

# Talking Points: Shaun Tan

How can small ideas in a sketchbook grow into something much bigger?

Shaun Tan uses his [sketchbooks](#) as a space for exploring ideas. Starting small, he works without pressure, [drawing](#) and writing down any idea that comes to mind. From there, he selects the strongest ones and gradually develops them into fully fledged stories, [graphic novels](#), and [animations](#).

Watch the videos below and discuss the questions that follow to build a deeper understanding of Shaun Tan's work.

Please Note:

This page includes links and videos from external sites, verified at publication but subject to change.

Teachers should review all content for classroom suitability.

[Report any issues](#), and check school firewall settings if videos don't play.

AGES 9-11

AGES 11-14

AGES 14-16

FREE TO ACCESS

## Shaun Tan

Shaun Tan grew up in Perth and works as an artist, writer and film-maker in Melbourne. He is best known for illustrated books that deal with social and historical subjects through dream-like imagery, widely translated throughout the world and enjoyed by readers of all ages. –[Shaun Tan](#)

See more of Shaun Tan's work on his [website](#).

## Shaun Tan's Sketchbook Work

Watch the film below to hear how Shaun approaches his early sketchbook work, and how he then develops this into more finished artwork.

Stop the video at various points so that you can have a discussion with the children to help them think through what Shaun might mean by his various working practices.

## The Arrival

Watch the trailer for 'The Arrival' by Shaun Tan.

Watch the video above to see the full animation of Shaun Tan's graphic novel.

## Questions to Ask Children

Do you like Shaun Tan's work? Why?

How do his drawings make you feel?

What kind of atmosphere did you pick up on in 'The Arrival?' How do you think he achieved this?

Do you think that Shaun Tan was successful in capturing the story without any writing or text? Why?

## This Talking Points Is Used In...

Pathway: Storytelling through drawing



[This is featured in the 'Storytelling Through Drawing' pathway](#)

**Additional Pathway: Drawing and Making Inspired by Illustrators**

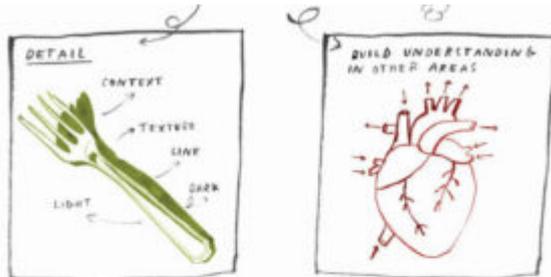


[This is featured in the 'Drawing and Making Inspired by Illustrators' pathway](#)

**using sketchbooks to make visual notes**



# Show me what you see



SHOW ME WHAT YOU SEE METHOD:

1) GUIDE SEEING

"SHOW ME..."

2) RULES



3) CHALLENGE EXPECTATIONS

4) COUNT DOWN