

# Create a talking animal

For hundreds of years, humans have told stories about animals. Some of these help us learn about domestic pets or creatures who live in the wild. Others introduce animals who talk like humans, wear clothes, have magic powers, go on picnics or drive fast cars.

## Imaginary animals

The Gruffalo, as far as scientists can tell, doesn't exist. It's a made-up animal, part warthog, part dinosaur, part bear, part who-knows-what, completely invented by the author and illustrator. At the beginning of the story, the mouse thinks he has invented the Gruffalo - but at the end of the book, he meets a real one!

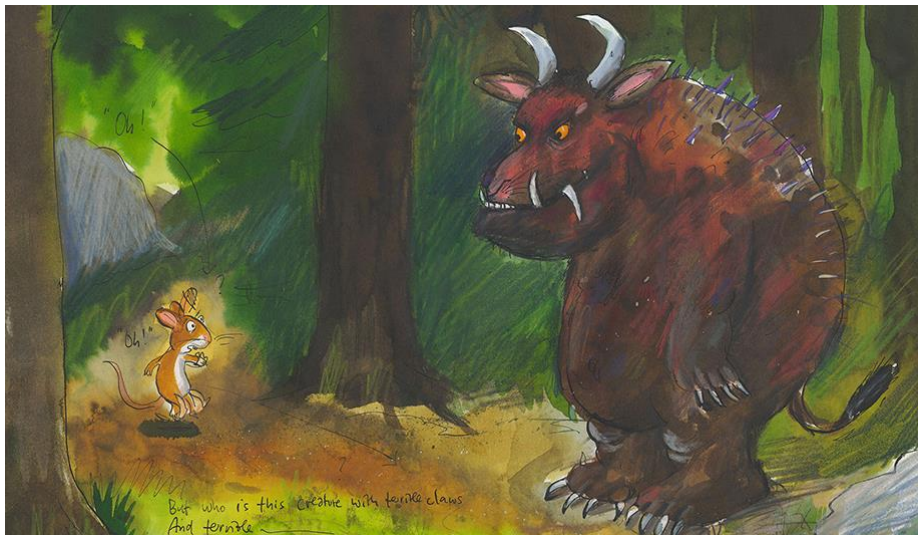
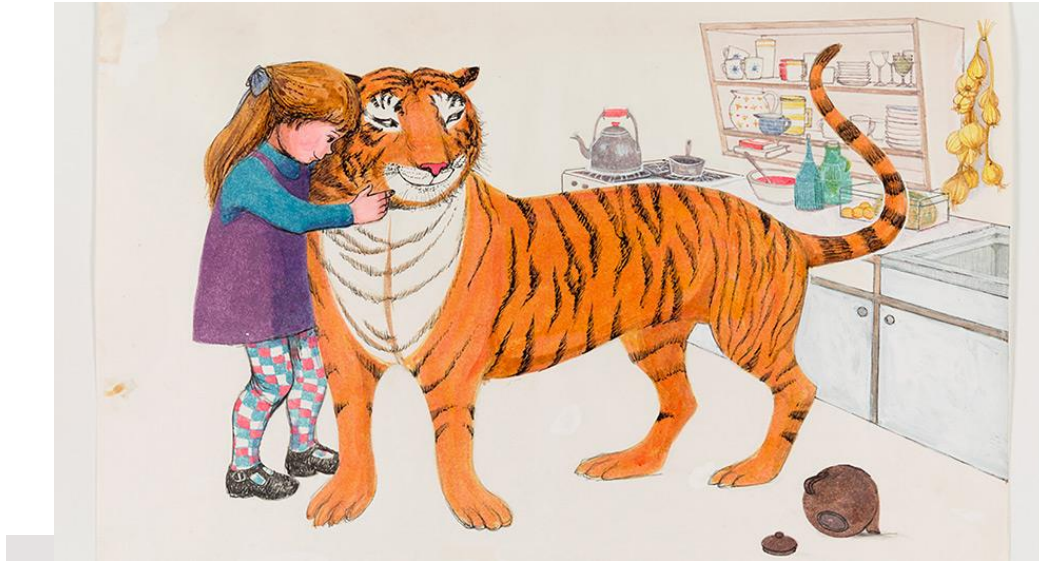


Illustration for *The Gruffalo* © Axel Scheffler 1999.



In *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*, the Tiger invites himself into Sophie's house where he promptly eats all the food in the cupboards and drinks all the water in the taps.

Have you ever met a toad who took the train and liked driving expensive cars, or a mole and a water vole that go on a boat picnic together?

Look at this medieval book, created in 1240. Can you spot anything unusual? Alongside tigers, rhinos and insects, the book includes made-up wild animals, like the unicorn.





## Make some notes to build up ideas for your animal

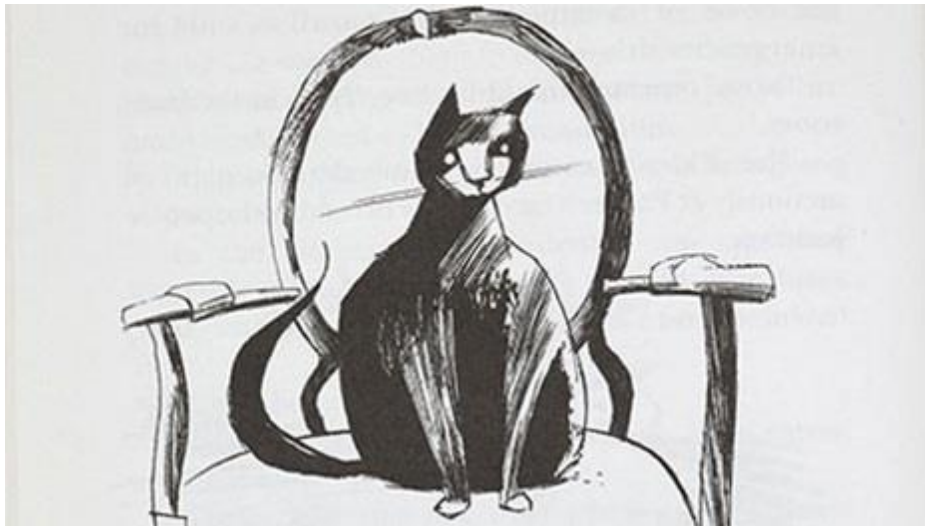
Does your creature wear clothes?



Does it talk like a human?



Does it growl, purr or bark like a house pet?



Does it roar, squeal or hiss like a jungle animal?



Where does your creature go? Who does it meet?





If your creature came to your house what would you do? Would you offer it something to eat? Would you play a game together, such as hide and seek or Monopoly? Would you read it a story or play some music? What would you and the creature talk about?



Does your creature live in a forest, in a jungle, on a moor or in a zoo? Perhaps it has a job. Does it work in a school, a supermarket, an old grey office or a library? Maybe it plays music in an orchestra or writes stories for children.

How does your creature make you feel? Is your creature terrifying, fascinating, revolting, boring or adorable? Perhaps it's a mixture of all these things.

Does your creature have special powers? Can it see into the future or read people's minds? Is it a book worm, an extraordinary poet or a brilliant chef?

The Gruffalo has purple prickles, a poisonous wart and knobbly knees. What kind of body does your creature have? How does its skin feel when you touch it? Do its physical characteristics reflect its personality?



What kind of personality does your creature have? Is it bubbly and bouncy, grumpy and scary, ridiculous and nonsensical, ridiculously knowledgeable or lonely and in need of a hug?

Now it's time to draw and write about your talking creature and let us know what it says. You could create a whole story or simply a beautiful illustration. Send your creations to our twitter page and together, we'll create a magic zoo.