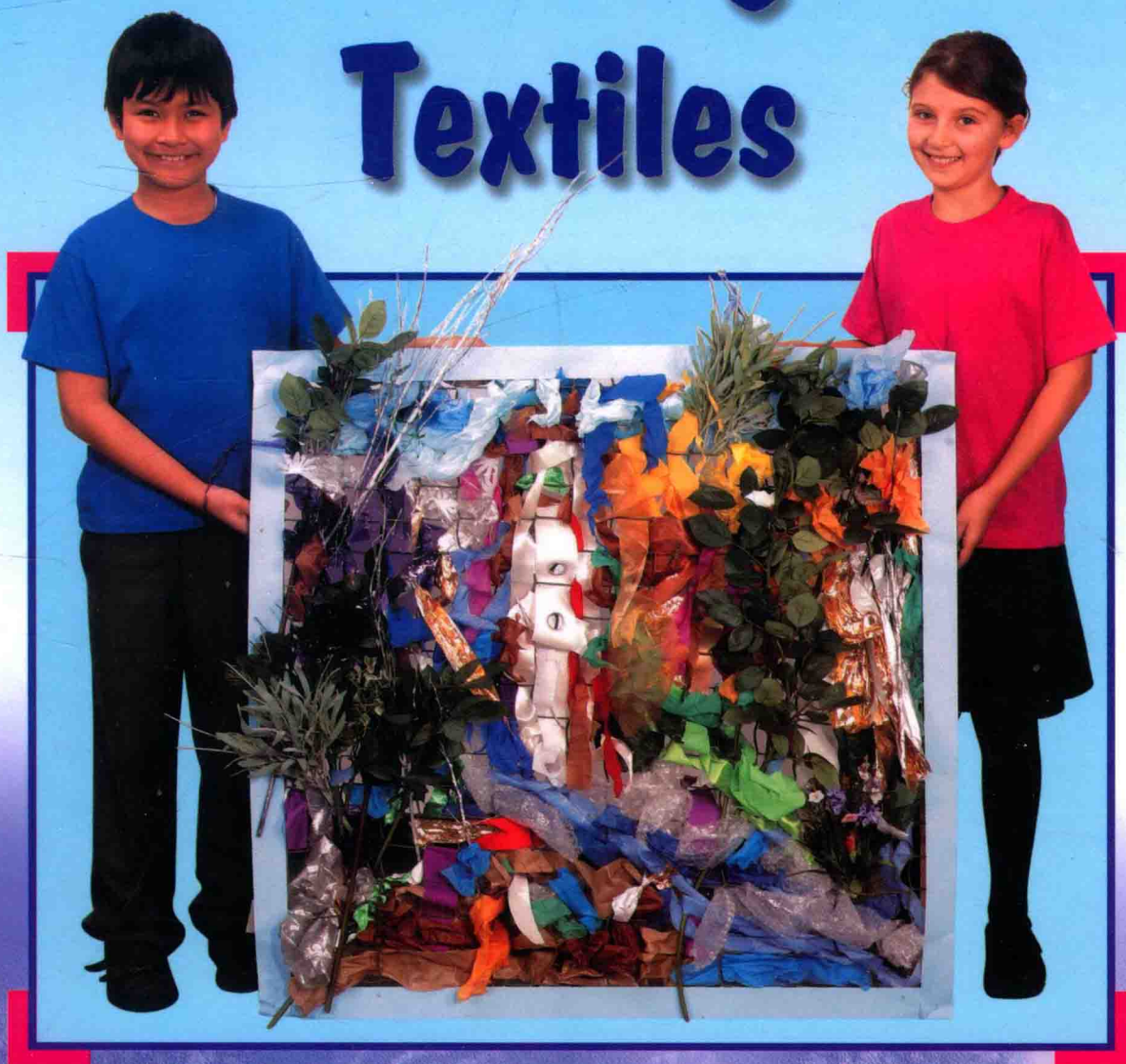




# STEP-UP ART AND DESIGN



## Talking Textiles



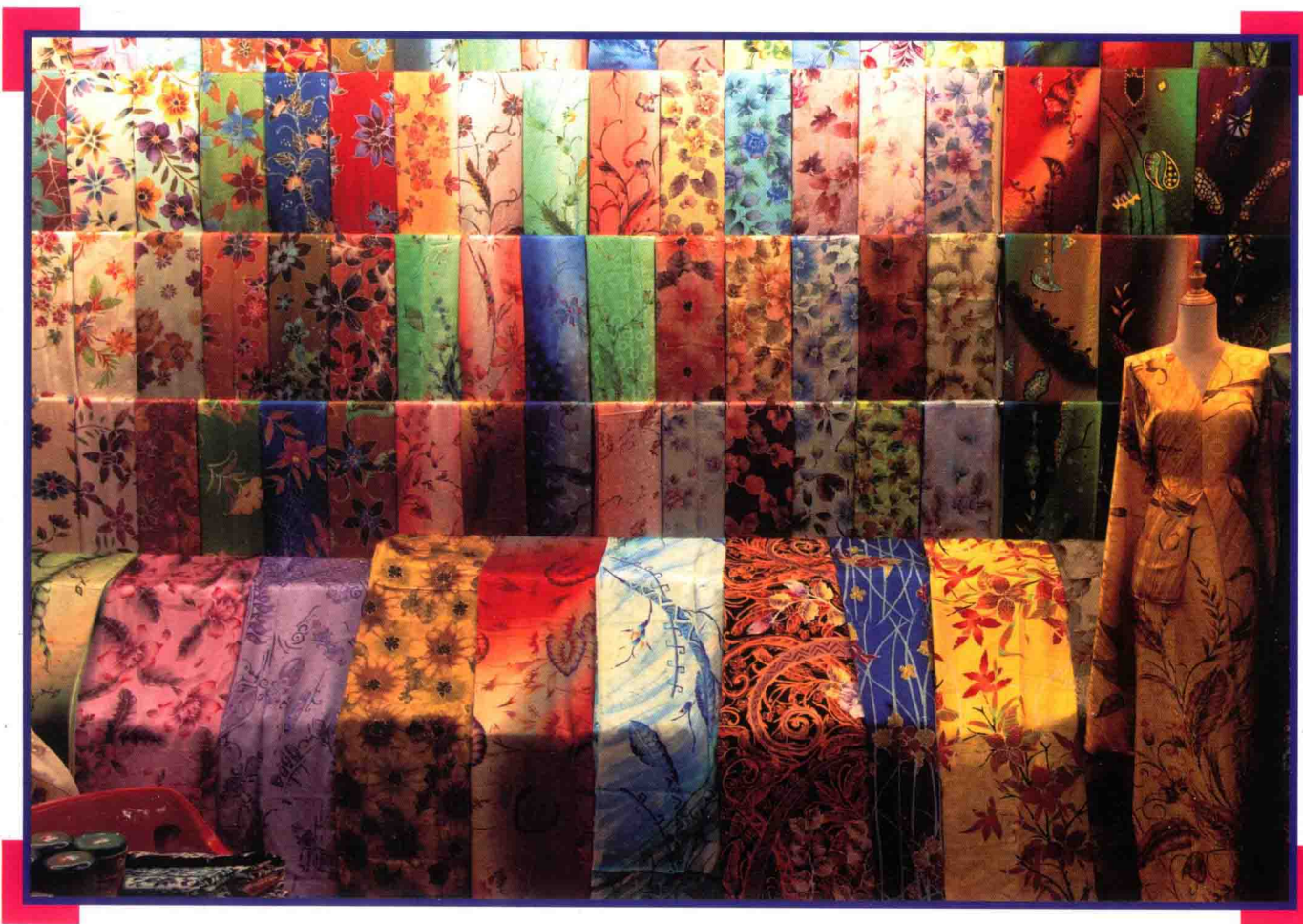
Susan Ogier



STEP-UP  
**ART AND DESIGN**



# Talking Textiles



**Susan Ogier**



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Project manager: Rachel Minay

Designer: Leishman Design

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# What are textiles?

People have been making textiles for thousands of years. Textiles are used to make clothes and furnishings for our homes, such as curtains, carpets, sheets and blankets, and in art and craftwork. Other uses include bags, tents, sails for boats, and handkerchiefs – can you think of any more?

## Making textiles

Textiles are made from **fibres**. These fibres are first **spun** into **yarn** and then bound together to make a textile. Different methods are used to bind the yarn – these include knitting, crochet, lacemaking, braiding, **felting** and weaving (see page 6).



▼ In crochet, loops in the yarn are made and connected with one hooked needle.



▲ A knitted textile is made by using two knitting needles to make and connect loops in the yarn.

► Lace is a delicate textile made by looping and twisting yarn into patterns.



► Braiding is plaiting three or more strands of yarn to make a strip. Here, strips of braiding have been joined to make a rug.





## Textile sources

Textiles are made from either natural or **synthetic** fibres. Natural fibres may come from plants, such as the cotton plant and flax (which makes linen), or from animals, for example wool. Synthetic fibres are made from chemicals and are used to create textiles such as Nylon and Lycra.

## Materials collage

Collect as many different types of textiles as you can. Try to choose examples that show the different ways that fibres can be connected to make the textile, such as knitted, laced or felted. Make a **collage** in your **sketchbook** and write notes next to the materials saying which method you think has been used.



▲ This cyclist is wearing Lycra. Why do you think this material is suitable for sports activities?

## Textile textures

What do you think the different **textures** of these textiles would be?



velvet curtain



denim jeans



nylon parachute



woollen socks



hessian sack



polyester sleeping bag

Consider the uses of the different textiles here – could they be swapped around? For instance, would it be comfortable to wear a pair of socks made from denim? Would it be possible to use a parachute made from velvet?





# Spinning and weaving

Spinning is the process of making fibres into lengths of stronger yarn. This yarn can then be used to create a textile, for example by weaving.

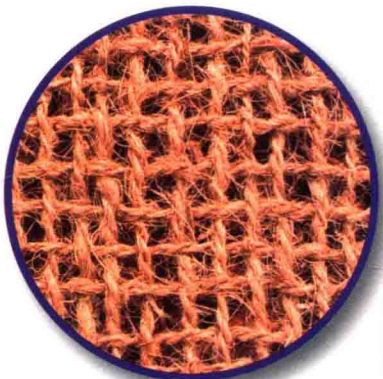
## Spinning

Do you remember the story of Sleeping Beauty, who pricked her finger on a spinning wheel and slept for a hundred years? Before the invention of the spinning wheel, people twisted the fibres together by hand to make yarn. Modern spinning machines are powered by electricity and can produce metres of yarn every second.

## Weaving

Weaving has been used to create textiles since ancient times. A weaver uses a machine called a loom to make a textile by interlocking lengths of yarn called warp, which run **horizontally**, and weft, which run **vertically**.

▶ Can you see how the warp and weft are interlocked to create this woven fibre canvas?



▶ This girl is using a spinning wheel to make woollen yarn from the fleece of a sheep.

## Once upon a time...

The crafts of spinning and weaving are central to many myths and fairy tales, for example *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Write a fairy story for younger children around the theme of spinning or weaving. How will you **illustrate** your story?





# Making a large-scale weaving

Make a weaving, based on a myth or fairy story, with a small group of friends.

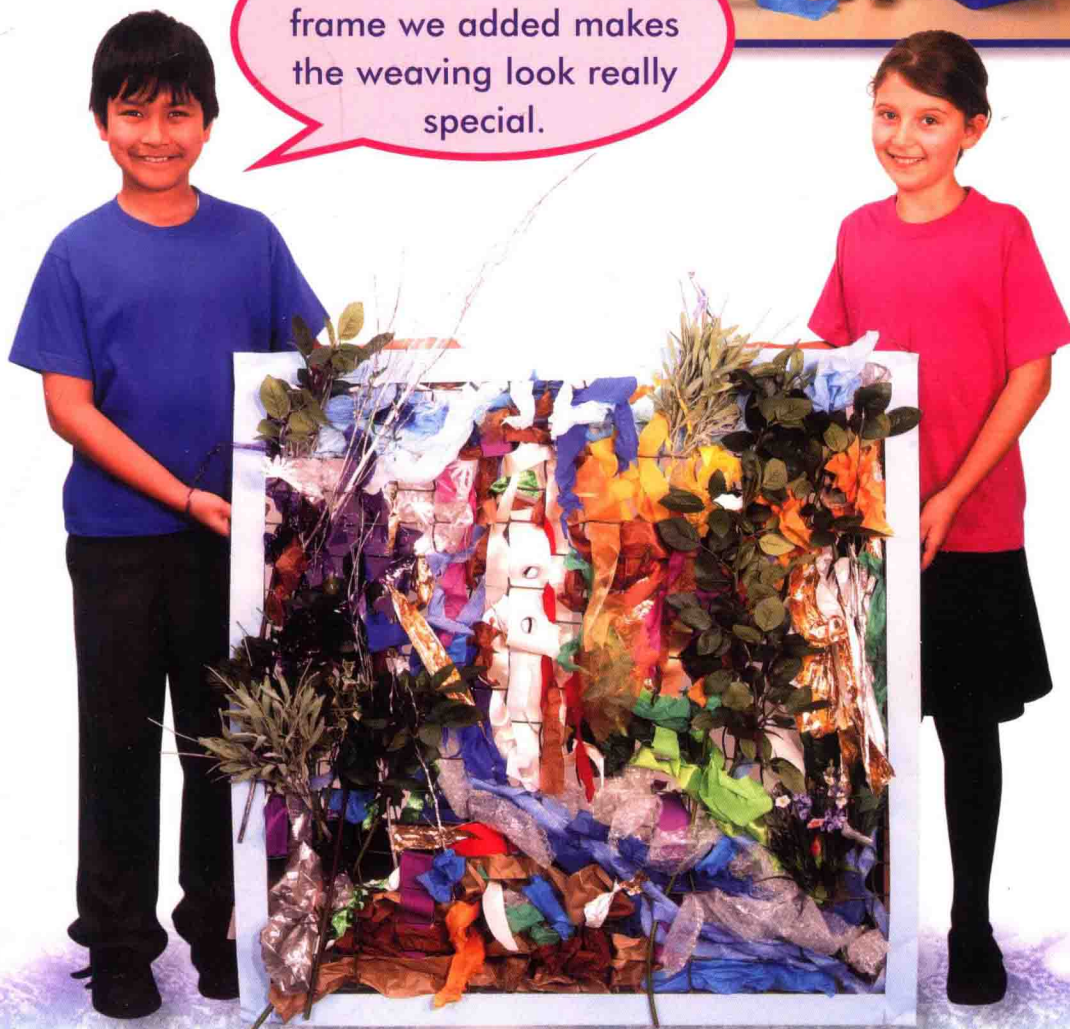
First, agree on the story to use. Read it out loud, trying to **visualise** colours, sounds and images as you are reading. Note these ideas in your sketchbooks.

You will need to work **collaboratively** to decide how the different ideas will work together in one piece of work. Agree on a final design.

Staple some garden netting to an empty wooden frame. Then collect materials that are suitable for threading in and out of the netting and that reflect the ideas in the final design. These could include ribbon or strips of fabric, crêpe paper, tissue, wrapping paper and recycled materials such as plastics. You could even tie related objects into your weaving to add interest.

We're creating a river by weaving in lots of different blues and silvers.

I think that the frame we added makes the weaving look really special.





# Tales from tapestries

Many different cultures have used weaving to create textiles. The Incas wrapped dead bodies in elaborate woven textiles before burial. The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans decorated their homes with wall hangings of intricate woven designs. In a **tapestry**, the threads of yarn are woven together in a special way to make a pattern or picture. Tapestries are often used to tell stories.

## The Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry is 70 metres long and tells the story of King Harold and the Battle of Hastings. This 900-year-old piece of work is not actually a tapestry at all because it is **embroidered**. A true tapestry is woven.

► This scene from the Bayeux Tapestry shows Harold's death, but it is not clear how he dies. Many historians now think that Harold is not the figure with an arrow in the eye, but the one cut down by a horseman.



▲ This 15th-century tapestry is one of a series known as the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries and would have been used to decorate and **insulate** the cold stone homes of rich people. Look carefully at the story in the tapestry. Why do you think medieval people liked this type of subject matter?





## Britain's Bayeux

Britain has a **replica** of the Bayeux Tapestry at Reading Museum. It was made in 1885 and it took 35 embroiderers a year to make. See the whole story in sequence at: <http://www.bayeuxtapestry.org.uk>



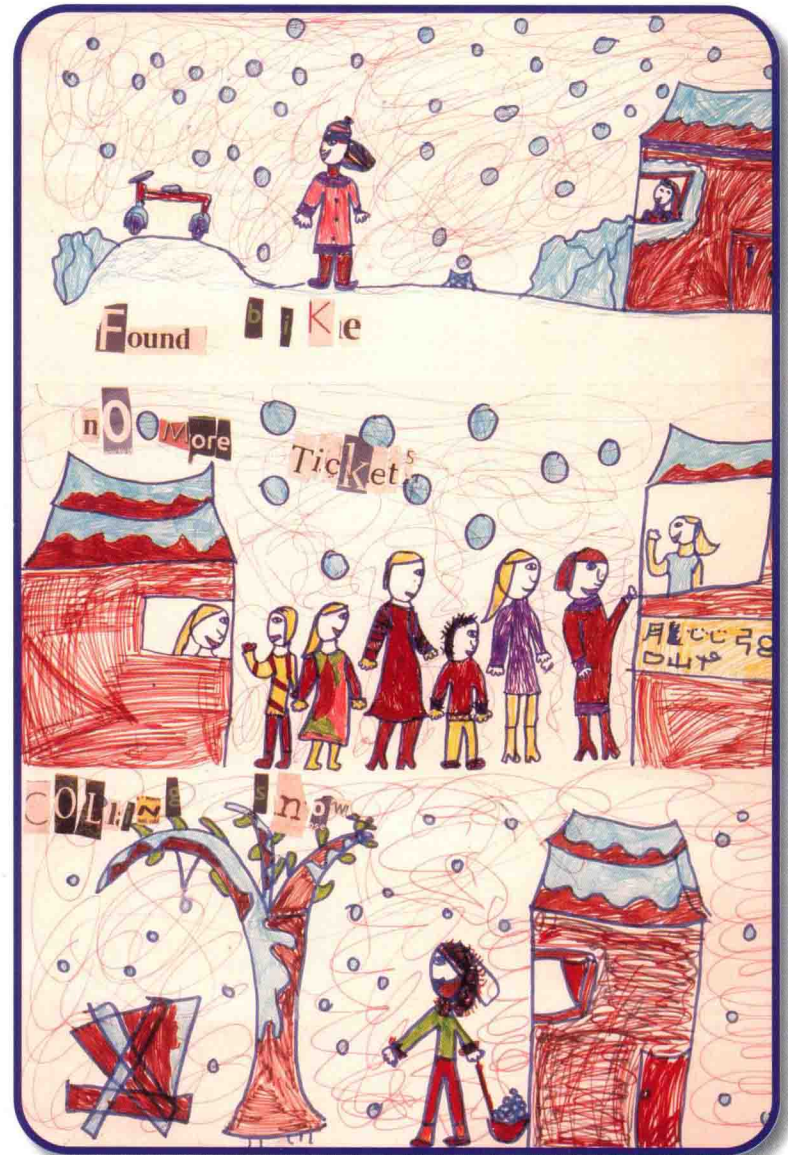
## News collage

**Cartoons** tell a story in sequence – just like the Bayeux Tapestry. Choose a current news story and create a cartoon by showing it in three or four stages. Your cartoon will be the starting point for a collage made from textiles.

Refer to your cartoon to order the news story as a clear sequence of events. Split into pairs or small groups and decide who will make a collage of which scene.

For each scene, collect a variety of materials that you can flatten and shape by cutting and tearing. Arrange your shapes on a piece of card or fabric. When you are happy with your **composition**, secure the pieces with glue or thread. Add texture and detail by using string and wool, which can be glued to your collage or sewn through the base and knotted or taped at the back.

▼ This cartoon represents a news story from China, when the worst snowstorm in years left hundreds of thousands of people stranded at railway stations.



When all the collage scenes are complete, display your news story by placing them in sequence alongside your cartoon.



# Clothes and fashion

Humans have always needed to protect their bodies from the weather and from harm. Early people used animal skins and plant material to make clothes for themselves. There is evidence that **Stone Age** people sewed items together using needles made from bone or wood.

## Changing fashions

The clothes we wear today are not simply to protect us from injury or the weather, but they also give messages to other people about who we are or what we do. 'Fashion' means the style in clothing that is popular or admired at a particular time. Fashions are always changing, as we can see when we look back at some of the clothes that people wore in the past.

Today we have a lot of choice and can easily find clothes that we feel comfortable in, whatever our personal tastes. What fashions or styles do you like?

**1950s 1960s 1980s 1920s**

► *These fashions all date from the 20th century. Can you match each picture to a decade?*





# Galleries and museums

One way to find out about fashions of the past is to visit museums that have collections of historic costumes and galleries to look at portrait paintings. Portraits that show clothes, jewellery and hairstyles tell us what fashions were like in different periods. Modern fashion designers are also often inspired by fashions of the past.



Do you think that Queen Elizabeth I looks comfortable in this 17th-century fashion? The richness of her dress and jewellery showed everyone her great power, wealth and status in society.

## Fashion for a friend

Design an outfit for a friend that shows his or her personality. Find out more about your friend by interviewing him or her and asking about likes and dislikes. What colours will you use? You might choose yellows and oranges for someone who has a bubbly personality or purples and greys for someone who is thoughtful. What materials and textures will you use? Note down all your ideas in your sketchbook.

Use fabric or newspaper to make the outfit by sewing, gluing and taping pieces together. How will the outfit fasten together? You might consider making a cape that goes around the shoulders or a **tabard** that slips over the head.

Perhaps you could organise a fashion show for the rest of the school and photograph everyone in their new designs.



Use your sketchbook to draw your initial ideas after interviewing your friend. You could design an outfit for an everyday or a special occasion.



# What a performance!

Costumes are an important part of any performance, whether it is a dance or a drama, and good costume design helps the audience to become more involved in the story.

## Setting the scene

Have you been to a play or a pantomime or seen one on the television? How did the costumes help to create the mood? If you have been a performer in a dance or play, how did your costume help you to understand or develop your role?

## Carnival arts

Performances do not always take place inside a theatre, and sometimes they require the audience to **participate** as well as watch. Carnival is an example of an art form that takes place outdoors, and is as much about the imaginative costumes as it is about the music, dance and participation. The name is from the Italian 'Carnevale', which means 'to put away the meat'. This comes from a time when people held costumed parties before they gave up eating meat for Lent.



▲ Period costumes can help an audience to place a film or play in its historical setting.

▲ Carnivals take place in many cities of the world. These stilt-walkers are taking part in a Children's Carnival in Trinidad, an island in the Caribbean.



# Carnival creation

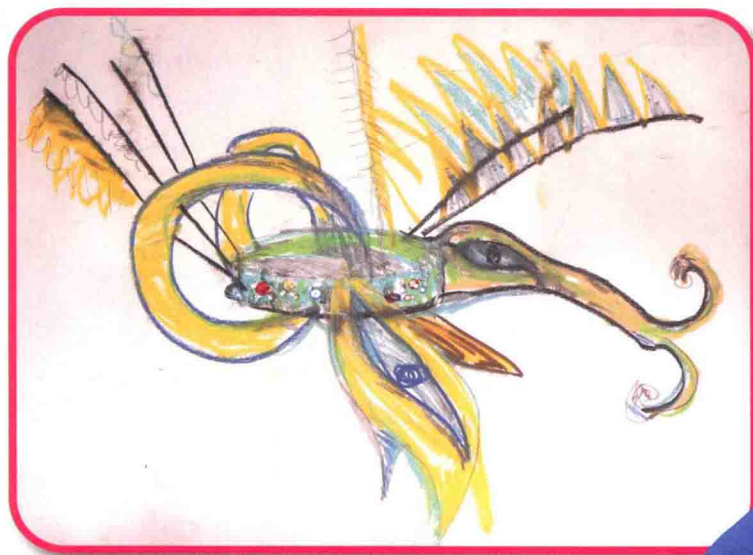
Work with a partner to design a **three-dimensional** headpiece for a carnival performer. Start by measuring your head size and then make a simple card band, stapling it to fit correctly. You will create your headpiece by building attachments on to this base.

Design your headpiece on paper first, being as imaginative as possible. Then create the shape of your design by bending materials such as wire, card and paper, and fixing them to the card band. Add decoration with paint, foil, feathers, ribbons, beads and flowers.

## Artist's practice

The designers of elaborate carnival costumes must consider that the person wearing the costume will be moving and dancing all the time. Testing and evaluating the design at all stages is very important.

My headpiece was based on ideas that I had while we were studying the Ancient Egyptians.



**Evaluate** your work often and change things as you are working. Talk to your friends and look at their work, too, as this will help you develop your own ideas.

