



Notes for Teachers

WORKSHOP GUIDELINES FOR CREATING YOUR OWN CHARACTER **From the author of The Zartarbia Tales - Ana Fischel**

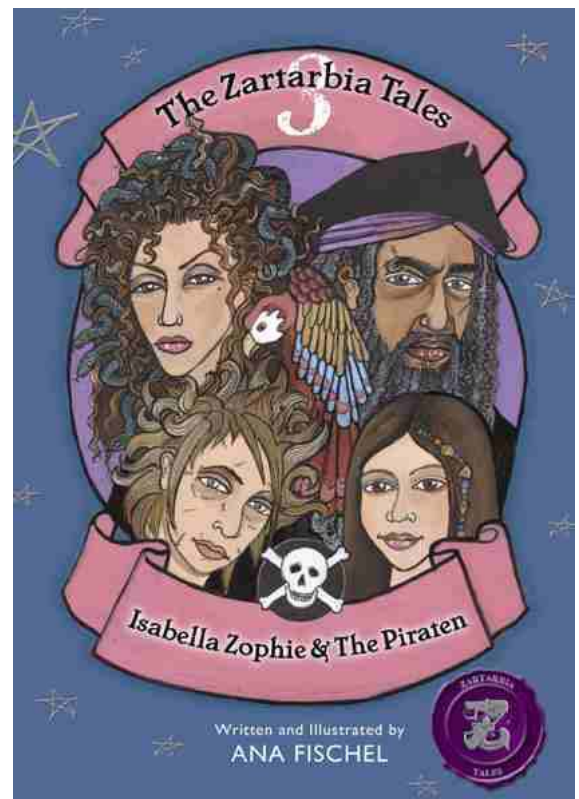
Following a hugely successful series of school workshops run by Ana Fischel (British author of The Zartarbia Tales) as part of the 'Reading Is Fundamental' project in England; Ana has devised the following guidelines for schools to encourage children to create their own characters.

The workshop aims to guide children through the process of creating a character for the third book in the Zartarbia Tales series as part of an International competition, open to all children to the age of 16, closing date 31st December 2005.

Owing to the success of the competition thus far, it will be repeated for the fourth book in the series.

The process of creating a character differs greatly between authors and Ana's approach is from a visual perspective. This makes for an imaginative and fun learning experience for the children and covers a range of learning objectives including literacy.

Here follows guiding questions and thoughts for the children to consider while creating their character





WORKSHOP GUIDELINES FOR CREATING YOUR OWN CHARACTER:

Firstly your character can be whatever you want it to be. You can use any medium; pencils, paints, collage, crayons, felt pens, computer generated etc. The only limitation is your imagination so really think about how you can bring your character to life in visual terms.

For example; if you have created a mermaid character then you might want to use glitter for the tail or wool for the hair. If your character is a sea monster then you might want use foil or sandpaper for the skin.

Secondly when you are thinking about what sort of character you want to create, firstly focus on the things YOU ENJOY – this is essential if your character is to be believable and interesting. .

You have to remember that everybody is inspired and influenced by all sorts of things - it might be a film you particularly like; a book you've read; perhaps it's a piece of music you enjoy or a person you've met. Saying that try not to copy these ideas directly, it doesn't matter where your inspiration comes from as long as you make it your own. For example if you are a fan of Harry Potter, then try not to focus on creating another wizard but maybe focus on some of the monsters or magical creatures that he encounters.

Thirdly write down a list of qualities your character might have.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Firstly is your character a baddie or a goodie? Or maybe it's neither? Is it a monster / part human and part animal / maybe it's a robot / an alien / a mermaid or a fairy?

Does it have any magical abilities? (For example your character might have X-ray vision or have the ability to make it's self invisible.)

Does it fly, walk, swim or maybe it has wheels for feet)

Does your character have skin / feathers / scales / fur - or maybe it's made from metal / or fire / or ice?

Does your character have a special costume?

How does your character move and speak? (Maybe it has its own language that nobody else understands?)

Perhaps you could write a short story about your character?

Don't be worried about your piece of artwork being realistic or your short story being 'technically' correct. Art and writing are very personal - this is about how you want to express yourself.

Don't panic if you're not able to create a character you are happy with straight away, it often takes me up to 10 attempts, so keep trying and don't get disheartened.

Remember reading and writing should be fun, so I hope you enjoy this workshop!
- Ana Fischel, author and illustrator of The Zartarbia Tales.