

## Drawing skills in Kindergarten and Pre primary

Children need to be able to control their pencil to be able to master writing. An efficient, stable pencil grasp is more effective in enabling the child to complete the finer pencil direction changes needed for writing. Many small hands find holding a pencil challenging for many reasons and teaching a child correctly at the beginning of their writing career, is far more effective than trying to address it later in their school years. Unusual pencil grasps often indicate some fine motor discrepancies.

In Kindergarten they start to develop stroke formation in several key shapes which make up the prewriting skills needed to form numbers and letters. They should be able to form:

- A vertical line (down) *from 3yrs*
- A horizontal line (sideways) *from 3yrs*
- A circle ( starting at the bottom) *from 3yrs*

They then learn to :

- Make a square by stopping and changing direction
- Make zig zags
- Make a plus sign
- Make a cross
- Draw a circle starting from the top.

These key shapes and ability for the pencil to stop and start and change direction give the child the necessary strokes to master writing.

Drawing is extremely valuable for developing a strong link between a symbol and meaning. It is very strongly correlated with writing and later literacy. This is because to activate drawing you need to think about the image of the object and all its characteristics that make it special. When we read a description in a

book about an object it also activates this particular part of the brain. When we then try to write, whether it be handwriting or on a computer, we too need these strong descriptions to articulate the characteristics. Early drawing strengthens this neural pathway and hence is a very good early way to develop literacy and also to predict good literacy. So early drawing even in this computer age is highly important. It doesn't have to be skilled just representational. If it's going to be an elephant it really needs BIG ears and a trunk. The image of the shark on the following pages is not "artistic or skilful" but it has all the elements of a shark.

Young children in kindy will start with drawing people , then houses and often next flowers or simple animals.

Children need to do two main "**thinking**" things when drawing:

1. They need to perceive the shape of the object and all the component shapes that make up the item. Most drawing is just an amalgamation of shapes.
2. They need to think about the parts of that item/object that gives it its unique character. This also involves the context of where you normally see or find it. Eg a swing is usually in a tree or a park, a cricket bat is usually with a ball, a soccer ball usually has a hexagonal pattern on it and it's how we know its not a basketball or indeed a football.

Children need to do two main "**doing**" things when drawing":

1. They need to control their pencil to make it go in the same direction and shape that they perceive. This is a pencil control skill.
2. They need to make a plan of where they will start the drawing, stop and change direction and alter the size of various parts of the object. This spatial and size control usually develops later, towards the end of kindy or in pre-primary. This planning step is often the trick and the support strategies really help the child to develop.

No one needs to be an exceptional drawer. We just must develop the capacity for our brain to manage the above so we can, not only draw but also learn to write. Writing on a computer **still requires** the same capacity from a literacy perspective, so this is highly relevant in the current curriculum.

One fantastic tip is to draw with your children and show them how many things they can draw with the simple shapes they can do. That is with the top 5 shapes; a vertical line, a horizontal line, a circle, a square and finally zigzag patterns.

It doesn't really matter what you use to draw with e.g. paints, crayons, textas, whiteboard markers, bath crayons, pencils or indeed what you draw on, e.g. paper, cardboard boxes, balloons, whiteboards etc. If your child has pencil grasp difficulties or weaker hands, a thicker tool is always going to be beneficial to support their grasp.

Children often like to use whiteboards as it is fast and fun. If it's on a vertical surface or angle it will simultaneously help their wrist stability and arches of the hand to strengthen so it's a double bonus.

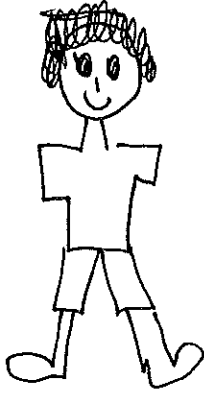
What can work to help reluctant drawers are to:

1. **Talk a child through the drawing.** "Let's draw a tree?" . Think and say out loud the basic steps like in the step by step drawing instructions for a picture that you see in the paper or kids drawing books. " What do I do first? Oh, that right it needs two long sticks for the trunk" "What next? A big leafy circle on top". This process of thinking the steps out loud teaches the child to think and plan the different parts which helps all drawing ( and indeed later writing). Its what comes naturally to good drawers.
2. **Taking Turns to complete a drawing.** This provides additional assistance as you can say," I will draw one side of the tree trunk and you can do the other", so you can model what to do. You can do the tricky bits of the drawing, "you do the round plate and I will draw the burger". For some kids you may only need to step in when they get stuck or if their interest is waning. This can work well with children with weak attention.
3. **Doing parallel drawings.** You and the child both have a sheet of paper and you draw side by side. You can think out loud and say the simple steps and you can model / show the action for the child. E.g. "I might draw the crocodile's sharp teeth going up down up down like a zig zag".
4. **Completing a half-done drawing.** You just give the child a picture with a small thing missing like one eye, or no handle on a door, or no leg. You can also complete the drawing where you have drawn one side and they need to draw the other.
5. **Tracing drawings.** This is a great way to develop more confidence and skill. It helps eye hand control; attention and they can turn their picture any colour they want. This is an exceptional strategy for learning to write name, numbers or letters.

## Examples of Drawing Supports.

### What's Missing?

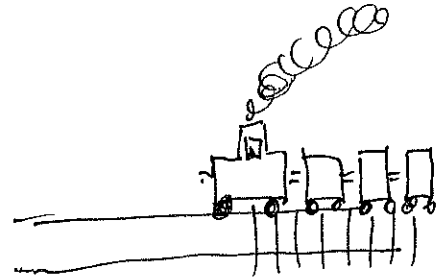
Make it funny or obvious at first? "Oh my goodness I left Dad's arms off!".



or

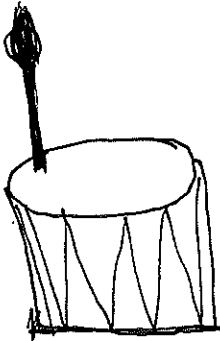


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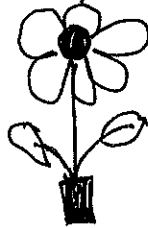


### Finish This.

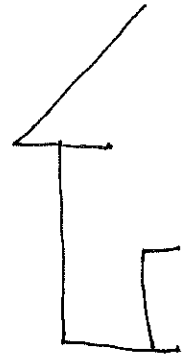
"I only put one candle on the cake but you are 4"



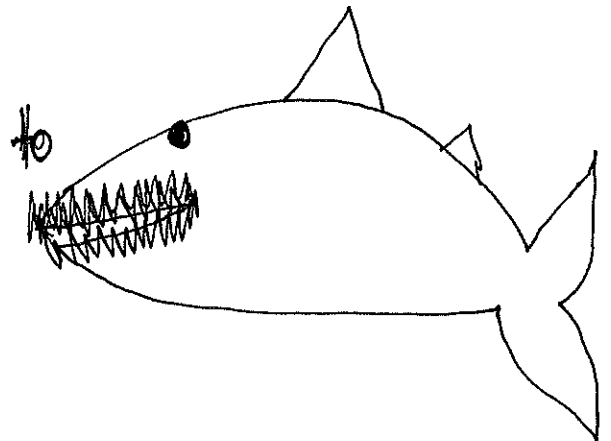
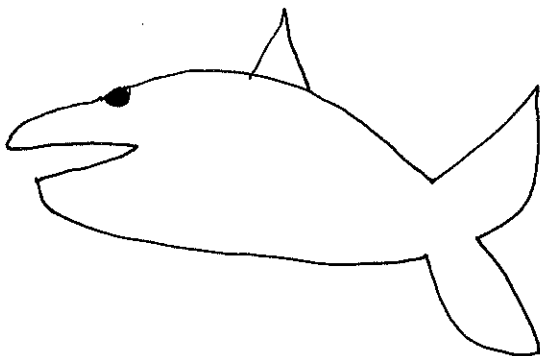
or



or



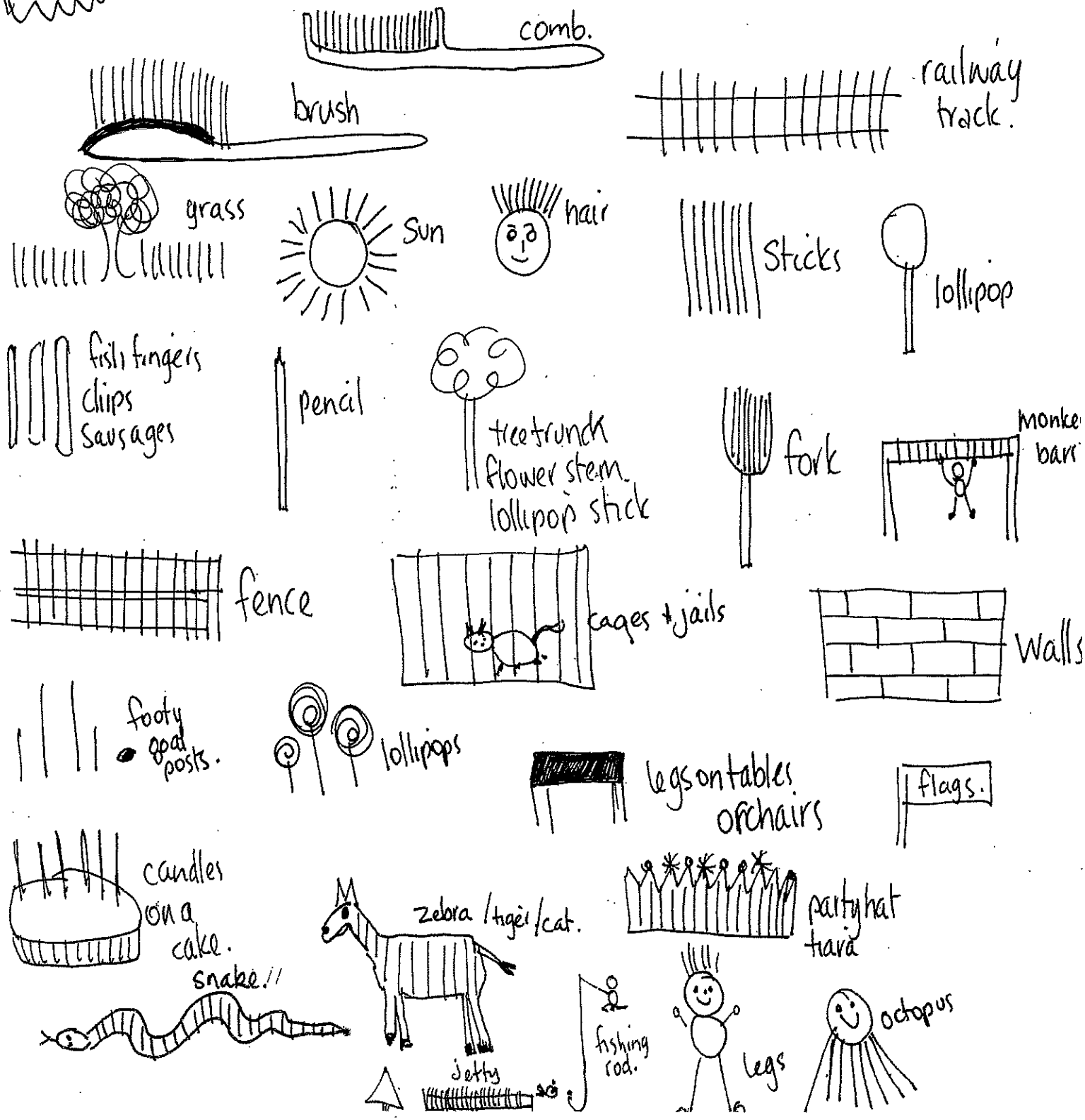
"Where are the sharks teeth?"



# What can you draw using the common pre-writing patterns that kindy children can draw?

The four main strokes that can be made in the beginning of the kindy year are the horizontal stroke, the vertical stroke, the circle and the zigzag. These can be put together in many ways to make lots of representational pictures. If your child is a reluctant drawer then try to teach them by combining these simple strokes **they too can draw** meaningful objects.

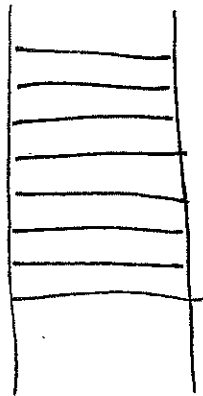
Vertical lines



# What can you draw using the common pre-writing patterns that kindy children can draw?

Horizontal lines

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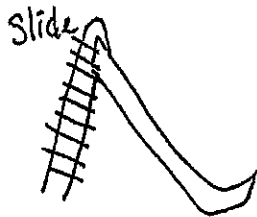
ladder



Stripes on shirts, shorts, dresses



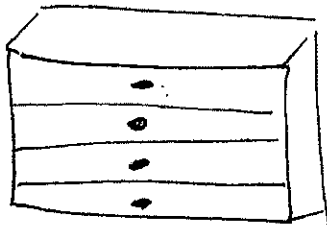
beach towels



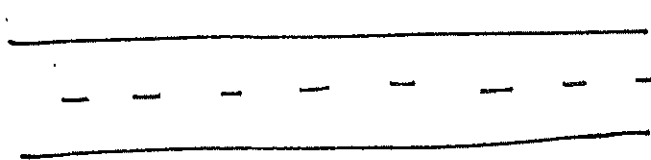
slide



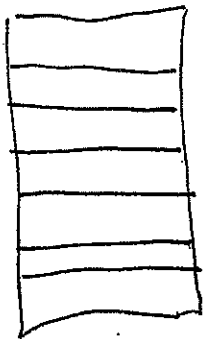
doona.



drawers cupboards



road.



Cupboard + shelves.

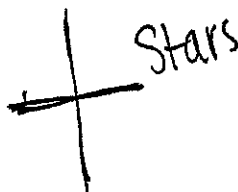


Writing paper.

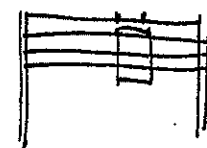
add stripes to t-shirts, shorts, dresses, curtains, fish details on pot plants fences, walls, towels birthday presents etc



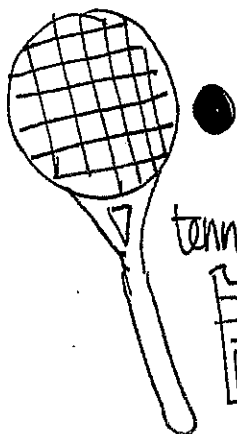
farm fences



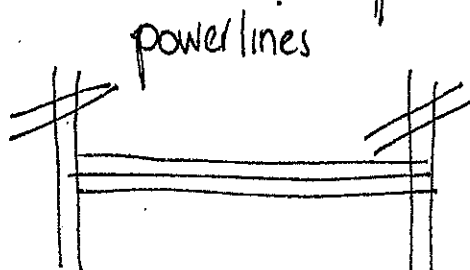
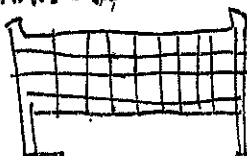
Stars



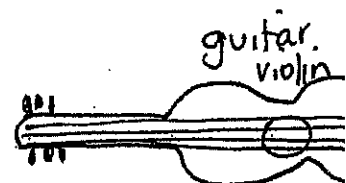
washing line



tennis ball



power lines

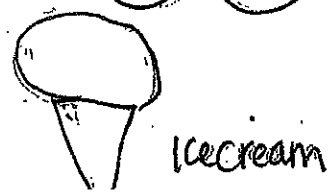
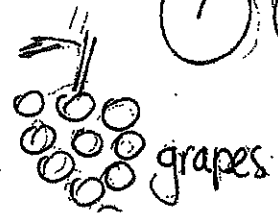
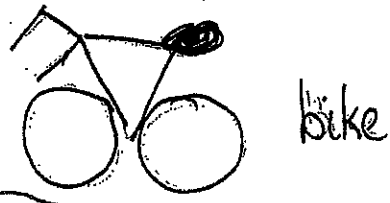
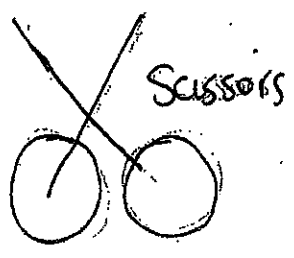
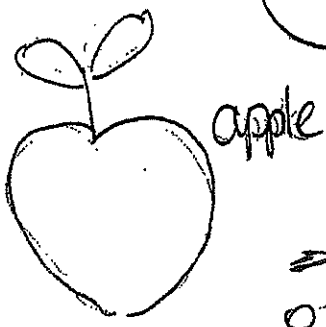
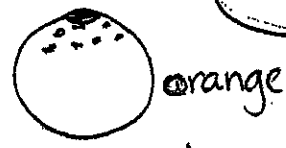
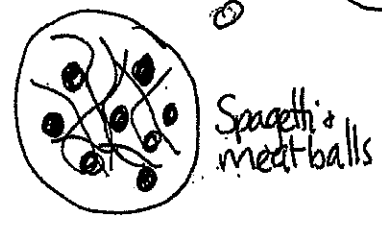
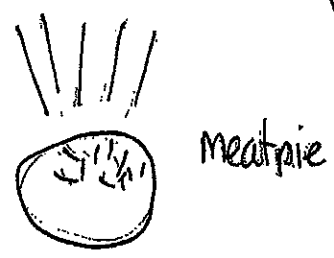
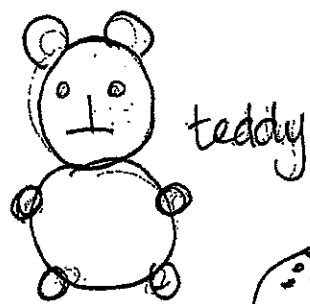
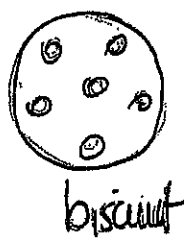
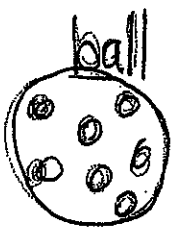
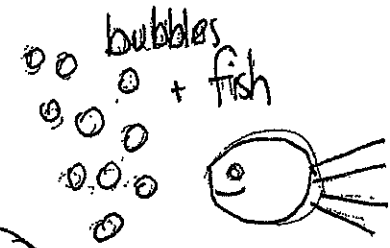
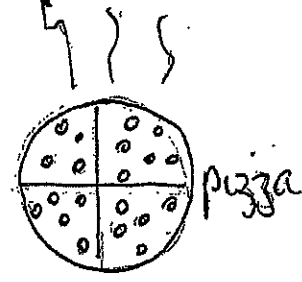
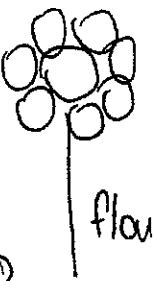
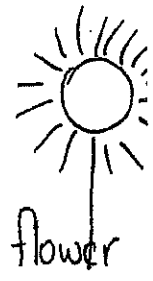
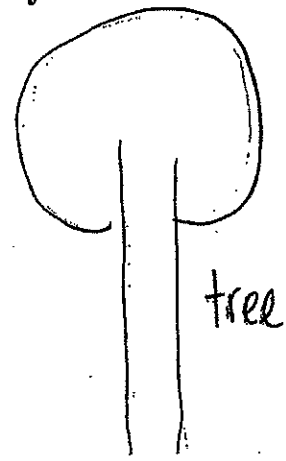
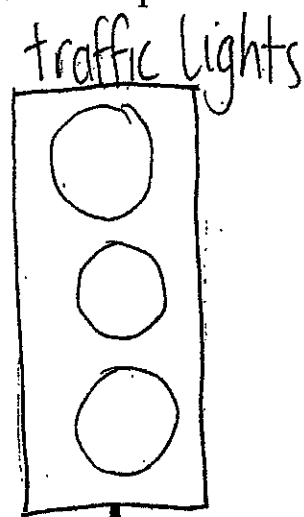
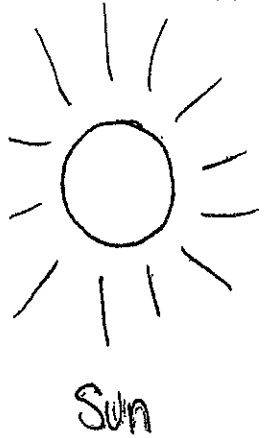


guitar violin

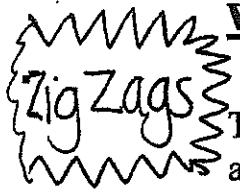
# What can you draw using the common pre-writing patterns that kindy children can draw?

## Circles

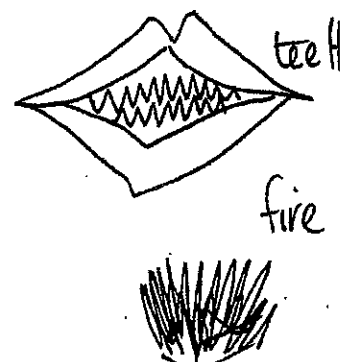
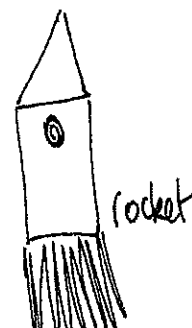
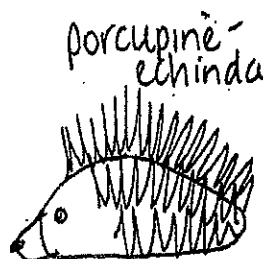
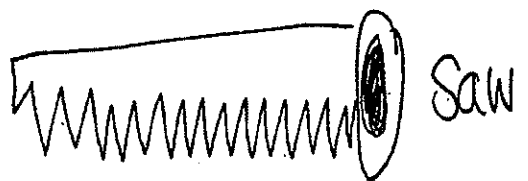
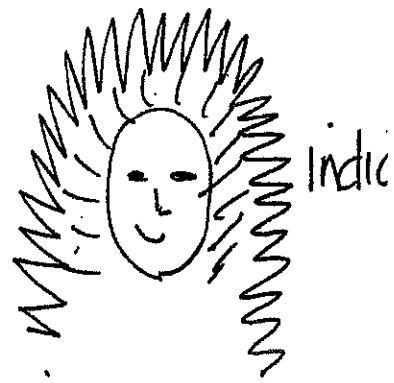
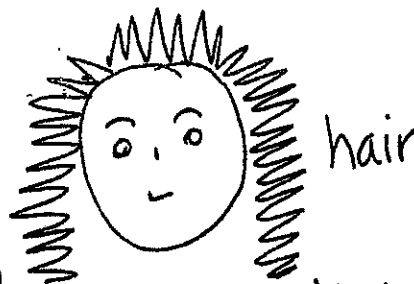
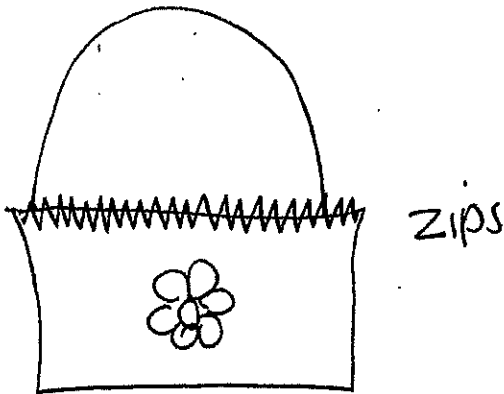
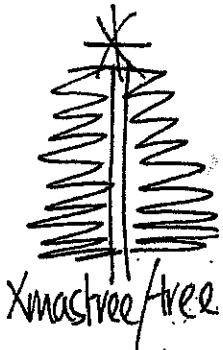
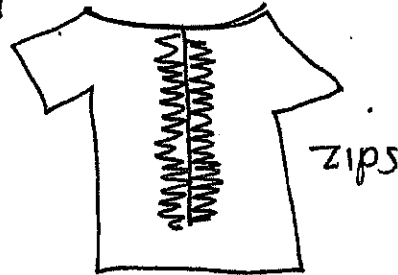
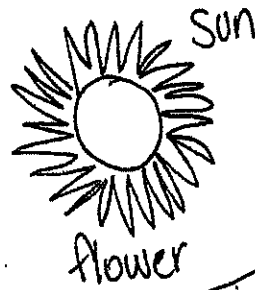
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Squares

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Windows



presents



kettle pot

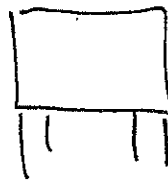


TV

Windows



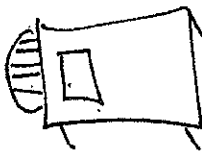
Microwave



Table



chairs



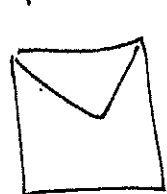
bed



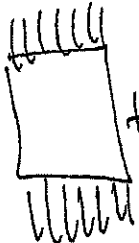
house



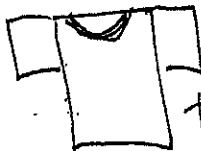
letterbox



envelope + paper



towel



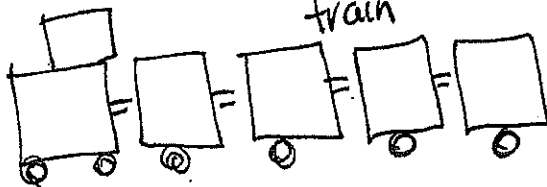
t-shirt



rocket



book



train

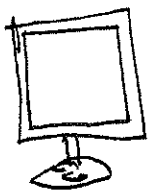


boxes



picture frame

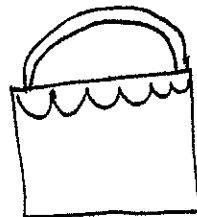
Mobile Phon



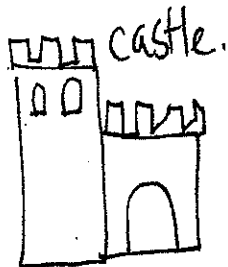
computer



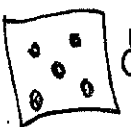
sandwich / toast with jam / vegemite



handbag



castle



dice



briefcase



lego



sandpit



bucket spade + sandcastle



watering can



pot plant



Swimm