



## SHARING STORIES: Children's Book Illustrators



# VICTORIAN ENGLAND: THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



## WHAT WE LEARNED:

- We learned how Victoria and Albert's growing family changed the era's ideas about childhood. Rather than looking at children as "adults in waiting" people began to view childhood as a special time of nurturing and flourishing.
- Because of these changing attitudes writers began to focus on creating imaginative tales specifically for children.
- Of course, such stories needed pictures, so we explored three of the era's groundbreaking illustrators—John Tenniel, Beatrix Potter, and Randolph Caldecott.

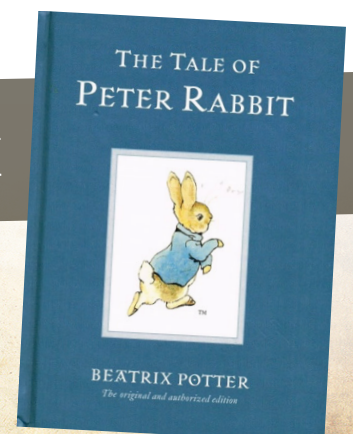
## ART ACTIVITY: Beatrix Potter Watercolors



Our imaginations soared into the world of Victorian Illustrations today! Your child was introduced to literary and artistic giants including the likes of Beatrix Potter, Lewis Carroll, and John Tenniel. To culminate our time together, we created watercolor paintings based on the art from Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*. The children chose one of her classic illustrations and recreated it by transferring the image and painting it in watercolors. They were challenged to not only capture the details of the original artwork, but also to use color mixing theory and watercolor painting techniques. We hope you are pleased with how these paintings turned out!

## BOOK NOOK

*The Tale of Peter Rabbit*  
Written and Illustrated by Beatrix Potter





# FOR Parents

The art and personalities covered in these lessons highlight how the Victorian era's changing attitudes toward childhood launched a "Golden Age in Children's Literature." As one historian notes the innovative illustrators of this period turned "Art for the nursery into Art indeed." The lessons and activities presented are designed to inspire your child's curiosity and encourage further exploration into the wonderful world of children's book illustration.

## EXPANDING THE VIEW: Victorian Pop-Up Books

This golden age of children's literature also included 3-D books. Although pop-up formats had been used for centuries, it was not until the Victorian era that they appeared specifically for children. *Days of Delight* is a good example! Click [HERE](#) to see pictures from this 1896 book by Raphael Tuck & Sons.

Lane's *Telescopic View of The Great Exhibition* highlights another popular format in this genre. Click [HERE](#) to see pictures from this work. Notice that as you "open" the book the flat image becomes three-dimensional.

## PAPER ENGINEERING Modern Pop-Ups

Robert Sabuda has been "crowned" the king of modern Pop-Up books: He notes that, "With the ability to hold a crayon, came the discovery that I was an artist. I spent hours, days and weeks drawing, painting, cutting and gluing. My bedroom was a constant whirlwind of pencil shavings, drippy paint brushes and mounds of paper scraps. My mother's pleas of 'when are you going to clean up this mess?!' went unanswered!" But it was a trip to the dentist that sent him on the life-long adventure of becoming a "paper engineer." Click [HERE](#) to watch the Reading Rockets interview "A Trip to the Dentist," to learn more!



Following the video, click [HERE](#) to visit Robert's website and learn how to create your own simple pop-up. You can also click [HERE](#) to learn about Leonardo da Vinci's Mechanical Knight!

## A CLOSER LOOK: Arthur Rackham

Due to artists like Tenniel, Potter, and Caldecott the Victorian period became known as the "Golden Age of Children's Literature." However, it would be artists like Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) who made sure their legacy of wonder would continue into our time. Arthur Rackham was the greatest of

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## A CLOSER LOOK continued

the late Victorian children's book illustrators. His versions of *Grimms Fairy Tales*, *Rip van Winkle*, *Peter Pan*, and *Alice in Wonderland* are considered classics. Rackham died in 1939. The last book he illustrated was Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows*. "In the hands of artists like Arthur Rackham, children's books attained levels of beauty, elaboration, and quality never equaled since" (Christopher Wood). Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the artist and to see his *Alice in Wonderland* illustrations.

## CONNECTIONS AT HOME: Become a Mycologist!

Beatrix Potter loved exploring the natural world! She and her brother Bertram would take a journal on their long nature walks, filling the pages with detailed descriptions and pictures of what they discovered. Beatrix continued journaling into adulthood. These entries would create a path for Beatrix's later success not only in literature but also in science. Although her literary fame is widely known, few realize that her mycology illustrations are still highly valued among those who study natural science.

Take a moment to review Beatrix's life by watching this brief [VIDEO](#) produced by the British Council. Once you've finished, grab your journal and take a nature walk with a family member. Be sure to carefully describe and draw what you observe—insects, flowers, blades of grass, acorns, mushrooms, frogs, rabbits, mice, or whatever else suits your fancy! When you get home, study your entries then write and illustrate your own imaginative story. Be sure to share it with family and friends.

## ADDITIONAL Resources

Click on the links below to read, create, and discover more:

- [Sir John Tenniel's Alice in Wonderland](#), The Marginalian
- [The Beatrix Potter Collection](#) (20 Stories): Read to me | Audiobooks with read along pages
- [Beatrix Potter](#), The Armit Museum and Gallery Library
- [Under the Microscope](#), The Armit Museum and Gallery Library
- [Beatrix Potter Family Photos](#), Beatrix Potter Society
- [Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing](#), Scholastic
- [The Most Beautiful Pop-Up Books & Paper Engineering: A Collector's Guide](#)
- Find ALL of Beatrix Potter's books in downloadable forms [HERE](#).

Due to the changing nature of web resources, M&G strongly urges you as the parent to preview these sites before your child accesses them. The fact that these sites are available on this handout does not imply that M&G endorses their content from the standpoint of morals, philosophy, theology, or scientific hypotheses.

### M&G Educational Mission:

Through tours, events, and publications, the Museum & Gallery seeks to partner with educators in fulfilling all of the National Visual Arts Content Standards. By integrating art into the core curriculum, M&G's goals are to teach children to value the arts, to communicate through the arts, to become creative problem solvers through the inclusion of STEAM-related concepts and fully-developed STEAM units, to understand history and culture in light of the arts, to improve literary interest and understanding through visual storytelling, to critique the arts, and to develop an aesthetic awareness of the arts. Through fulfilling the mission, M&G is able to help develop citizens who have the ability to think, feel, and understand the world in which they live.

