

Author & Illustrator ACADEMY

SIMON FARNABY

MAKE YOUR WISHES COME TRUE:

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS



ILLUSTRATE A TALKING ANIMAL

Before watching the video or reading the extract...

In *The Wizard and Me* by Simon Farnaby, the narrator of the story is a guinea pig. This means that the author has given an animal a human personality! Create an animal character of your own and illustrate what you think it would look like. Give your chosen animal human features and personality traits.

DISCUSS THE EXTRACT!

TAKEN FROM 'DAY 1' – PAGES 1-5.

Before you get into the detail of the discussion get the group's initial responses to the extract – how did they feel about it? Are they keen to read more? Do they have any questions?

1. Does Bubbles make you laugh? Why? Find examples.
2. What do you learn from Bubbles by reading his 'list of things I hate'?
3. What do you learn about Rose? What is her relationship to Bubbles?

FIND INSPIRATION

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO, DEVELOP SIMON'S IDEAS

INSPIRATION 1: FACTS AND KNOWLEDGE

Simon explains that he likes to include important facts and knowledge when writing a story. He is especially interested in Animals, Nature and Historical Facts. In his words: '*History can be good fun!*'

- Simon Farnaby's first book, *There's a Wizard in My Shed*, is about a wizard named Merdyn the Wild who has arrived in the 21st century from the Dark Ages. Consider why this is an interesting or funny idea for a story. What sort of trouble might Merdyn get into in the modern world?
- Choose another period in History (it might be one that you've been studying at school, or one that you're particularly interested in). Bring a character from that time into the modern world. Create a list of the challenges they might face as they try to adapt. Consider their clothing, customs, manners, way of speaking and expectations! How can you make this character's experiences funny for the reader?

INSPIRATION 2: THE THINGS YOU WISH FOR!

In the video, Simon describes that reading and writing stories is almost like 'wish fulfilment'. The things you imagine in your wildest dreams can actually come true – no matter how strange you think they are!

- Think about your own wishes and dreams. Perhaps you wish you could fly? Or maybe you'd like to be best friends with a talking bird? Or is it something even more weird and wonderful...?
- Taking inspiration from Simon, write down some ideas for a story in which your own wishes come

CREATIVE CHALLENGE FROM SIMON FARNABY

Simon describes how he came up with a real-life voice for his guinea pig character, 'Bubbles'. Pick an animal of your own – it might be your pet or favourite animal – and imagine what it would sound like. Write or perform a monologue for your animal. What would they talk about if they could?