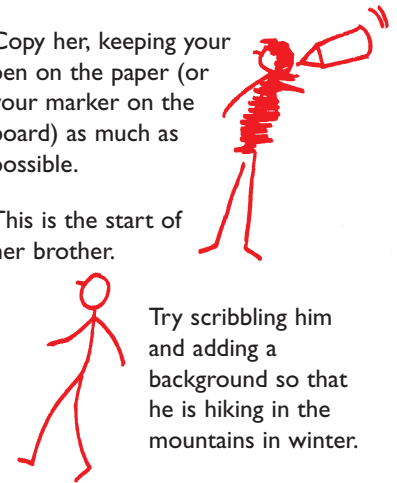
going shopping ...




and at a ball.

Copy her, keeping your pen on the paper (or your marker on the board) as much as possible.

This is the start of her brother.



Try scribbling him and adding a background so that he is hiking in the mountains in winter.

This series won't help you paint the Sistine Chapel, but it will teach you some simple tricks of the trade and, I hope, encourage anyone who has ever said 'I can't draw' to have another go. 



Mark Fletcher is academic director of English Experience in Folkestone, Kent, and illustrates as well as writes their range of Brain-friendly® photocopiable materials. He is a DTEFLA assessor. Mark's new book, *Teaching for Success*, is reviewed on page 51.

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