

Candlewick Press presents

A Guide for classrooms using the dot and ish

FROM THE AUTHOR:

I wrote and illustrated *The Dot* and *Ish* as a way to help children and "grown-up children" be brave enough to "make their mark."

While the books are about art, they really are about process — about ideas, creative thinking, bravery, expression, original ideas, and sharing.

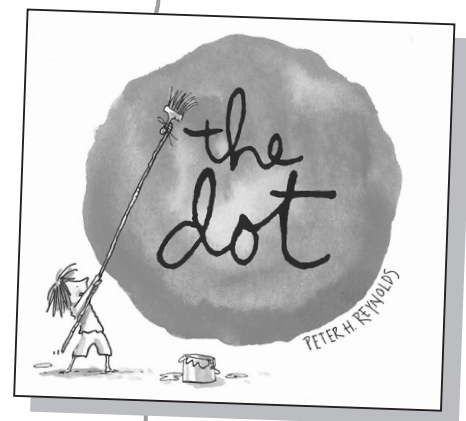
The Dot is about getting started — getting "un-stuck." It is also about creative teaching, about exploring an idea in many ways, and sharing our gifts with others. Once you get rolling, there is a potential of getting "squashed" which is what *Ish* is about. *Ish* aims to help give young and old alike some vocabulary to defend their ideas. I use the "Ish Approach" with kids and "grown up kids" to help them relax in order to express themselves. Ish-ful strategies can allow art, writing or problem solving to flow creatively. You can't become better at something that you don't do. So, make your mark and see where it takes you. Let it flow and see where it goes.

I hope my books will encourage and inspire you as you nurture the creative spirit in your classroom — and in yourself. In this guide you'll find ideas, materials, and activities that can act as a springboard to your own experience of *The Dot* and *Ish* in your classroom. Of course, this is just the tip of the iceberg, and I hope that, like Vashti and Ramon, you'll be inspired to keep going as you explore and play with these themes. I'd love to hear from you. Feel free to drop me a note and share!

Wishing you a wonderful teaching and learning journey,

Peter H. Reynolds 

Peter H. Reynolds



For more ideas go to www.peterhreynolds.com

Classroom Ideas for the dot

This is a "rough sketch" of possible ways to introduce and follow up on *The Dot*. Feel free to adapt it to your grade level. Have fun!

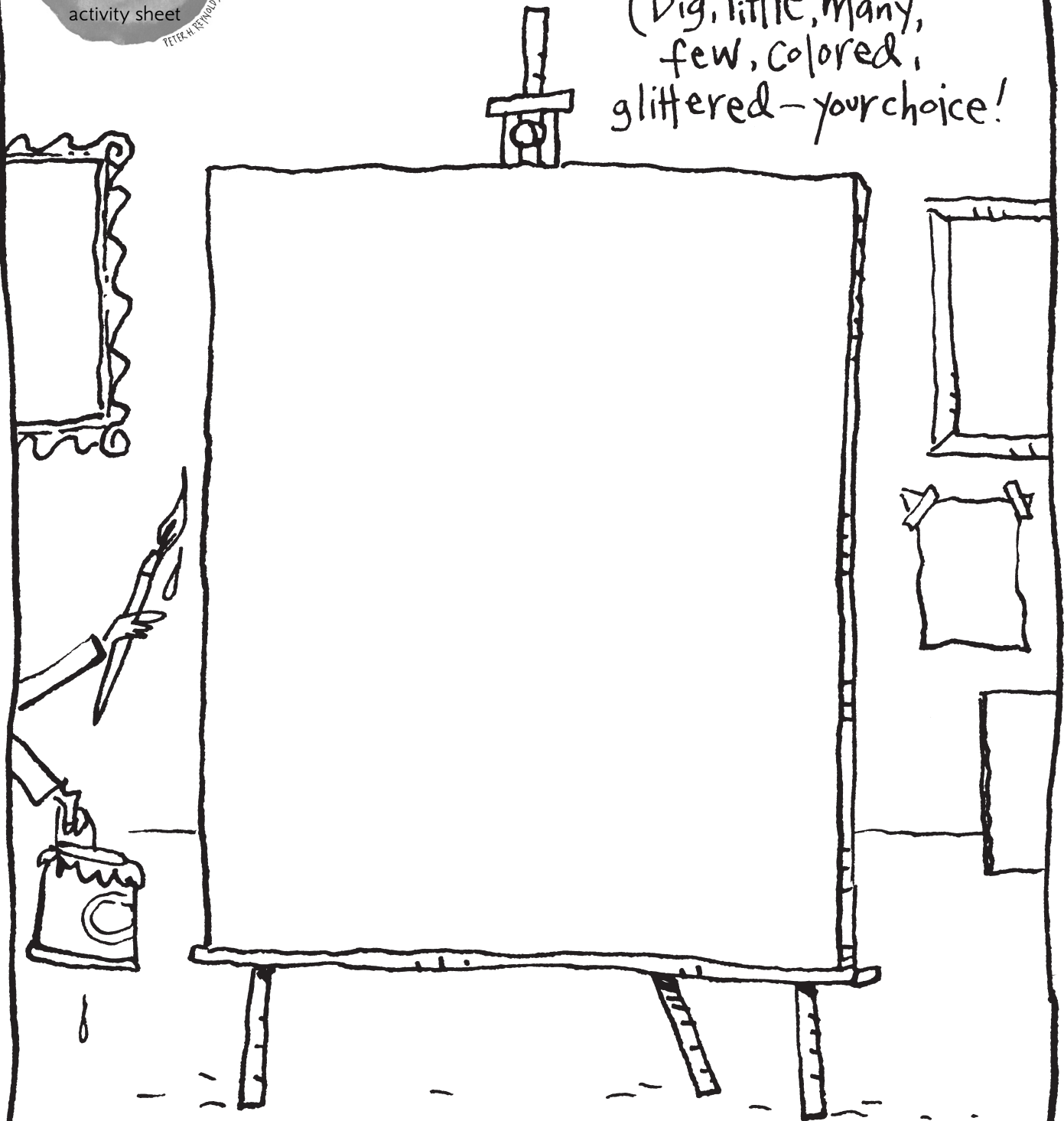
- Before reading the book, have a talk with your students about how we feel when we are starting something new. (This is especially apt at the beginning of the school year.)
- How do we feel when things seem difficult to do?
- Ask how many students like to draw.
- Tell them you are going to read a story about a girl who does not think she is good at drawing and what happens to her when she goes to art class.
- Follow the reading with a discussion about the story.
- Pass out large "dots" to your students and have them write their names on them, as well as some activities they enjoy.
- Have the students draw dots on the reproducible "easel" page provided. They can then carefully cut out their dots and paste them into their own swirly gold (or any color!) frame made of construction paper
- Invite your students to choose another shape or object. Have them explore this "idea" by trying to make as many different versions of the same thing, varying size, color, or texture, using negative space, etc.
- Provide your students with blank-page journals, for them to "make a mark" in every day (a word, a picture, something funny that happened that day, a doodle, a squiggle, a dot!).

One dot
can launch the
journey. ↓



Make your mark! Make your own dot!

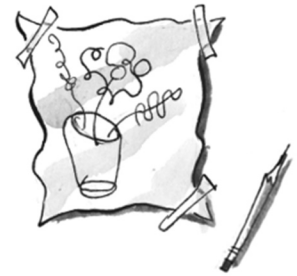
(Big, little, many,
few, colored,
glittered - your choice!)



Be sure to sign and date your work! Peter

Classroom Ideas for

ish



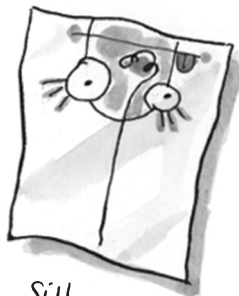
This is an Ish-ish list of possible ways to introduce and follow up on *Ish*. Feel free to adapt it to your grade level. (Try it with adults too!) Have fun!

- **The Squiggle-ish Game:** Play this with a partner. Squiggle a line for each other, trade sheets of paper and now try to make a drawing from the line your partner made. Relax, have fun, and use your imagination! On a roll? Add some paint, and cut it out and mount it on a darker piece of paper. Be sure to have BOTH artists sign their name to each finished drawing.

- **Ishing—Not Dishing.** After reading the book, *Ish*, discuss what Leon could have said to Ramon to be kinder. Have you heard people say hurtful things about someone's art, or their attempt to try something new? Brainstorm some things you can say to encourage—rather than discourage.

- **Ishful Portraits.** Create an ish-ful self-portrait. Have the whole class do this. You can also partner up and do a portrait of your partner and them of you. Label them ishfully, for example: "Peter-ish," "Wanda-ish"

- **Ishful Gallery.** Start a gallery of art that is ishful. For example, print out a Picasso portrait—you can label it "Face-ish." Try searching on the web using a search like "Abstract boat" or "Greek painting boat" or "Children face art", print them out and show them to the class. Ask what each one is. Students will learn to see patterns, be more imaginative, be more generous in their interpretations, be less literal, develop open minds.



Silly-ish

- **Ishful Feelings.** Brainstorm moods. Have students select a mood to paint or draw. Label them ishfully. Ex. "Stubborn-ish" "Happy-ish" etc.

- **Ish Upon a Star.** Have each student draw a star on a notecard. Have them paint them. Label them with their names. Then glue them to a big banner creating a constellation of stars. Ask students to find two stars exactly the same. You can label the banner "When You Ish Upon a Star." Then after, discuss what a real star is. What does it look like? Show images from www.nasa.org of real stars. Ask if their star looks like the photo. Let them discover that their drawing is actually star-ish!



fish-ish

- **Ishful Poems.** Read Ramon's poem from the book, *Ish*. Have students brainstorm their favorite words. Perhaps those words will trigger some ishful poetry. Read some poems that don't rhyme or have innovative structure. Magnetic poetry is also helpful for ishing up a good ishful poem.

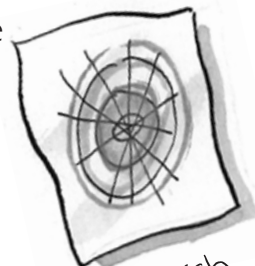


tree-ish

- **Ishful Math.** Estimation is a life-long learning skill. Show

groups of items in photographs, but only for a few seconds. For example: how many chickens? Perhaps a dozen-ish? The number of muffins in a bakery store window. A hundred-ish? The number of people in a baseball stadium? Twenty thousand-ish? If a student is stumped in math, just encourage them to put down an "answer-ish." If they show you some work or an answer, even if they feel it is wrong, they will have provided you something to help you see the pattern of their thinking. This will give you some insight into their thinking and how you might be able to help them.

- **Ishful Science.** Show images of familiar animals. Then begin showing ones that are less familiar. Ask students to identify them. If they are unsure, encourage them to use ishful thinking. "Monkey-ish", "raccoon-ish" etc. Write their ishful ideas down and then discuss the possible connections between the animals/species. This kind of thinking allows scientists to make "educated guesses" or a "hypothesis" which starts off the scientific method.

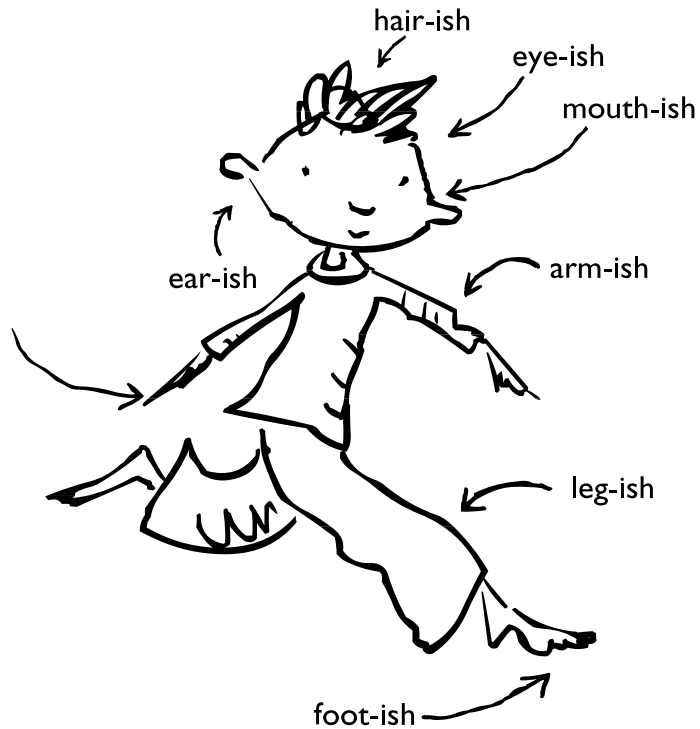


sun-ish



This is an ish-ful boy.

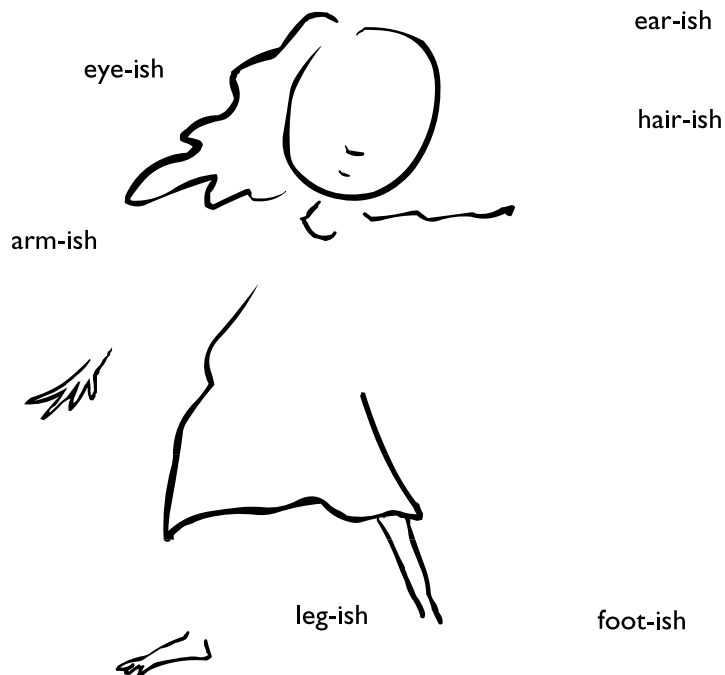
Is this a hand?
It looks like a
squiggle, but we're
sure it's a hand
because it is at the
end of the arm!
It is hand-ish!



If you'd like to, paint this ish-ful boy. I
Paint on him or around him.



Fin-ish this ish-ful girl.





Relax. Have fun.

Draw your own versions of what Ramon drew.

tree-ish

house-ish

boat-ish

afternoon-ish

fish-ish

sun-ish

peace-ish

excited-ish

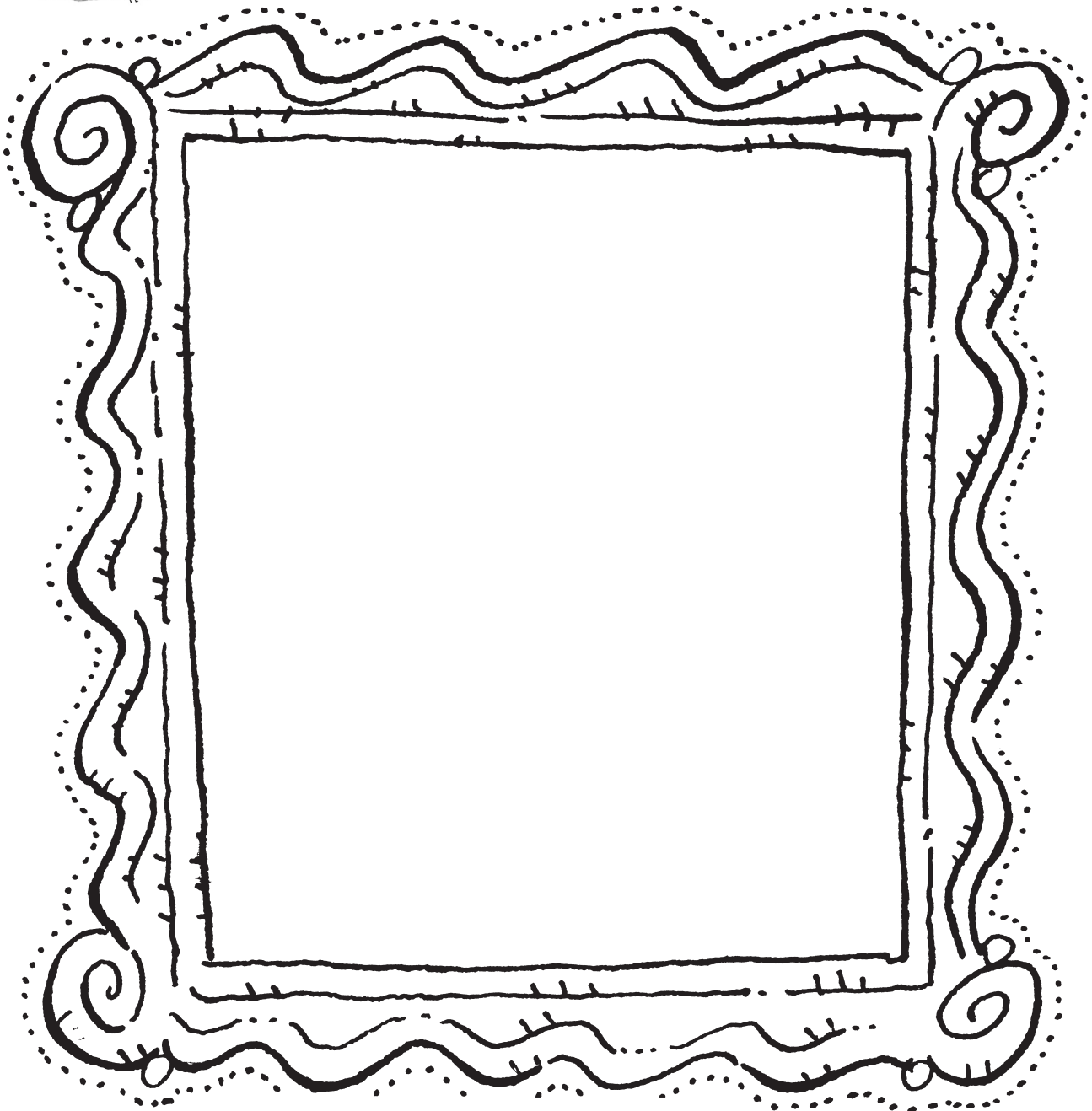
What other things can you draw ishfully? Try writing a poem-ish about your ishful art!

the
dot

activity sheet

PETER H. REYNOLDS

Here's a swirly frame for your creation!



Cut out the frame, add your art,
and hang it up to share.