

REFRAME

INSPIRE SCHOOLS

CREATIVE EXPRESSION
AND DIGITAL LITERACY
THROUGH ZINE MAKING

A creative digital project

In partnership with Factory International and Midlands Arts Centre

**SOUTHBANK
CENTRE**

mac
Midlands Arts Centre


factory
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About REFRAME: Inspire Schools



About REFRAME: Inspire Schools

REFRAME: Inspire Schools is a creative digital learning project, delivered in partnership between the Southbank Centre, Factory International and Midlands Arts Centre. For this project, secondary schools from London, Birmingham and Manchester engage in an annual programme of events and workshops, connecting pupils and teachers with professional artists and designers from the creative sector. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their artistic ideas and learn digital skills by creating their own 'zine', a DIY, self-published magazine. Each school group uses the latest Apple technology to work on their zine, using their existing skills and learning new techniques on a range of applications. The project supports learning in key areas of the curriculum including English, computing, art and design, and citizenship. Through REFRAME: Inspire Schools, pupils can gain an understanding of the creative careers they might want to explore in future.

About this resource

This resource shares the activities we have delivered in schools and showcases creative methods of incorporating digital technology into your school projects. It is designed for teachers who want to embed ideas about creative design and digital skills in the classroom at key stage 3. This guide takes you through the process of creating a zine using digital tools, and working with iPads and Procreate illustration software. Inspire Schools is a digital skills project that makes use of Apple iPads, Apple pencils, and free or low-cost software chosen for its creative potential and suitability for school settings. We also include recommendations for those who want to take their digital skills further and incorporate elements such as animation or music.



Inspire Schools curriculum links

The Inspire Schools programme covers many key stage 3 curriculum areas across different subjects.

The key learning outcomes include

Computing

- Use technology creatively, selecting, using and combining multiple software applications, potentially across a range of devices
- Use digital design and multimedia software applications and enhance creative digital skills
- Create, reuse, revise and repurpose digital artefacts
- Use technology safely, respectfully, responsibly and securely

Art and Design

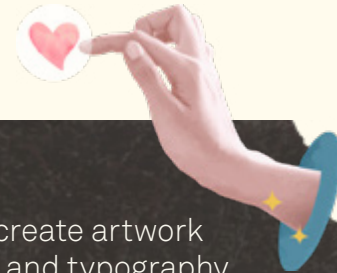
- Use a range of techniques and media to create artwork
- Make graphic design decisions on layout and typography
- Engage in practical art processes such as drawing, collage and composition
- Create digital illustrations using digital art tools
- Practice photography
- Analyse and evaluate art and design work

English

- Engage with literacy skills through imaginative writing, poetry, prose, song lyrics and stories
- Discover how to convey your message through titles and text (journalism)
- Engage with language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact

Citizenship

- Engage with political and social issues through issue-based subjects, discussion and research



Creative expression through zines



A history of the zine

The word 'zine' is a contraction of the word magazine. The term first appeared in the early 20th century. Zines are hand-made, self-published booklets that typically blend collage and creative writing with typography and illustration.

Zines are a powerful and often political medium used by artists, activists, campaign groups and minority communities. They can be a means to amplify the voice of an individual or group. Zines can be a simple and effective tool for sharing important messages. A zine can be a one-off creation or reproduced thousands of times. It can be on any subject, but is often presented from the maker's perspective.

One early example of a zine was a publication called *Fire!!* This small literary zine was published in New York in 1926, during the Harlem Renaissance. It was created by a group of young African American writers, including Wallace Thurman, Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes. *Fire!!* was controversial both because of its subject matter and its use of slang. Its bold name represents a challenge to the ideas of older Black generations.

Later in the century, fanzines became a way for enthusiasts to share information and commentary about science fiction, horror films and music. See the cover of the first *Star Trek* zine, *Spockanalia*, published in 1967, [here](#).

From the 1960s onwards, there was an explosion of zine making corresponding with the emergence of subcultures, countercultures and the civil rights movement. Groups used zines to express their culture, art and politics. The invention of cheap and accessible publishing technology such as Xerox photocopiers enabled a generation of zine makers to share their publications.

Zine makers harnessed the DIY aesthetic that photocopying offered, cutting and pasting photographs and typed or handwritten text. They could create artistic effects using torn and crumpled paper.

In the 1990s, the Riot Grrrl movement created zines that celebrated feminist punk music and highlighted misogyny in the music industry.



Here are some examples of recent zines created by young people.

[YOU\(TH\)scapes](#): a zine about youth-focused city planning

[Splice of Life](#): A zine about a young person's lived experience of independent travel, in collaboration with Harthill Youth Centre, Liverpool and [Comics Youth CIC](#).

[Brum Library Zine](#): a 2024 zine protesting library closures in Birmingham

Zines in schools

A zine can be used to convey ideas, thoughts and research. Zines can encourage students to think about how they present their ideas to others, and explore key areas of the curriculum creatively. Once a theme or message has been decided on, the zine format lends itself to group work and collaborative activities.

Whether students want to create collages, draw sketches, write poetry, take photos or compose music, their zines will allow them to express their creativity and convey a collective message.

Inspire Schools has previously engaged with topics inspired by exhibitions at the Southbank Centre's Hayward Gallery: the climate emergency (inspired by *Dear Earth*), and untold histories and stories (*There Is Light Somewhere* by artist Tavares Strachan).

The most successful zines share personal opinions and stories. They focus on subjects and messages that are important to the maker and their community.

Zines can address any subject. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Art – looking at Pop Art, graffiti art or a particular artist such as Yinka Shonibare or Yayoi Kusama
- Science – explaining scientific topics, as in this zine from [The Small Science Collective](#)
- Music – introducing musical icons or genres that inspire your students
- The media – investigating reality TV or influencer culture
- Sports – celebrating a particular sport, icon or event
- Anti-bullying and keeping safe
- My city – supporting students to explore themes of identity, heritage and home



Which topic within your subject area or school might lend itself to a zine?



How to make an analogue zine

What you will need:

Arts and craft materials: a selection of papers, pens, pencils, coloured pencils, marker pens, glue sticks and scissors.

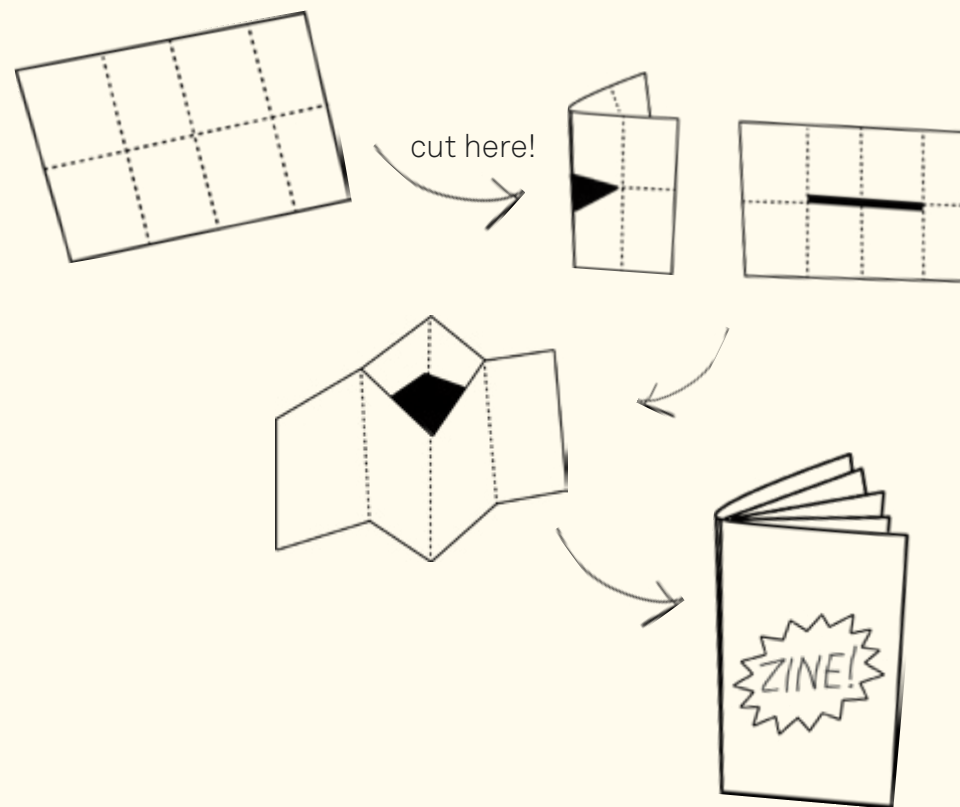
Zine layouts

In this [short film](#), artist Ioana Simion of Artizine, who is one of our Inspire Schools Artist Educators, shows you how to make a paper zine.



Artist Ioana Simion of Artizine

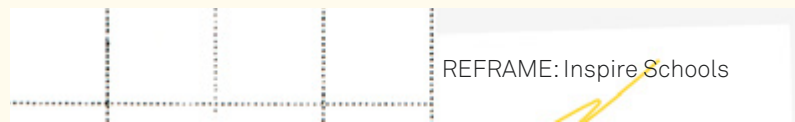
There are many different zine layouts. We used an eight-page folded format, which is ideal for group work, as smaller groups can work together on each page. See below for an example of how to fold your own DIY eight-page zine



Recommendation

Zines are a great vehicle for young people's voices. Why not create a small zine library to inspire your students? You can find many interesting and affordable artists' zines on [Etsy](#).

Visit a [zine library](#) in your area for inspiration. You can also find interesting zines at the Southbank Centre's [National Poetry Library](#).



Creative zine activities



Creative zine activities

Here are some examples of activities used during the Inspire Schools programme to help you and your students build a bank of creative assets that can feed into their zines. You can adapt the assets to suit different subject areas. For example, for a STEM zine, you could include factual writing rather than poetry, and scientific imagery, either presented as a collage or drawn by students.

Activity 1: Applying collage techniques to zine making

This activity encourages students to experiment with the medium of collage and explore the rough and ready style of a zine. You can communicate this point by demonstrating the difference between clean, structured glossy magazine layouts and looser, more freely composed zine designs. By the end of this activity, students should have had a chance to get creative and grasped the idea that curation and editing can be part of a creative workflow.

What you'll need:

Items related to the topics covered by the zines, including magazines, photographs, maps, books for research, books for typography and image ideas, flyers, newspapers and catalogues. Art materials such as pencils, pens, paints, scissors and glue. Paper and/or a zine template.

Exercise 1:

Students take part in a quick, abstract collaging activity, using only colours, patterns and shapes. The aim of this exercise is to inspire students' creativity. The collages should evoke a feeling or emotion without using any recognisable imagery. For this first collage, suggest that students tear out images instead of using scissors. Allocate 10 minutes or so for this activity.

Exercise 2:

Students create a more complex collage, focusing more on image selection. Allow more time for this exercise.

1. Introduce scissors and neat cutting. This can be combined with rough edges to produce interesting effects.
2. Once students have selected their images, they can work on the positioning and layering of their collage materials. How can they use the materials to convey a theme?
3. Students add the materials to their zine template, adding further decoration or illustrating their zines by hand.

Go to page 18 to find out how to use collage materials to create a zine in Procreate.

Activity 2: Exploring creative writing through found poetry

This is a quick exercise that makes use of the resources you have already collected for the zine project. Found poetry can help students find words and phrases to express their ideas and summarise their research. It also makes a visual impact.



What you will need:

Books, magazines and newspapers that students can cut up and use.
Art materials including pencils, pens and markers.

1. Give students a page cut from a book or magazine and some basic art supplies such as pencils, pens and markers.
2. Ask students to select a starter word from their page to inspire their poem. Next, ask them to select up to 15 more words or phrases from their page.
3. Ask students to rearrange the words they have chosen to produce a poem.
4. Once the students have decided on the flow of their poem, invite them to cut out the words and stick them onto a page of their zine. They can use drawings or collage to illustrate their poem.

Activity 3: Visual communication and design – exploring emotion through texts and images

Images, colours, symbols and visual styles can impact how words are received and spark ideas. Visual communication can be an incredibly powerful device for changing opinions or behaviours.

Every day, we can observe methods of visual communication used in adverts, or even in the packaging on supermarket shelves. Graphic designers choose certain imagery and colours to communicate and inspire different emotions. When creating designs for our zines, we want to be thinking along the same lines.

What you'll need:

Paper, collage materials, drawing materials such as pencils, paints and brushes and our prompt boxes template (see page 21).

1. Assign groups of students an emotion, such as ecstatic, scared, exasperated or excited (or ask them to select their own).
2. Ask them to write down their emotion in the corner of their prompt boxes template. Then they should use the template to explore how they would visually communicate the emotion in different ways (i.e. as a colour, a line, a shape, a drawn word, a face and an animal).
3. When students have explored these prompts within the prompt boxes template, they can use their new ideas as the basis for a zine. They can add found materials and illustrate the page with drawings or paintings.





Digital transformation



Applying basic digital techniques

Students can apply basic digital processes to their handmade zines using the technology you have access to at school.

What you will need:

A photocopier and a scanner. A digital camera, such as a smartphone camera, iPad camera or DSLR.

You can use these tools to transform analogue artwork such as paper zines into digital assets. These digital assets can be copies of the original work or develop it further, into new forms. This transformation could turn into a final project or act as a starting point for further creative development of the zines.

The processes outlined below can provide your class with different ways to present their work.

Photocopying

- Why not take inspiration from the 1970s punk scene and use your school photocopier as an artistic tool?
- Students could make multiple copies of drawings, print off photos and photocopy torn or ripped paper (to create interesting textures). They could Tipp-Ex out spaces, try hand writing text, or print off text and paste it onto their photocopy. They could also use the photocopier to increase or reduce the size of images to create interesting compositions
- Make multiple copies of images from magazines if you only have one and they are in demand

Scanning

- On most photocopiers, you can scan documents to create PDFs, which are really useful digital assets
- The scanner can create continuous scrolling pages, and offers the option of black-and-white or full-colour images
- PDFs can be embedded on websites, distributed by email or added to a blog. You can also use PDFs to create online magazines with pages that turn digitally (see page 20)

Photography

- Use an iPad camera, a smartphone camera or a DSLR. You could also experiment with 35mm film and scan the printed photos using the photocopier
- Students can snap their own photographs to use in their zines, either in the grounds of the school or in the classroom
- You can also photograph your zine or parts of your zine and share them on your school's website or social media channels, or present them on a blog

Working with iPads

Teachers can develop their digital skills, and those of their students, using the free and low-cost apps available on iPads. Read on to find out more about applying digital techniques to your zine-making process. We advise you to introduce digital techniques once your students are clear on what they hope to achieve with their zines. At this stage, they should also have amassed a selection of creative assets that are ready to be loaded into the software.

iPads have a range of accessibility features that you can use to tailor the devices to the needs of your students. [Here are the options.](#)

You (or your IT team) will need to install Apple School Manager on your students' iPads. This feature enables you to manage iPad settings and security across every device. Apple School Manager creates an Apple ID for each student or log-in. It also offers 200GB cloud storage.

What you will need:

- Apple iPads – ideally one per student. However, sharing is fine as this project encourages collaborative working
- Apple Pencils
- Secure Wi-Fi access

Idea 1: Create the zine in Pages

Pages is an intuitive word-processing app that comes free with iPads. It is especially useful for creating quick zine layouts. Unlike Word, this software allows users to move objects freely within a page. Students can easily import media such as photos and videos into Pages.

- Your students can use the audio recorder function to record their voices. They could recite poetry or prose or provide a welcome message at the beginning of their zine.
- Students could include hyperlinks to websites and YouTube videos in their zines, use the Apple pencil to handwrite text, or add text boxes to explore typography.
- Pages also has an animation function.

[See Apple's Pages User Guide for iPad.](#)

Idea 2: Use an Apple Pencil

Apple Pencils contain pressure sensors that enable users to create nuanced marks. They are really useful for drawing expressively in fine detail, handwriting text and navigating menus. [Here is a user guide for Apple Pencils.](#) On page 18 of this guide, the artist Mike Emerson provides tips on how to use an Apple Pencil in the Procreate digital illustration app.

Working with iPads

Idea 3: Draw in Tayasui Sketches School

Tayasui Sketches School is a low-cost app for schools that's available through Apple Education. This digital drawing and painting app offers users a range of digital art tools, brushes, effects, textures and colour palettes. The basic version does not allow users to create layers. Once students are happy with their drawings, they can import them into their zine using Pages.

[Here's a tutorial on how to use Tayasui Sketches School.](#)

Idea 4: Make use of your iPad camera

iPads come with an integrated HD camera. Users can apply creative settings including reverse and front camera options, a timer, flash and autofocus. Pano mode is designed for taking panoramic 180-degree shots and Burst mode can be used for action shots.

Students can also use the iPad camera to record video content.

For editing, there is the Photos app, in which it's possible to adjust, crop and mark up shots, or draw over them digitally. Students can add filters to make images more exciting.

The [Photo Booth](#) app enables users to add effects while taking a photograph.



Making a zine with Procreate

Procreate is a relatively low-cost digital painting and drawing app (currently £12.99 per licence). It is used by many professional illustrators and designers.

It is intuitive to use, and offers a wide selection of tools, brushes, textures and effects. There are interactive features including video replay for users who want to create animations. It's possible to import documents and photographs within the app, add hyperlinks to videos or web links and create detailed artwork. Procreate is more advanced than Tayasui Sketches School and is designed to be used with an Apple Pencil on an iPad.

In a short instructional film, artist and Inspire Schools Artist Educator Mike Emerson demonstrates how to get started in Procreate. He shows students how to use the app to create a collage for a digital zine, with the help of some of the creative prompts outlined above.

In the film, Mike shows you how to use some basic tools in Procreate. He demonstrates how to save documents, try out different brushes, textures and colours, and design your own artwork using the app.

Apple provides Procreate support and tutorials [here](#).



Artist educator Mike Emerson



Supercharge your digital zine

Here's a list of ways students can add multimedia to their digital zines, using free software and apps.

Animation

Students can bring their zines to life by using Procreate to create an animation out of frame-by-frame drawings. The animation can be exported as an MP4, and students can use a hyperlink to include it in their digital zines. Here's Apple's Procreate and animation [handbook](#).

Time-lapse video

Students can film a time-lapse video of their drawings in progress. See Apple's Procreate handbook for [guidance](#).

Music and soundtracks

[Garageband](#) can be used to create beats and raps, record song lyrics, compose music and even record poetry recitals. Export tracks as MP3s, and use hyperlinks to include them in a digital zine. Students can also create movies to accompany their tracks (see filmmaking).

Filmmaking

Students can use iPad camera video functions to capture a film, and [iMovie](#) to edit it. They can then add in a soundtrack, titles and end credits. Depending on where the digital zine is to be shared, it may be necessary to upload MP4 files to YouTube or Vimeo and add hyperlinks to the zine.

Experimental photography

Using Procreate and Photo Booth, students can add time-lapse photography to their zines, apply filters, and use kaleidoscope, thermal camera and x-ray effects.

You might want to create photo slideshows to display the images produced by your group.



Presenting your zines

Zines are designed to share messages and ideas in artistic, imaginative and engaging ways. Here are some imaginative ways of presenting your zine projects at school.

Physical presentations

- Encourage students to curate their own zine exhibition.
- Host a zine fair where students can swap printed or photocopied zines.
- Identify a space in your school that could be used for a zine library.
- Submit your zine to the [British Library](#) or a [local zine library](#).
- Hold an event where your students can present their ideas and research, or even perform their poetry.

Digital presentations

- Scan zines to create PDF versions and add them to your school website.
- Start a blog or a new website to display the zines, using free sites such as [Webador](#) or [Wix](#).
- Create an online gallery of the zines on your school's website.
- Use Apple Books to make a digital book out of a PDF or Pages document, with pages that can be turned. This option isn't suitable for zines which have multimedia components.
- Publish a digital magazine using [Issuu](#) or [Flipbooks](#). There are free basic options, or you can pay for the premium package, which allows you to include hyperlinks to video and audio files stored on YouTube or Vimeo.
- Create a supercharged digital zine using the professional design software Adobe InDesign. InDesign allows users to present innovative publication layouts, add interactive navigation buttons, and embed multimedia such as MP3 audio, MP4 videos, web links, animations and illustrations.



Helpful links

Online safety

[Before using this resource, we recommend that you refer to the NSPCC's up-to-date guidance on how to keep children safe online.](#)

[For further context and guidance, here is the government's online safety act.](#)

Digital resources

[Apple Education Community offers helpful resources for teachers using Apple technology.](#)

[Apple iPad tutorials for schools cover the Garageband, iMovie, Audio and Camera applications.](#)

[Use famous artists to inspire your students to create digital art.](#)

[Find out more about how to sign up for Apple Schools Manager.](#)

[Pages user guide for the iPad.](#)

[User guide to Procreate.](#)

[User Guide to Tayasui Sketches School.](#)

Glossary of Technical Terms

[Understand different types of file format.](#)



Prompt box resource sheet

Follow the prompts to visually communicate your emotion, and draw your response in the box provided.

1. What colour would it be?	2. What would it look like as a line?	3. What shape would it be?
4. How would it look as a drawn word?	5. What face would it make?	6. What animal would it be?

Resource credits

This resource has been created by freelance producer and curator [Sonya Russell Saunders](#), with additional support from Lily Dettmer, Creative Engagement Producer (Schools) at the Southbank Centre.

Creative activities and Procreate content produced by [Mikesian](#)

How to make a zine content produced by Ioana Simion of Artizineuk (Instagram: @artizineuk)

Image credits:

Pg 3: Inspire Schools workshop, photo by Holly Bond (2024)

Pg 9: Ioana Simion, photo by Ioana Simion (2025)

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REFRAME: Inspire Schools partnership

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

About the Southbank Centre

We're the UK's largest centre for the arts and one of the nation's top five visitor attractions, showcasing the world's most exciting artists at our venues in the heart of London. As a charity, we bring millions of people together by opening up the unique art spaces that we care for.

The Southbank Centre is made up of the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Hayward Gallery, National Poetry Library and Arts Council Collection. We're one of London's favourite meeting spots, with lots of free events and places to relax, eat and shop next to the Thames.

southbankcentre.co.uk



About Factory International

Factory International is a global destination for arts, music and culture which opened in the heart of Manchester in 2023. Programmed and operated by the team behind Manchester International Festival (MIF), Factory International commissions, produces and presents an ambitious year-round programme of original creative work, music and special events by leading artists from across the globe at its landmark new venue, online and internationally. It also stages the city-wide Festival every other year at Factory International and at venues and spaces across Greater Manchester. Driven by the same interests and ambitions that defines MIF, Factory International encourages artists to create work in new ways, to collaborate across disciplines and blur the boundaries between art and popular culture.

factoryinternational.org



About Midlands Arts Centre (MAC)

Midlands Arts Centre is a contemporary arts centre set in the magnificent surroundings of Cannon Hill Park, Birmingham. Voted No.1 Free Visitor Attraction in the West Midlands 2019 in a survey carried out by VisitEngland, MAC welcomes over one million visitors a year. The arts centre offers creative opportunities for all ages across theatre, film, visual arts, practical courses and accessible programmes, and is a national leader in developing work for children and young people. MAC is a registered charity supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery through the Postcode Culture Trust, Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.

macbirmingham.co.uk

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