

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

TO *ILLUSTORIA* ISSUE 15: BIG AND SMALL



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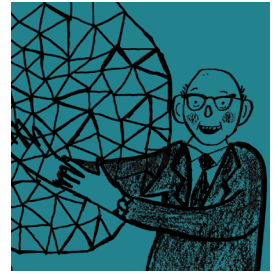
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We want to hear from you!
For questions and comments, contact: claire@illustroria.com
For order inquiries, contact: danweiss@mcsweeneys.net



ISSUE 15: BIG AND SMALL

Greetings Educators and curious humans who want to plumb the depths!



Welcome to *Illustroria* Issue #15—an exploration into the far-ranging spectrum of things BIG and the tiny examination of things SMALL.

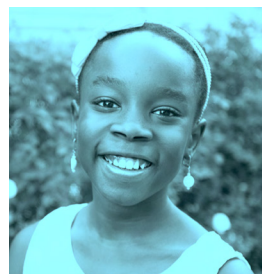
While each issue is meant to be an engaging experience on its own, the following open-ended prompts and activities can be adapted for use in the classroom as group collaborations, independent extension work, or something that gets tucked away for an interesting stand-alone sub plan, or curious reader looking for more!



* A note about our cover art, a collaboration by the duo known as Icinori. For their subject matter, the artists were inspired by scenes from the *Sinbad the Sailor*, a fictional mariner and the hero of an ancient Middle Eastern tale. In one of his adventurous voyages, Sinbad encounters the giant nest (and also giant eggs) of the gargantuan Roc bird. The surprising sizes—an egg, towering over the sailors, and bird, big enough to fly off with a person in tow—seemed a perfect fit for this theme which exploring *scale*.



"This is the kind of magazine you keep on your bookshelves with your favorite books." —Cece Bell, author of *El Deafo*



LEARNERS OF ALL AGES!

First things first: Generate a list of BIG and SMALL things.

For some of these activities, it might be useful to brainstorm a list of things that are big and things that are small as a class. This may seem like an activity better for younger students, but this is a quick and easy activity that will prime brains of all ages for creativity. The older the students, the more varied your list might be. A brainstormed class list might include things like this:

<i>Big</i>	<i>Small</i>
<i>Elephant</i>	<i>Ant</i>
<i>Whale</i>	<i>Pebble</i>
<i>Building</i>	<i>LEGO bricks</i>
<i>Jupiter</i>	<i>Electrons</i>
<i>Infinity</i>	<i>Buttons</i>
<i>Kanye's ego</i>	<i>Earring backs</i>

A class-generated list can be used to scaffold some of the following activities.

YOUNGER LEARNERS

(see page 5 for older learners)

SMALL

“From Us to You” page

Discussion or Writing Activity

Not all discussion questions need to be practical! Sometimes, an especially absurd question can yield delightful results. When there are clearly no “right” answers to a prompt, students feel a little more empowered to take chances in their responses. Here’s one such prompt:

- *What thing would you most like to shrink to the size of your hand, if you could?*

You can stack on several follow-up questions. The simplest and most useful would be to add “explain why” to the prompt. Other questions to consider:

- *How would the world be different if your shrunken thing was available?*
- *What would be some benefits of having a thing this small?*
- *What could go wrong?*
- *What are some very tiny things that you’d like to enlarge to the size of your hand?*

Page 8

The Art of Yayoi Kusama

Art Activity

What ordinary object in your life would become more exciting if it was covered in polka dots? Create a drawing

of something you see every day, then add bright or neon colors with large dots all over the surface. How might cars, fire hydrants, telephone poles—even dogs, cats and people—look?

Page 22-23

Creating Calligrams

Art and Writing Activity

Cut out the animal shape from colored paper. Draw lines across the middle. Write the story, then add details on the face of the creature. The story could also be nonfiction, such as facts about the habits or habitat of the animal researched.

Page 26

Haiku, Small Poems About Big Things

Writing Activity

Try writing a lune: a simpler, more free-style version of haiku. The writer of a lune does not have to count syllables. The first line is 3 words, the second line is 5 words, and the third line is 3 words. And, even better, a lune can be about absolutely anything! (Referring to the class “Big/Small” list can be helpful.)

Page 29

On Our Desk: featured art technique, Frottage

Art Activity

Make your own rubbings. Take some thin paper or printer paper outside. Find a few surfaces to rub onto the paper, and label the source on each. Take a bigger page and try to rub a sample of all the surfaces onto that same page. Then take another pile of papers around indoors, try floor panels, blinds, shoe soles, tables, baskets, etc. Create a final illustration by cutting shapes out of the rubbing samples and glueing that onto a final page. Layer marker or colored pencil on top of the texture. Not sure what the subject matter should be? Try creating silhouettes of animals that would have interesting textures on their surface, like dinosaurs, birds, or fish.

Page 33

The Noisy Neighborhood spread

Writing Activities

Pick any two characters from different parts of the scene and tell a story about what’s happening.

- *What events led up to this moment, and what do you think happens next?*
- *What might a newspaper reporter say to describe the events of this scene?*
- *What is the title of the article that gets printed in the paper?*

Art Activity

Have students create their own Noisy Neighborhood! Incorporate collage—have a variety of magazines with people, animals, and buildings available. Once your students have constructed their neighborhoods, have them tell stories aloud about all the different things happening within.

BIG

Page 6

Sentence Expando Machine

Use this to take simple sentences and make them more descriptive. One example sentence can be written on the board, while students create their own expanded versions. Or group collaborations can happen, one student writes a sentence and passes it to the next person to expand. It’s fun to read the results aloud and see how differently everyone’s mind works!

Page 12

Drawing Tips—Creating Perspectives

Art Activity

First, look at the examples (the person next to the planet and the person curled up in the cup) to introduce the

concept. Then, have students sketch their own sets of items of contrasting sizes. (Generating a list of big/small things together beforehand may help scaffold this for some kids.)

Writing Activity

After making their own drawings, have them each write a short story inspired by their drawings. For a fun twist on this, shuffle everyone's drawings into a stack, then hand them out randomly. Each person writes a brief story based on the strange perspectives they get.

Pages 20-21

Studio Visit with MiniMiam

Writing Activity

Show any or all of these photos to students and challenge them to write a story inspired by the image. Photos of tiny people interacting with food (you can find many, many more examples of this with an image search online) are great writing prompts, as the scenes generate immediate questions that can only be answered by imagination:

- *Why are those astronauts mining cantaloupe seeds?*
- *Who are those workers inflating raisins for?*
- *Are those tomatoes the size of a minivan, or are those people the size of ants?*

There are clearly no incorrect answers, and even reluctant writers often find themselves compelled to craft a narrative.

Page 25

Draw Your Own Planet

Art Activity

Use a black or blue piece of paper for the background or paint a piece of cardboard with dark colors. Cut the shape of a planet out of another piece of paper and create patterns and colors across the surface. Add geographical features like water or volcanoes, and any other creatures or beings who live there. Maybe it is filled with just one thing—a favorite plant, or animal, or food? Try ideas that are based on science or else go with very silly ones, depending on today's mood.

OLDER LEARNERS

SMALL

“From Us to You” page

Journal prompt/Discussion question

Not all discussion questions need to be practical! Sometimes, an especially absurd question can yield delightful results. When there are clearly no “right” answers to a prompt, students feel a little more empowered to take chances in their responses. Here's one such prompt:

- *What thing would you most like to shrink to the size of your hand, if you could?*

You can stack on several follow-up questions. The simplest and most useful would be to add “explain why” to the prompt. Other questions to consider:

- *How would the world be different if your shrunken thing was available?*
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Page 12

Tardigrade Tales

Writing Activity

Tiny, goofy-looking, and virtually indestructible, it's impossible to overstate how bizarre the tardigrade is. Able to withstand just about every extreme imaginable, their entire existence is alien to us. That said, they're excellent subjects for fantastical tales of anthropomorphization.

Introduce (or reintroduce) the idea of anthropomorphization. (Writing non-human characters in human-like ways.) Ask the class to give a few examples of anthropomorphized characters in stories. There are countless examples, from fairy tales (the three little pigs) to advertisements (those weird toilet paper bears) to literary classics (George Orwell's *Animal Farm*).

Then, share the text on page 12 and have students each compose a short, adventurous tale of a tardigrade team on a mission in an extreme environment.

Page 22-23

Calligrams

Research Activity

Learn more about the history of this fascinating tradition. The art of making images through the arrangement of words upon the page can be traced back many centuries. First popularized by Guillaume Apollinaire's wonderful *Calligrammes* from 1918, there are even earlier examples to be found. Most of these earliest story-pictures were found in a 9th-century manuscript known as the *Aratea*. Each page of the *Aratea* has a poem on the bottom half describing an astronomical constellation. This constellation is then beautifully drawn above the poetry, and made up of words taken from Hyginus' *Astronomica*.

*See links page for more information

Art Activity

Cut out the animal shape from colored paper. Draw lines across the middle. Write the story, then add details on the face of the creature. The story could also be nonfiction, as in facts about the habitats and habits of the animal researched. Try writing the story in cursive or with a calligraphic pen, or with a nib pen dipped in real ink. Research mythological creatures and create stories based on these.

Page 26

Haiku, Small Poems About Big Things

Writing Activity

The basic structure of a haiku: 17 syllables spread across three lines, 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second, and 5 in the third. Read some examples as a class, then have kids craft their own tiny poems about a large thing of their choosing. (Referring to the class list of "Big/Small" can be helpful.)

Page 33

The Noisy Neighborhood spread

Writing Activity

Pick four characters from different parts of the scene and create names + background stories for each. Then, come up with a plot where each character eventually crosses paths with all the others, entwining and connecting their separate lives.

Art Activity

Have students create their own Noisy Neighborhood high-rise apartment building! Incorporate collage with drawing and mixed media options. Have a variety of magazines with people, animals, and buildings available. Pick one of the window scenes involving favorite characters and draw the inside of that room—adding details that hint at how they live, who else lives there, and what goes on, regarding their work and hobbies.

On Our Desk

Featured art technique, Frottage

Writing Activity

Research the Surrealist Movement and some of the artists who were involved! A few of our favorites: Max Ernst, Leonora Carrington, Salvador Dali, Joan Miro, Remedios Varo. What were some of the other art techniques they invented? What were they hoping to accomplish with these techniques? See links page for short summaries provided by the Tate Museum of Art website, and descriptions of methods like Frottage, Grattage, collaborative drawing, and automatic writing or drawing.

Art Activity

Make your own rubbings. Take some thin paper or printer paper outside. Find ten surfaces to rub onto the paper, and label the source on each. Take a bigger page and try to rub a sample of all the surfaces onto that same page. Then take another pile of papers around indoors, try floor panels, blinds, shoe soles, tables, baskets, etc. Create a final illustration by cutting shapes out of the rubbing samples and glueing that onto a final page. Layer marker or colored pencil on top of the texture. Not sure what the subject matter should be? Try creating silhouettes of animals that would have interesting textures on their surface, like dinosaurs, birds, or fish.

BIG

Page 6

Sentence Expando Machine

Writing Activity

Use this to take simple sentences and make them more descriptive. One example sentence can be written on the board, while students create their own expanded versions. Or group collaborations can happen: one student writes a sentence and passes it to the next person to expand. It's fun to read the results aloud and see how differently everyone's mind works!

Art Activity

Using cardboard scraps and a large cardboard box, create your own Expando Machine *live performance*. Cut slots in both sides; one for sliding basic sentences into, and another for sliding the expanded sentence out of. Add control panels and other sci-fi-looking details—it could even have a robot face on the front, if you want it to have personality! Cut strips of paper with the shorter sentences and keep in a pile. Create a pile inside the 'machine' with strips of paper that have longer sentences. Cut out a hole in the back so one person can 'manually' receive slips of paper and 'export' results out the other side. Take the Sentence Expando Machine to a classroom of younger students and 'perform' the magic transformation!

Page 12

Drawing Tips: Creating Perspectives

Art Activity

First, look at the examples (the person next to the planet and the person curled up in the cup) to introduce the concept. Then, have students create a sketch where they pair two items of contrasting sizes. Add contrasting colors with paint, pencil, and markers. (Generating a list of big/small things together beforehand may help scaffold this for some kids.)

Writing Activity

After making their own drawings, have them each write a short story inspired by their drawings. For a fun twist on this, shuffle everyone's drawings into a stack, then hand them out randomly. Each person writes a brief story based on the strange perspectives they get.

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tos of tiny people interacting with food (you can find many, many more examples of this with an image search online) are great writing prompts, as the scenes generate immediate questions that can only be answered by imagination:

- *Why are those astronauts mining cantaloupe seeds?*
- *Who are those workers inflating raisins for?*
- *Are those tomatoes the size of a minivan, or are those people the size of ants?*

There are no incorrect answers; even reluctant writers can be motivated by these unusual scenarios!

LINKS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

We hope you've enjoyed this issue of Illustoria, and these accompanying activities! If you'd like to go even deeper down the rabbit hole (which is, very truthfully, one of our favorite things to do), here are some links—vetted by our staff—that people big and small are sure to find delightful, astounding, and informative (a winning combo to be sure!). ENJOY!

Chapter series: World Record for Biggest Things
(includes some links to things that didn't make the cut!)

Biggest Candy Store
<https://bubblelondon.blogspot.com/2011/11/dylans-candy-bar.html>

Biggest Slide
<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/worlds-tallest-longest-tunnel-slide/index.html>

Biggest Bicycle
<http://www.recordholders.org/en/records/didi.html>
<https://guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-rideable-bicycle>

Biggest Pizza (total surface area: 13,580.28 sq ft)
<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-pizza>
<https://giordanos.com/pizza-world-records/>

Biggest (living) Cat: A 'Liger'
<https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-living-cat>

Biggest Spider (size of dinner plate, eats birds) - 2 diff answers, depending on mass vs length
<https://guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/largest-spider>
<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-is-the-largest-spider-in-the-world.html>

Biggest Flower (Rafflesia - 3 feet wide & 15 lbs)
<https://www.loc.gov/everyday-mysteries/item/what-is-the-largest-flower-in-the-world/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafflesia_arnoldii

Chapter series: World Record for Smallest mammals
5 smallest mammals
<https://www.livescience.com/33049-smallest-mammals.html>

The Smallest and the Tallest (2 page comic by Katharina Kulenkampff)
Smallest / largest insects:
Such as the Pygmy Blue Butterfly and Scarlet Dwarf Dragonfly ~
<https://www.thoughtco.com/smallest-insects-4161295>
S the giant Rhinoceros Beetle and bird-sized Atlas Moth ~
<https://insh.world/science/earths-15-largest-insects-will-make-squirm/>

Small Talk: Factoids
Links to the tiny artworks created by these artists:
Vladimir Aniskin, recreated famous Asian landmarks on grains of rice:
<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/10/08/vladimir-aniskin-and-his-invisible-masterpieces-a67628>

Rosa de Jong creates tiny worlds inside of test tubes:

<https://www.ignant.com/2015/12/16/vertical-miniature-worlds-by-rosa-de-jong/>

Rembrandt's tiny self portrait, the size of a postcard, in 1629:

https://www.wga.hu/support/viewer_m/z.html

Salavat Fidai, tiny sculptures out of graphite on the points of pencils:

<https://www.artsynature.com/artists/micro-sculptures-pencil-carving-by-salavat-fidai/>

Anja Markiewicz, nano origami animals the size of jelly beans:

<https://designworld.com/nano-origami-extremely-small-folded-paper-sculptures-by-anja-markiewicz/>

Tiny books, popular items from the Middle Ages, due to easy travel size:

<https://www.abebooks.co.uk/books/miniature-miniaturization-tiny-prayer-bindings/small-books.shtml>

Yayoi Kusama: large art from tiny dots

More here, about the artist:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-yayoi-kusama>

Information about the interactive sculpture pictured in the photograph, Red Pumpkin:

<https://publicdelivery.org/yayoi-kusama-pumpkins/>

Magnified Lives (guest curator feature)

Microorganisms that the artists based their illustrations on:

Diatoms

<https://diatoms.org/what-are-diatoms>

Gorgeous etchings by Ernst Haeckel:

<https://www.alamy.com/ernst-haeckel-diatoms-microalgae-image245900649.html>

Tardigrades

<https://www.livescience.com/57985-tardigrade-facts.html>

Rotifers

<https://reefs.com/magazine/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-rotifers-part-i/>

Draw This: Calligrams

Enjoy this collection of images and more history, from The Public Domain Review

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/aratea-making-pictures-with-words-in-the-9th-century>

Noisy Neighborhood, center foldout spread

The world's tallest building was part of the inspiration behind this image, by Dani Labrosse

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings

On Our Desk: Frottage, a favorite art technique of the Surrealists

More detailed description:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/frottage>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/surrealism>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/cadavre-exquis-exquisite-corpse>

Big Feelings: Match the Character to the Emotion

Looking for more words to describe emotions? Check out this epic vocab list of descriptive words, spanning the spectrum from pleased to joyful, slightly frustrated to overwhelmed:

<https://www.enchantedlearning.com/wordlist/emotions.shtml>

Nonfiction comic +DIY: The gigantic art of Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen

Often the credit has historically gone to Claes, but these gigantic artworks are a result of the collaboration of both Claes and Coosje. Here's their website and catalogue of works:

<http://www.oldenburgvanbruggen.com/>

Interesting history of how their collaboration as a couple developed:

<https://ocula.com/magazine/insights/claes-oldenburg-coosje-van-bruggen-shared-history/>

Creative Adults At Work: Interview with the owner of this museum,
World's Largest Collection of World's Smallest Versions of World's Largest Things
You can experience the online version here, and learn about workshops:

<http://www.worldslargestthings.com/mobilemuseum.htm>

<http://www.kansastravel.org/worldslargestcollection.htm>

Studio Visit with Minimiam

Website of the artists, with more examples:

<https://minimiam.com/>

Interview, teen activist: Anouk Yeh

<https://www.anoukyeh.com/>

<https://www.internationalcongressofyouthvoices.com/anoukyeh>