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## Pencil's Best Story Ever by Carly Gledhill



### Learning Resource Guide for Teachers and Librarians

Suitable for ages 5+

#### Themes:

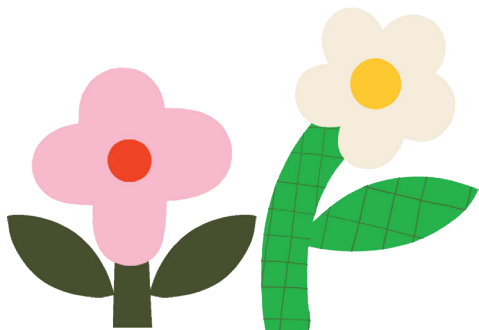
- Storytelling
- Creativity
- Teamwork and friendship

This resource guide is for *Pencil's Best Story Ever*, a playful and imaginative picture book by author and illustrator Carly Gledhill.

It is designed to support KS1 students but can be easily adapted for younger or older learners. It offers a wide variety of cross-curricular activities and discussion prompts, encouraging creativity and engagement across literacy, art, drama and social-emotional learning.

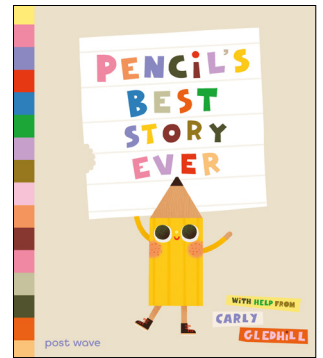
With *Pencil's Best Story Ever* as a springboard, pupils are invited to explore storytelling, character creation and collaboration – all while developing their own unique and entertaining stories!

*Pencil has written THE BEST STORY EVER and he can't wait to share it with you. But when Pencil's characters refuse to keep to the story, chaos unfolds. Can Pencil pull his story back on track so that EVERYONE can play a part and EVERYONE can enjoy it?*

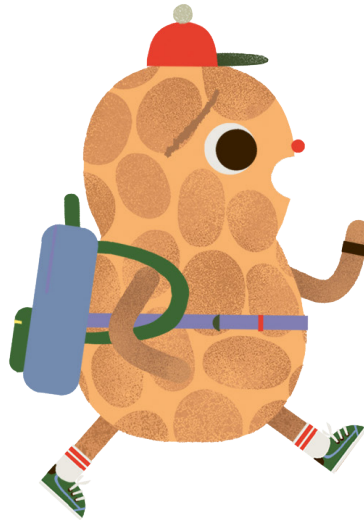


**Contents:**

Pre-reading Prompts	p 3
Discussion Questions	p 4
Activity 1: Story Fix-It	p 5
Activity 2: Character Profiles	p 6
Activity 3: A Different Point of View	p 11
Activity 4: Group Storytelling Cards	p 12
Activity 5: Story Ingredients: What Makes a GREAT Story?	p 13
Activity 6: Write Your Own “Best Story EVER!”	p 14



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With thanks to SHAPES for Schools for producing this Resource Pack.

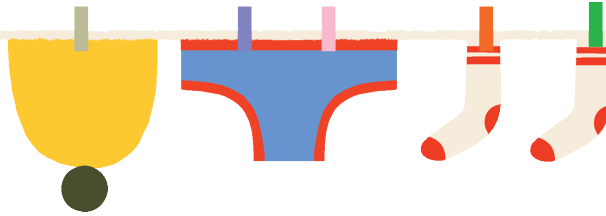


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*Pencil's Best Story Ever*

Text and Illustrations © Carly Gledhill, 2025





### 1. Making Predictions:

- Show the cover of the book. Ask students:
  - What sort of character do you think Pencil will be based on Carly Gledhill's illustration? Do you think Pencil will be serious, silly, angry or happy?
  - What do you think Pencil's best story will be about?
  - Do you think it will be a funny, scary or silly story?

### 2. The Nature of Writing:

- Discuss the process of writing – what makes it fun?  
What makes it difficult? Ask students:
  - Have you ever struggled to start a story?
  - What story have you written that you are most proud of?
  - Do you think it is possible to write 'the best story ever'?

### 3. Story Starter Challenge:

- Write the book's title on the board: *Pencil's Best Story Ever*:
- Ask students: If you were Pencil, what kind of story would you write?
- Students can:
  - Draw the front cover of their imagined story.
  - Write a one-sentence story summary.



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### 1. How does Pencil tell his story? Who does he tell it to?

Encourage children to identify the different layers of the story:

- The main story told by pencil.
- The interruptions by Pencil's characters.
- Pencil talking directly to the characters and the reader.

Can the children explain the impact of this? Does it make them laugh and why?

Do the children feel part of the story?



### 2. Who are the main characters in Pencil's story?

Ask students to keep track of the different characters as they are introduced.

Can they distinguish between the main characters and the secondary characters?

Which characters are their favourites, and why?

### 3. Why does Pencil sometimes find it hard to tell the story?

Ask students to pinpoint a moment where something unexpected happens in the story, for example when a bird steals Peanut's sock, or when Peanut admits that he's scared of the dark. Ask them to consider how Pencil responds to these events and what it tells us about the nature of storytelling, i.e. that it is not always easy or straightforward; the writer might have to change the direction of the story or edit their original ideas.

### 4. How do the characters in the story work together as a team?

Invite students to identify moments in the story where the characters work as a team.

How do the friends help each other? What do they overcome together? What does this tell us about teamwork? Do children think it's better to write a story alone or with friends? Why?

### 5. How does the story end? Is Pencil happy with it?

Encourage students to reflect on whether they enjoyed the story or not. Did it make them laugh? Who was their favourite character? At the end, Pencil prompts the characters to be part of the next story. Do children think the characters want to take Pencil's offer, or not? What might happen in Pencil's next story?



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## Activity 1: Story Fix-It

5

**Objective:** Build creativity and narrative thinking.

**Instructions:**

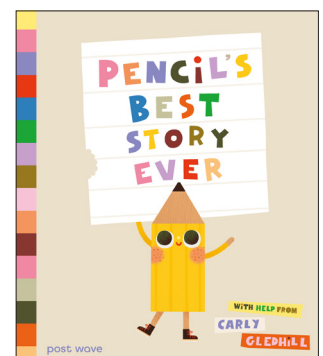
For each surprising moment in Pencil's story, ask students:

- What does Pencil choose to do?
- What would you do instead?

Students can create their own version of the story by making different choices and seeing where it takes them.



Unexpected Event	What Pencil does...	What I would do instead...
1. A bird flies away with Peanut's sock.	Pencil asks Peanut to get it back.	
2. Peanut tells Pencil he's scared of the dark.		
3. Peanut hides in the forest.		
4. Peanut runs into 'a BIG, grizzly . . . Jelly?'		
5. Bear tells Pencil he can't eat Jelly.		
6. Peanut tells Pencil he doesn't want to get 'smushed' by a giant snowball.		



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## Activity 2: Character Profile - Jelly

6

**Objective:** Deepen comprehension and empathy.

**Instructions:**

Students choose a character and complete a profile:

**What do they like?**

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**What do they dislike?**

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**What is their role in the story?**

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**How do they help (or not help)?**

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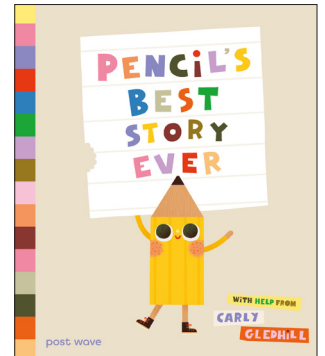
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Character:

**Jelly**



## Activity 2: Character Profile - Peanut

7

**Objective:** Deepen comprehension and empathy.

**Instructions:**

Students choose a character and complete a profile:

**What do they like?**

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**What do they dislike?**

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**What is their role in the story?**

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**How do they help (or not help)?**

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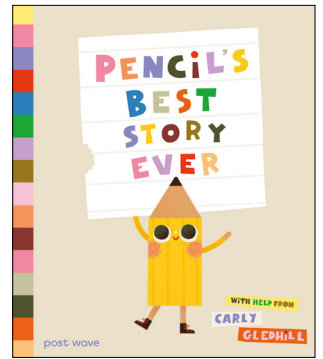
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Character:

**Peanut**





## Activity 2: Character Profiles - Bear

8

**Objective:** Deepen comprehension and empathy.

**Instructions:**

Students choose a character and complete a profile:

**What do they like?**

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**What do they dislike?**

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**What is their role in the story?**

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**How do they help (or not help)?**

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Character:

**Bear**





## Activity 2: Character Profiles - Pencil

9

**Objective:** Deepen comprehension and empathy.

**Instructions:**

Students choose a character and complete a profile:

**What do they like?**

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**What do they dislike?**

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**What is their role in the story?**

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**How do they help (or not help)?**

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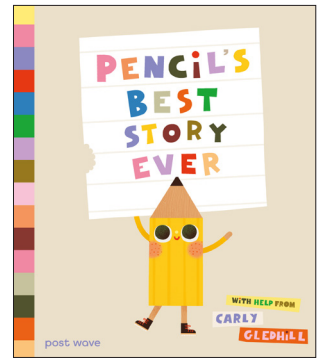
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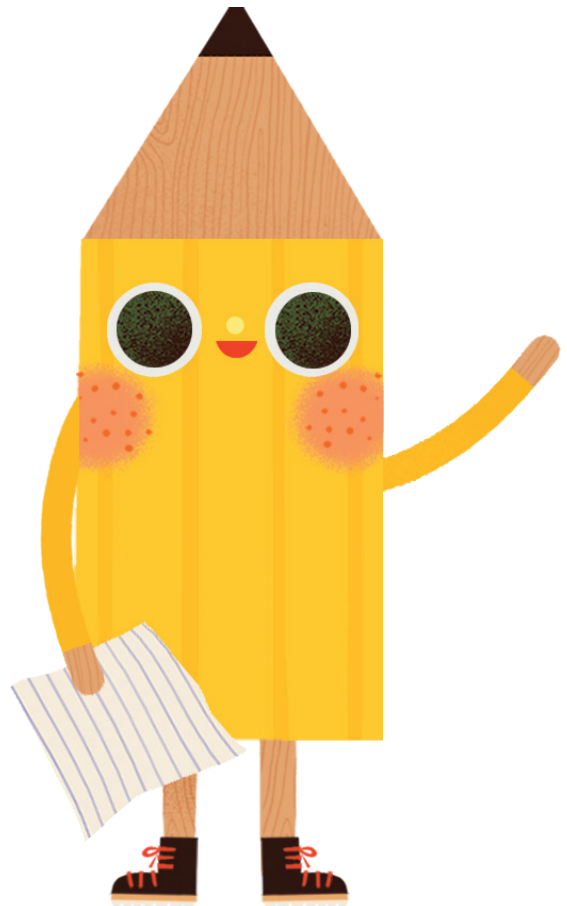
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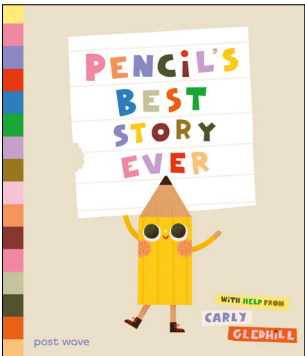
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Character:  
**Pencil**



**Objective:** Deepen comprehension and empathy.

**Instructions:**  
Students can create a new character and complete a profile.



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Character:

.....

**What do they like?**

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**What do they dislike?**

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**What is their role in the story?**

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**How do they help (or not help)?**

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### Activity 3: A Different Point of View

11

**Objective:** Practise perspective-taking and narrative voice.

**Instructions:**

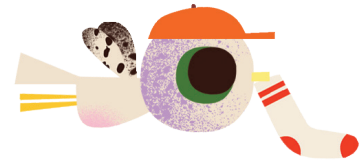
Pick a character other than Pencil. Retell a part of the story from **their** point of view.

**Options:**

- Write a diary entry
- Write it in the style of the book
- Act out a scene in groups
- Create a comic strip version of the scene

**Prompt Ideas:**

- How did Peanut *feel* when the sock was stolen?
- What was it like for Bear to meet Jelly?



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## Activity 4: Group Storytelling Cards

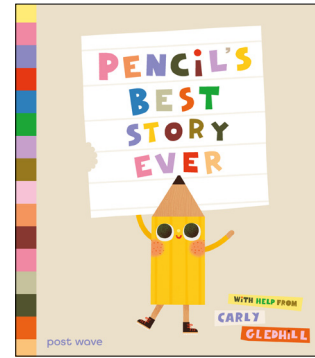
12

**Objective:** Collaborate and improvise a story as a group.

**Instructions:** Work in a small group. Cut out the challenge cards and shuffle them. Begin with:

Once upon a time, Peanut left the house to go on a BIG adventure . . .

Take turns drawing a card and continuing the story.



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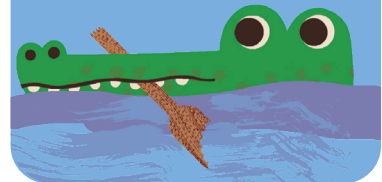
**Add a new character**



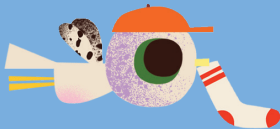
**Introduce a magical object**



**Insert a scary event**



**Include something funny**



**Add a villain**



**Add a surprise**



**Change the setting**



**Give a character a problem**



## Activity 5: Story Ingredients: What Makes a GREAT Story?

**Objective:** Analyse story structure.

### Instructions:

Make a list of “story ingredients” – the key things every great story needs. For each one, find an example from *Pencil's Best Story Ever*.

### Suggested Ingredients:

- Memorable characters
- A clear problem or challenge
- Surprising twists
- Funny or emotional moments
- A satisfying ending

### Extension:

Create a “Recipe Card” for a great story (e.g. “1 cup of adventure, a pinch of danger . . .”)



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**Objective:** Apply creative writing skills.

**Instructions:**

Now it's your turn! Write your own **Best Story EVER** using either:

- Characters from Carly Gledhill's book
- Brand-new characters you invent

Before writing, plan your ideas using a **Story Strip** template.

Students should try to include at least **three ingredients** from Activity 5. But most importantly: **have fun, be creative and don't be afraid of a few surprises!**

Beginning /  
Setting the scene

First problem  
or surprise

What goes wrong?

How it gets worse...



How the characters  
solve it

The ending



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