

## **How To Make A Bird**

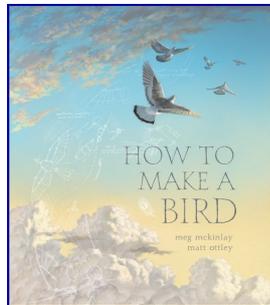
By Meg McKinlay and Illustrated by Matt Ottley

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\$25.99

Extraordinary imagery and rich language spark the reader's imagination as they enter the creative world of a young girl. From award-winning author Meg McKinlay and celebrated artist Matt Ottley comes a moving and visually stunning picture book that celebrates the transformative power of the creative process from inception through recognition to celebration and releasing into the world. We shadow the protagonist as she contemplates the blue print of an idea, collects the things that inspire from the natural world to shape a bird. And breathes life into it before letting it fly free. It shows how small things, combined with a little imagination and a steady heart, can transform into works of magic.



Teacher Notes have been based on those supplied by the publisher. A full version is available on our website. There are different questions and activities for various levels of students. The below are those aimed at **Upper Primary**.

### **Themes:**

- Creativity
- Imagination
- Letting Go

### **Discussion Questions and Activities:**

- The opening double-page spread includes an image of the preserved skeleton of a large, prehistoric-looking fish. Why do you think Matt Ottley may have decided to include this in the illustration? What does the girl have stuck to the walls of her room? What might this tell us about her?
- Do you consider *How to Make a Bird* a story? Why or why not? In what ways is the written text of the book similar to a poem?
- Is this just a book about making a bird, or is it about something more? If so, what might it represent?
- An allegory is a story which operates on a symbolic level. Do you think *How to Make a Bird* is an allegory? Why or why not? If so, what do you think the bird in the story might represent? Can you think of any other picture books you've read that could also be allegories?
- Discuss the idea of creation and ownership. Some questions to consider could include: if you create something using paper and pencils that belong to your friend, is it yours because you made it, or theirs because it was made from their things? If you write a story and someone else reads it, is it yours because you wrote it, or do they own it as the reader? Your parents created and raised you, do they own you or are you independent?
- One idea is that *How to Make a Bird* is about letting go of the things you have created. In what ways might Meg McKinlay have had to let go of her story? How do you think she feels about this?
- In what other ways might a creator have to let go of the thing they have made? You might like to consider this question in relation to specific types of creations, both physical and non-physical. Ideas could be artworks, novels, recipes, fashion designs, social systems, relationships and children.
- Working in small groups, conduct simple science experiments demonstrating the four forces of flight: lift, weight, thrust and drag. Ideas could be making paper airplanes, releasing balloons or using a hairdryer to keep light objects aloft.