



Carlo Collodi wrote *The Adventures of Pinocchio* a hundred and thirty years ago. The story originally appeared weekly in parts in a children's newspaper, and these the installments were later made into a book. In its own time, the story was meant to discipline children, and to teach them to not be naughty. In the course of time, with changing notions of childhood, this 'message' became less important. But Pinocchio's lovable antics, his love for adventure, and Collodi's storytelling abilities endured, and turning this tale into a fable of childhood, its perils and joys. This allowed the story to transcend its own time – to become what we would call a 'classic'.

Since its initial publication, *Pinocchio* has been translated into many languages and appeared in many versions, some of them illustrated by famous artists. One of the hallmarks of a classic is the fact that it can be interpreted differently, by people in different times and places. And so it is with our version of Pinocchio: we worked with a scroll painter from West Bengal, and asked her to illustrate the story in her own colourful style. So the artist's characters look Indian, and her way of depicting the story is unlike any other version of Pinocchio. In the process, she makes the story her own, and gives it an added dimension, bringing a new meaning to the term 'universal'.

Talk About

- Try to find other illustrated versions of Pinocchio, and look at them with the child. What is similar about the various versions? What is different? What is particular about *The Patua Pinocchio*?
- Pinocchio was written over hundred years ago in another language and in another country. How is it that we read his story today? Use this question to get children to think of how stories travel, which stories travel and why – you could point to what makes a story appealing to children everywhere, using examples from Pinocchio, and then introduce the idea of a 'classic'.
- Encourage children to find out more about classics: from your library, pick out two books that are considered classics. Talk about them: Who wrote them? Which part of the world do they come from? When were they written?
- Point out to children that books that are considered classics can be recreated – that is, each time a classic is made available, something is – or can be – added to it. Look at *The Patua Pinocchio* in this light.
- Draw attention to the way the characters are painted. Talk about different styles of painting. Look up the Bengal Patuas and their style of art.
- Explain that this is the first time an artist from India has illustrated this book. How has the artist drawn Pinocchio's face, his clothes? Is there anything common between Gepetto, the Fire-eater and the Fisherman? What about the Fox and the Cat, and the Talking cricket? Is the Blue Fairy shown differently from the way fairies are normally drawn? Look at the scenes on pages 70, 77, 167. What is interesting about these pictures?
- Can you think of other ways of telling and drawing the story of Pinocchio?
- Ask children to talk about their favourite scene and character in the book and discuss it together.
- Pinocchio is a puppet who becomes a boy – why does Pinocchio want to become a boy?

Activities

Make Your Own Pinocchio

- Draw a Pinocchio figure, in profile, making sure that the nose is prominent. Cut it out. Make several copies of the drawing. Draw a series of noses, which get longer and longer. Invent some lies that Pinocchio tells, and paste the noses onto him, as the lies grow.

Create Your Own Pinocchio Story

- Make a list of all the important characters.
- Draw each of the characters, and cut them out. If you're working in a group, each child chooses one or more characters to draw. Make several copies of the character drawings.
- Make a list of important scenes. Either draw the scenes, or search for the settings in magazines - for example, a studio, a house, a school, the sea etc. etc. Paste the figures into the settings. Write captions to the drawings.
- Put the images in order, and either use them as flash cards to tell the story, or write out the captions and text, and stitch them together as a book.