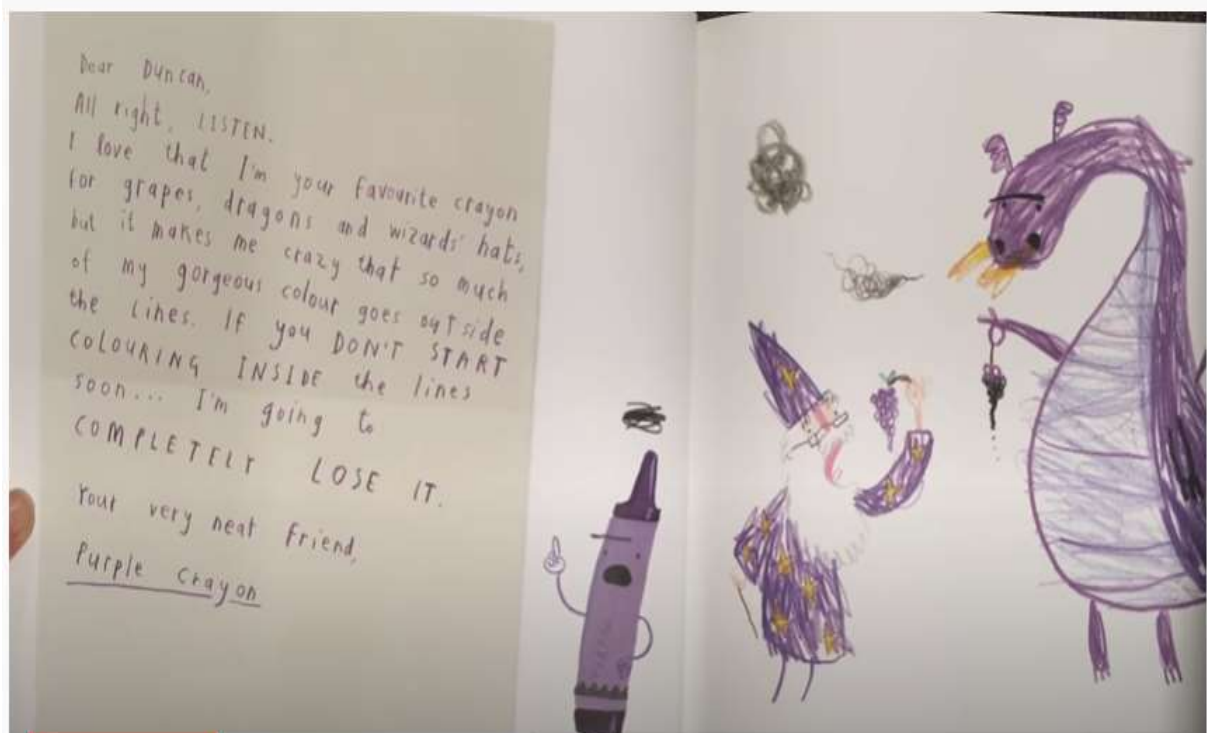


The Day the Crayons Quit is a fun book for young children. When you read it as a more experienced reader, however, you realise that there are lots of clever jokes in it and the author clearly knows a lot about how children draw and how they think. It is a very clever idea for a story and has a letter format.

Each crayon writes a letter to the boy Duncan and complains about its lot. It has a unique take on the world according to its colour and the colouring job it is required to do.

For example, the purple crayon is very upset at Duncan's lousy colouring: I love that the text is written in purple crayon and the endless colouring of grapes, dragons and wizards' hats has become really boring. The character of the crayon is also given in the way the crayon wants to be neat and stay in the lines.



The yellow and orange crayons are barely speaking and they both feel they are the exclusive colour of the sun. The other crayons even take sides.

This book got me thinking about the pens I use. My orange pen is my "Outstanding Orange" pen and I use it for marking children's work. I use it to make encouraging remarks and point out the good stuff. My green pen is for "Going on Green!" and gives top tips for things that need changing or mistakes that need rectifying.

I imagine my orange pen might say,

Hey!

I'm in here! I've been in this pencil case for rather too long and I need to come out! You've been using a keyboard all the time haven't you? You've been writing comments on purple mash and I don't get a look in! Not fair!

I love putting all the fantastic ticks all over the children's work - the fabulous sentences in English; the good reasoning in maths; the careful choice of cool vocabulary.... I even liked drawing the smiley faces, although they sometimes were a bit lop sided! Let's do more of this!

I really liked to work in partnership with my old friend the purple pen. He did all the hard work, fixing things, adding things in and making changes and then I got to sweep in the end with the well done! (I didn't like to say anything to Green Pen but, you know, she's so picky! "Why is this here?" and "Not sure what you mean here" – she just wants everything perfect. Some pens are never satisfied! She needs to relax and just say "Cool! Yay! Go You!")

...and so on....

My orange pen seems to have developed irritating expressions and become very enthusiastic whilst lying in a pencil case, I notice!

What might your pen or pencil say to you? Is it enjoying a rest? Does it miss being busy or is it overworked with all this home learning? What would it like to write or draw? Is it nervous about having to write a new language next year or draw diagrams? Is it afraid you might swap it for a(dramatic music).... Keyboard?!

Think about how you could make this idea work for you. You can use the layout idea of the book above and add illustrations or purple mash has pages for writing and drawing.

Have fun with this. Happy crayoning!