



Story Summary

One rainy night, Wally's family finds an old steamer trunk in the attic. Inside is a pile of paintings drawn from a single line from an enchanted pen. They could only belong to Uncle George, who believed that all stories begin with one line and a rich imagination.

Award-winning author and illustrator Wallace Edwards explores the world of storytelling through a single pen line that grows into an image and the first line of a new story. Readers will be inspired to finish the simple stories that begin with "Once Upon a Line" or use the enchanted story line to tell their own unique tale. A key at the end of the book identifies the single line that is at the core of each image. An absorbing book filled with paintings rich in detail and color

Wallace Edwards is a beloved children's book author-illustrator whose vivid imagination has transformed the world of animals and strange creatures for a generation of children. A graduate of the Ontario College of Art, he is a popular guest speaker at conferences and literary events. Wallace's awards and shortlists include the Governor General's Award, the IRA Children's Choice Award, and the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award. Wallace lives in Yarker, Ontario.

Picture Book Ages 6–9 | ISBN: 978-1927485-78-1 | Pages: 32

Themes:

Imagination, fantasy, Visual Art

BISAC Codes

JUV051000 JUVENILE FICTION / Imagination & Play

JUV002000 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / General

JUV020000 JUVENILE FICTION / Interactive Adventures

JUV009000 JUVENILE FICTION / Concepts / General

Reading Level

Fountas & Pinnell: Q | Lexile measure :AD540L

Additional Resources

Pair this book with:

Other books by Wallace Edwards (e.g. *Woodrow at Sea*, *Uncle Wally's Old Brown Shoe*, *Alphabeasts*, *Monkey Business*, *The Cat's Pajamas*)

Curriculum Connections

This guide contains a read-aloud guide, two detailed collections of follow-up activities (one each for visual arts and writing), and a mini-unit author study.

Activity/Activity Set	Main Subject Area	Specific Skills
Read-Aloud	Listening Comprehension	Imagining, making connections
Visual Arts Activities	Visual Arts	Solving design challenges, using line and space
Storytelling	Writing	Brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing
Author Study	Reading Comprehension	Making connections

Bibliography

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/arts18b09curr.pdf>

The Read-Aloud

After hearing *Once Upon a Line* the first time, students are sure to ask for it again or read it on their own, as there is too much to see, hear, contemplate, and say about it for one sitting!

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in oral texts
- extend understanding of oral texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience; to other familiar texts, including print and visual texts; and to the world around them

You Will Need

- *Once Upon a Line*
- Chart paper and markers or interactive whiteboard
- piece of clear acetate or plastic at least 3” square (e.g. an overhead transparency sheet, the clear lid from a greeting-card box, or a flat piece of plastic packaging)
- fine-tip black permanent marker

How To:

Before Reading

Beforehand, prepare acetate: using permanent marker, carefully trace the red line on the inside title page (along the chicken’s back) onto the piece of acetate or clear plastic. (Don’t use the similar black line on the first page of the story, as it’s a different size). Keep this concealed near you as you begin to read. Also, familiarize yourself with the book, and the key on the last page. Make sure you know where the hidden line is on at least the second spread.

Read the title. Ask “What phrase does this remind you of?” (Hopefully, “Once upon a time.”) Read the author’s name. Ask if students know any other books by Wallace Edwards. Explain that there is no illustrator’s name because Wallace Edwards is both the author and the illustrator. Turn to the title page. Invite students to tell what they see there. Wonder aloud, “Hmm, I wonder what that’s all about?”

During Reading

First spread: Read expressively, emphasizing the sentences, “See if you can find it” and “Now, use your imagination to finish each story.”

Second spread: Read the text, then go back to the previous page and ask, “What do you suppose Wally meant by “See if you can find it?” If necessary, suggest that he is inviting the children to find the line shown at the bottom of the page. Turn back to the second spread and see if anyone can find it. If no one can, point it out by tracing it with your finger. Say, “It might be hard to tell what I’m pointing at, so I have this little pattern to help us.” Show the acetate template. Place it on the page so that it follows the hidden line (see last page for key, if necessary). Don’t tell students that the pen is also pictured on every page, but if someone notices, show interest and invite students to find it on subsequent pages. Again, turn back to the previous page and ask, “I wonder what Wally meant by ‘Now use your imagination to finish each story?’” Return to the second spread and see if any students have ideas to complete that story. You will explore the story-telling more fully in a different activity.

Subsequent pages: Continue reading and giving students the opportunity to find the hidden line (and the pen) and to continue each story. Let them use the template to show their peers where the line is. After about half the book, don’t reveal the location of any more lines. Tell students they may look for the line but should keep it a secret so that everyone can have the fun of finding it on their own at the reading center during their spare time. Likewise, don’t allow students to tell where the pen is hidden during the second half of the book. However, on the final spread (the elephant in the umbrella), allow students to find the line and pen again so that the play on words in Great-Uncle George’s “Thank you for finding my pen!” on the last page will make sense.

After Reading

Place the book at the reading center along with the template and invite students to read or look at it and to find the line and the pen wherever they can.

A subsequent reading can be used to explore text-to-text connections. In this book, Wallace Edwards alludes to a number of stories that normally begin “Once Upon a Time.” See if students can find them (e.g. “The Tortoise and the Hare,” “Red Riding Hood,” “The Little Mermaid”). Have students note ways in which Edwards’ illustrations differ from the traditional tales (tortoise and hare are spectators at the race, the wolf is wearing the red hood). If students don’t know these tales, read them at another time.

A further reading can be used to introduce or add to a study of adjectives. Invite students to find adjectives on every page (e.g. humble, grand, great, fluffy, greedy, new, fine...). Some of these words may be new vocabulary for students. Define them for students, use them in a sentence, consciously use them in everyday speech, and encourage students to do the same.

Activity 1: Visual Arts Activities

In this activity, students re-create some of Great-Uncle George’s “lost” paintings!

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- develop an understanding of the elements of design (here we focus on line and space)
- use a variety of materials, tools, and techniques to respond to design challenges

You Will Need

- *Once Upon a Line*
- photocopier
- crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, or markers
- chart stand and markers
- fine-tip black felt or gel pens for each student
- pencils
- yellow highlighter
- blackline master “The Singing Shoe” (optional)

How To:

1. Remind students that Great-Uncle George had painted hundreds of paintings but all that remain are the 25 in this book. Tell them they have a chance to

help recreate some of the lost paintings. Trace Wallace Edwards’ line (or make a similar mark of your own) off-center on a sheet of paper and photocopy it so that every student has a copy. Invite students to imagine what it could become, turning the page different ways to change the orientation of the line. Have them draw a picture that incorporates the line. Show the pictures in *Once upon a Line* again, pointing out the horizon lines and background detail that Edwards has added. Encourage students to go back and add these things to their own drawings if they have not already, and then color them carefully with crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, or markers. Have students use their finished piece as inspiration for the writing activity below (step 3 in Activity 2). Post the finished artwork and stories on a bulletin board along with a copy of the line and an invitation for passersby to find the line in each piece of student art.

2. Play the game of “Shapes”: Have a student draw a simple shape or squiggle on chart paper and you make it into a simple picture (e.g. if the student draws something like an “S” shape, you can draw a cat next to it and the “S” becomes its tail). Next, have a student draw a different shape or squiggle and invite another student to make it into a picture. Afterwards, have students work in pairs or trios to play the game, taking turns being the shape-maker and the picture-maker.
3. Variation on “Shapes”: Have each student draw a simple shape or squiggle on clean white paper, using a fine black felt or gel pen, and write their name on the back using pencil. Number them (e.g. from 1 to 25) by writing a number on the front of each with black felt or gel pen, and then photocopy them once each. (Don’t copy them on a scanner/printer or the next step could smudge. Copies from regular photocopiers do not normally smudge when highlighted.) Draw along each photocopied mark with a yellow highlighter. The yellow should not show up on future photocopies. Test one to make sure this is the case. Do not use a darker color than yellow as it will probably show up as grey on the photocopies you will need to make later. Randomly hand out the highlighted copies, ensuring that no student gets their own. (Save the

originals. They will become the “clues.”) Invite students to make the shape into a picture using the same type of pen. Have them write their name on the back in pencil. Photocopy all the drawings. The photocopies should look the same as the drawings but without the yellow highlighter showing. This new copy is the “puzzle sheet”. The drawing with the yellow highlighter on it is the answer key. Compile everything into a book so that each “puzzle sheet” is facing its corresponding “clue” (original shape/squiggle) and arranged in numerical order. Put all the answer keys (that is, the highlighted drawings) in numerical order at the back of the book. Students play the game by trying to find the shape on the “clue” page hidden within the “puzzle page” as they read the book. This game will be perfect for K-1 students. To make it more challenging for older students, modify the clue pages by cutting out the shape and gluing it onto a new sheet in a different position and/or orientation. An alternative to compiling the puzzles in a book is to create a bulletin board where passersby can try to find the hidden shapes.

4. **The Singing Shoe:** Turn to the illustration of the man with the singing shoe. Make sure students see the similarities between the man’s face and the shoe. Invite them to sketch their own shoe in a similar position and turn it into a face. For younger students, or for a quicker, more independent activity, use the blackline master “The Singing Shoe.”

Activity 2: Storytelling

Students will progress from oral cooperative storytelling to independent writing of an original story.

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- generate ideas about a potential topic, using a variety of strategies and resources
- write short texts using a variety of forms
- identify elements of their writing that need improvement, using feedback from the teacher and peers, with a focus on specific features
- spell familiar words correctly (e.g., words from their oral vocabulary, anchor charts, the class word wall, and shared-, guided-, and independent-reading texts)
- spell unfamiliar words using a variety of strategies that

- involve understanding sound-symbol relationships, word structures, word meanings, and generalizations about spelling
- determine whether the ideas and information they have gathered are relevant and adequate for the purpose, and gather new material if necessary (e.g., discuss the content with a peer or reading buddy)

You Will Need

- talking stick (optional)
- *Once Upon a Line*
- pencils and paper
- scissors and tape

How To:

1. If your students have not done cooperative storytelling before, introduce it by having them retell a familiar story. It could be a traditional tale like “The Three Bears” or a story that you have read recently in class. Sit in a circle. Tell students they will take turns adding about one sentence to the story. It can be helpful to use a “talking stick,” an ancient aboriginal communication tool which is explained in several sources online. It is recommended to learn the rules for talking stick use (for example, listening carefully to the speaker) outside of this activity. The teacher can begin the story to get things started. If any students get stuck, prompt them as needed. Next, have the class cooperatively tell an original story using a familiar character.
2. Have students cooperatively tell a story based on one of the pages from *Once Upon a Line*, for example, the fourth story-starter in which the fisherman is trying out his new fishing pole. The teacher can read the page and then invite the student next to them to continue. Using a talking stick makes this seamless. The setting on this page is so vast that there should be plenty of adventures for the fisherman to have so that all students can have a turn to contribute. On other days, repeat this activity with other pages from *Once Upon a Line*. Encourage students to read the book with a partner during their free time and together create new stories based on their favorite pages.
3. Have students write a story to go with their artwork from above (Activity 1, step 1). Here are some suggestions for completing each stage of the writing process:

Pre-writing: Have students show their artwork to a partner and, cooperatively with the partner, create a story (orally) around it. Then make up a story around the partner's artwork. Switch to a different partner and repeat the activity one or two more times. Give students some time to think about the story ideas they have heard and given and perhaps write down some brainstorming ideas on a blank paper. Have them get together with another partner if they wish, to rehearse the ideas they have chosen for their story (i.e. tell their story aloud). **Drafting:** Perhaps on a different day, examine several pages of *Once Upon a Line* and prompt students to notice that Edwards always begins with the words "Once upon a line" and usually introduces the character to complete the first sentence. The second sentence gives more detail about what is happening in the picture but is then incomplete. Tell students that they will not leave their second sentence incomplete but will finish it with details that are not in their picture but from their imaginations. They will then write many more sentences to describe the rest of the adventure. Give students time in a quiet classroom to write their story. Remind them to begin with the words "Once Upon a Line" and follow with introducing the main character. **Revising:** Show students a draft that you have written based on this writing activity. Make it obvious that your draft is missing detail. Read it to students and have them suggest ways in which you could improve. Write additions on a separate piece of paper and demonstrate how to cut your draft apart and insert the missing detail. Have students do peer conferences. Using feedback from peers and you, and their own ideas, encourage students to determine if important detail is missing from their story and, if so, to add it the way you demonstrated. **Editing:** Young writers cannot be expected to self-edit their entire piece. They will have (hopefully) used many invented spellings in order to include interesting words that are neither on the word wall nor in their picture dictionary. Here is one way to encourage young writers to self-edit: They read their piece slowly, correcting any mistakes they notice, especially on word wall words. As they go, they can circle words they know they guessed at. Give them a reasonable number to circle (say, 4). This

will only be a small fraction of the words they have misspelled but it may be all they can manage. If students are capable, they can look those words up in a dictionary or in classroom books, but most often, the teacher will correct these words for them. The teacher will also correct any other misspellings or punctuation, or perhaps circle a few that they feel the student can fix on their own. For struggling young writers, still have them read their piece and circle a few words, but then the teacher neatly and correctly prints out the entire piece for the student to copy. For very young writers (K and early grade 1) who do not have the stamina to re-write their work, teachers can skip the editing and rewriting steps and simply type students' stories correctly and print them out. Some teachers prefer to display students' original drafts to show the skills that students have control over. **Rewriting:** On a different day, have students who are able to rewrite their piece onto lined paper. Teachers may choose to type the stories for one or more of their students or to display the original draft. **Displaying:** Place on a bulletin board with the corresponding artwork from Activity 1, step 1.

Activity 3: Author Study

Being immersed in the imaginative and fascinating work of Wallace Edwards is sure to make a lasting impression on students and get their own imaginations burning!

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- identify specific elements of texts and explain how they contribute to the meaning of the texts
- express personal opinions about ideas presented in texts
- extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them

You Will Need

- Several of Wallace Edwards' books (e.g. *Woodrow at Sea*, *Uncle Wally's Old Brown Shoe*, *Alphabeasts*, *Monkey Business*, *The Cat's Pajamas*) in addition to *Once Upon a Line*. If any of them are currently unavailable, check your school or community library.

How To:

1. Read as many of Wallace Edwards' books as you can find.
2. At the top of a sheet of chart paper, write Wallace Edwards' name.
3. As you read each book, ask students what they liked about it and record their responses on the chart paper using point form. After a few books, your students may notice some similarities among them. For example, the books are often richly illustrated, feature animal characters, and have objects hidden in the pictures. Students may say they are funny or have other words to describe the books. Some are adventure books (*Woodrow at Sea*, *Uncle Wally's Old Brown Shoe*), and *Once Upon a Line* invites students to help define the adventures.
4. Wallace Edwards' books are filled with allusions and references, providing rich opportunities for students to make connections: text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world. Show approximately three illustrations per day (more for older students) and ask students, "What does this remind you of?" or "What does this make you think of?"

Some examples from Once Upon a Line:

The first page (a humble creature) could reference the fable "The Lion and the Mouse" if students know it. The second page alludes to the fable "The Tortoise and the Hare" as well as the saying "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" The third page surely references "The Greedy Monkey" and other fables about greed. Even the youngest children will get Mr. Wolf dressed as Little Red Riding Hood. Students may not know Andersen's original "The Little Mermaid", but might be reminded of the comical scene in which Ariel tries to figure out the purposes of human objects in Disney's version. The prince who could dream in color resembles a playing-card king and is adorned with the four suits on the collar of his cloak. The young bird who did not want to grow up is holding onto a remnant of his infancy (the egg shell). Is this a Peter Pan reference? What artifacts of early childhood do the students keep? A favorite stuffy to cuddle at night? Don't point out the camouflaged dinosaur—students will be delighted to find it on their own! And does the vine on the ground remind them of the skeletal spine

- of a larger dinosaur they may have seen in a museum? If some of the references are obvious to you but lost on the children, consider enriching their repertoire of classics by reading some of the old fables and tales to them.
5. Store the collection of books where students have easy access to them. Encourage them to read or look at them in their spare time. Invite students to keep lists of things they have found hidden in each book. Store the lists between the pages of the books or in card pockets and encourage future readers to find the items and add to the lists if they can.
 6. Math activity: A number of motifs are repeated in Edwards' books: ducks, elephants, feathers, etc. Have students use the blackline master "Hidden Objects" as they read any of Edwards' books. They will tally the objects they find either hidden within the pictures or in plain sight. Afterward, they can make a bar graph using the data they have tallied.
 7. After completing several of the above activities, ask students if they have anything to add to the chart of things they like about Wallace Edwards' books. Then learn more about Edwards himself, using book jackets and the internet. Add these facts to the chart. Teach students how to turn point form into sentences: Explain that the chart is in point form but you want to write a sentence about Edwards. Invite students to tell you a fact in a complete sentence. If no one can do this, model it a few times until they can. Have students write a paragraph describing Edwards and his work. Guide them to begin with the words "Wallace Edwards is..." and finish the sentence with what they feel is the most important fact about him. ("If someone asked you who Wallace Edwards is, what would you say?") Display the finished paragraphs near your displayed art and writing from the activities above.



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Name: _____

Hidden Objects

As you read one of Wallace Edwards' books, tally the number of times you see each of these things in the pictures, either hidden or in plain sight. Add two more names of things you see repeated in the book and tally them as well.

Book Title: _____

Object	Tally
heart	
dinosaur	
duck	
other birds	
feather (not on a bird)	
egg	
bowtie	
necktie	
scarf	
elephant	
robot	
playing card (or character from one)	
motorcycle	
monkey	

Name: _____

The Singing Shoe

