

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 11, "Discoveries"
Activity #13

OBJECTIVE: Students use library and Internet resources to learn about Muslim and Pharaonic history in Egypt.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

To see both sides of the original Egyptian pound note drawn on p. 11, go to the following web page:

<http://www.banknotes.com/EG51.JPG>

"There are thousands of things around us that we don't even see, because we don't take the time to look at them," says Mr. Ellabbad on this page. He specifically looks at a 10-pound note (money) from Egypt and notices all the different drawings on it.

Take a good look at the side with Arabic writing. In the middle there is a picture of the Al-Rifai Mosque in Cairo, an important mosque (or masjid in Arabic) in the city. In your school library you can read about mosques in general, and mosques in Cairo. Other mosques in Cairo include Al-Azhar Mosque, Ibn Tulun Mosque, and Muhammad Ali Mosque. Find a book about Egypt, or look online for photographs of and information about these mosques. Write a few sentences about the history of one of the mosques. Look at the images and write about what you see. Find a particular picture that you like and draw part of it in your journal. Write about why you liked it.

On the other side of the 10-pound note is a picture of a pharaoh from ancient Egypt, with pyramids in the background and hieroglyphics on the left side. As you may have learned, ancient times are an important part of Egypt's history, and there are many historical areas throughout the country that feature statues of pharaohs, pyramids, hieroglyphics, mummies, and other artifacts from ancient Egypt. Look up one of these words from ancient Egypt—pharaoh, pyramid, hieroglyphics, mummy, obelisk, sarcophagus, scarab, papyrus—in a dictionary or on the Internet and write a few sentences about it. You can also ask your school librarian to help you look up these topics in the library.

mosque—a Muslim place of worship
masjid—Arabic word for "mosque"

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 11, "Discoveries"
Activity #14

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on the significance of images on currency, and create their own personal currency.

If you look at the currency of any country in the world, including the United States, you will notice that it has pictures of places and monuments that are important to that country. These can be very old, like pyramids, or from more modern times. In all cases, the pictures and words on a country's currency usually reflect the values of that country and what it holds dear.

Pretend that the place where you live (your bedroom, apartment, or house) is a country and give it a fun name (like Melissaland, Juan's Republic, iNation, etc.). Design your own 10-pound note. What will you draw and write on the front and the back? What is important about where you live, and about your life? Include scenes or objects or words that are particularly significant in your life. Show both sides of your 10-pound note in your notebook.

currency—something that is used as a medium of exchange, such as money

values—the ideas, customs, principles, etc. of a society

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 11, "Discoveries"
Activity #15

OBJECTIVE: Students engage in creative drawing and writing as forms of self-expression.

The last line of the author's essay on this page says, "...have you ever looked at the beautiful landscape that is drawn right in the palm of your hand?" Put your palms side by side and take a good look at them. Compare them with each other, and then look at each one individually. What do you notice? Put one hand, palm facing upward, in the middle of a fresh page in your notebook and trace the outline of your hand with a pencil. Copy the designs of the palm of that hand into the outlined palm in your notebook. Write about what these designs look like. Do they resemble something familiar to you? What do they make you think of? Write a short poem about what these designs look like to you; here is an example:

Landscape in My Palm

*I see elongated grooves,
like tilled earth waiting
for flowers to sprout,
and small rivulets
ebbing and flowing
each time I open
and close
my hand.*

Now look at the outline of your hand, in your notebook, and pretend that the designs in your palm extend beyond your hand. Draw them out onto the page and make them radiate out of your palm in ways that you think are fun and interesting — straight, flowing, jagged, interrupted, thicker, or thinner, and ending in designs or words (or nothing at all). Give your drawing a fitting title and sign your name and add the date underneath.

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 12, "First Impressions"
Activity #16

OBJECTIVE: Students make a self-to-text connection while reflecting on their dreams.

Read the essay on page 12 and look at the picture. The child looking up at the airplane is awed by its size and speed. When you were very young, was there something that seemed truly amazing to you? Did you dream about doing something really interesting, like traveling in an airplane? What made you have this dream? Have you been able to make your dream come true? Write about your childhood dream, or draw a picture of your dream and write a brief explanation below your drawing.

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 13, "The Artist and the Flowers"
Activity #17

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on how emotions affect artistic production, and try their hand at the artist's job.

Look at the pictures at the top and bottom of page 13, then read the essay. Can you see the difference between the two pictures? Write about what you see, and explain which one you like more. Why do you think the artist likes the bottom one more?

If you were creating a counting book for children and had to draw a picture for the number "7," what would you draw? Create a page for a counting book that illustrates the number seven. You can show 7 items that belong together, or draw pictures about the 7 days of the week, or paint an object that has 7 sides—be creative! Be sure to include on the page the two symbols (Arabic and Indian numerals) for the number seven, 7 and ७.

If you would like to use the numerals 1-7 in your drawing, refer to Activity #8A, p. 14 in this guide, to see how they are written in the Arab world.

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 14, "Cats"
p. 15 "How Should We Draw?", & p. 16, "Draw a Wolf"
Activity #18

OBJECTIVE: Students use illustration and then writing to consider the production of art.

Read these three pages and contemplate the pictures on each of them. Decide on an object or an animal that you would like to draw. Look through old magazines or on the Internet and find different pictures of this object or animal. Cut them out (or download/print them) and paste them in your notebook. Which do you like and which do you not like? Why or why not? Then draw your own picture of this object or animal. Does it look like any of the others? What makes the picture you drew "your own"? Does it look like "a printing press picture"?

Think more about what makes a true artist, and a good artist. Do you agree with Mr. Ellabbad, that a good artist "is one who can mix up...different memories and pieces of information" in order to create a drawing that reflects his or her style? Write a few sentences expressing your thoughts about what a true artist might be. And to go a little further, what do you think makes a "good writer"? Do you think Mr. Ellabbad would say that a good writer "is one who can mix up...different memories and pieces of information" in order to create a story or poem that reflects his or her style? Write down your thoughts in your journal.

printing press — a machine that transfers letters or images through ink on paper
style — the way in which something is said, done, expressed, or performed; a quality or imagination and individuality expressed in one's actions and tastes

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 17, "My Color"
Activity #19

OBJECTIVE: Students explore the idea of variations in skin color by trying to replicate their own in words and with art materials, and by reflecting on the variations in their community.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

There are many reasons why people have evolved to have different skin colors throughout the world. One of the major reasons is melanin, which is the pigment in each person's skin. There are two forms of it, each of which produces variations in the color of one's skin. In addition, the less there is of melanin and the smaller the melanin molecules, the lighter one's skin, and the more of it and the larger the melanin molecules, the darker the skin. Generally speaking, that is why each of us has a different "color" of skin.

Read the essay on page 17, and write a few sentences explaining why the author feels he needs to mix his own paints to come up with the closest paint color to his own skin. Remember that his country, Egypt, is located on the Mediterranean and close to sub-Saharan Africa; therefore, it has often been considered as one of the "crossroads" of trade and travel in history. Many people, of all skin tones, have always lived in or traveled through Egypt.

Do you think the "flesh pink" paint that Mr. Ellabbad got from Europe and North America represents the skin color of people who live in Europe and North America? Write a brief paragraph in your notebook about why or why not.

It is interesting that many years ago, the American company Johnson & Johnson started making "skin tone" bandages, but they were very light and matched most closely only the skin of people who had light skin. How do you think darker-skinned people felt about this? Many people and organizations criticized the company. Eventually, Johnson & Johnson stopped manufacturing these bandages and substituted them with clear ones that allow "your natural skin tone to show through."

Write your thoughts about the variations of skin color among people in the world. How would you describe the color of your skin in words? Can you mix paints or use one or more coloring pencils together to match the color of your skin? Try to do so in your notebook, and write under the final color what you did to arrive at that color. How about the skin of everyone who lives in your area of the world? Are there big variations among them all?

Mediterranean — an inland sea surrounded by Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and northern Africa. It connects with the Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar; with the Black Sea through the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus; and with the Red Sea through the Suez Canal

pigment — a substance, such as chlorophyll or melanin, that produces a color in plant or animal tissue

sub-Saharan — the region of Africa to the south of the Sahara Desert

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 18, "Left and Right"
& p. 19, "Heroes"
Activity #20

OBJECTIVE: By thinking about the left-to-right and right-to-left orientation of English and Arabic script and images, students reflect on language orientation and how it might affect perspective.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Go to the following web site to read about all world languages:

<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/direction.htm>

If you have access to American comic books, look at their covers and inside to see which way the heroes are drawn. Do the pictures of them face from left to right, like the picture of Superman on page 18? On this page we learn about the author's discovery that in Arabic-speaking countries, where the language flows from right to left, he noticed that people draw and look at pictures from right to left. Conversely, he believes that in countries where the language is written left to right, people there draw and look at pictures from left to right.

How has it felt to be flipping the pages of this book from right to left? Are you used to it by now, or do you have to keep reminding yourself to turn the pages opposite from the way you are used to turning them?

Two dictionary definitions of the word "perspective" are: "a mental view or outlook," and "the appearance of objects in depth as perceived by normal binocular vision [using both eyes]." If a person's vision is trained to follow words and pictures from right to left, or from left to right, how do you think this would influence his or her perspective? How about if they read and write a language that flows vertically, from top to bottom?

When you go to the web site above, you will find that there are different writing systems in the world, and many of them go in different directions. For instance, Arabic and Hebrew go from right to left horizontally, English and Russian go from left to right horizontally, and Mongolian goes from left to right vertically. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean can be written from right to left vertically or from left to right horizontally. Do you think these directions of writing affect the perspective of the people who live in those countries? Why or why not? Respond to all these questions in your journal, as you discuss what perspective is and the different factors that affect perspective. Might there be other things that affect a person's perspective, besides language?

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 18, "Left and Right"
& p. 19, "Heroes"
Activity #21

OBJECTIVE: Students learn about an Arab hero and consider their own cultural heroes.

The author has drawn a picture of King Baibars on page 19, a character from a traditional Arab epic. Actually, Baibars was a real person—a 13th century Mamluke king who won an important battle during the Crusades and became a hero in Arab history. He appears in stories that have been told for centuries in Arab countries. Look up King Baibars (also spelled Baybars) and the Mamlukes online or in an encyclopedia and write a short paragraph about them. Then think about real people who are heroes—not comic book heroes—in your culture. Look up one of them and write about her/him and why you think this person is important.

epic—a long narrative poem telling of a hero's adventures and accomplishments
Crusades—a series of wars fought from the late eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, in which European kings and warriors set out to gain control of the lands in which Jesus lived, known as the Holy Land; at that time, these areas were held largely by Muslims

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 20, "Upside Down"
Activity #22

OBJECTIVE: Students explore geographical orientation through map representations, reconsidering their map perspective.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Visit the web site "alternative world maps" for an "upside down" view of the world:

www.odtmaps.com

On page 20 we see a map from the 12th century, created by the Arab cartographer Al-Idrisi. As the author remarks, to our eyes in the 21st century, this map looks upside down—we need to turn the book around in order to make this map familiar to us. This is because in Al-Idrisi's time, Mr. Ellabbad explains, map makers put North at the bottom of a page and South at the top. Turn the book around and look at the map. Note that the seas and oceans are in dark blue, and land is in light brown. This is a map of northern Africa, Europe, and Asia, with the country that we now call Egypt just left of center. Note the river that extends upwards into a fan and hits the dark blue area—that is the Nile River, and the "fan" is the Nile delta. As you know, civilizations flourished in this area on the Nile for thousands of years.

We can pretend we are living in the 12th century and turn our own map of the continental United States upside down. Here is the result:



(Image from www.50states.com)

cartographer—a person who makes maps

delta—a roughly triangular area of land formed at the mouth of a river which reaches the sea in two or more branches

flourish—to be successful; prosper; thrive

Activity #22 (continued)

It looks very different to have Texas in the north and North Dakota in the south! But when you really think about it, as Mr. Ellabbad says, the Earth "isn't attached to the ceiling of a room or contained in a box, with a top and a bottom." It's a question of perspective, and from space, there is no top and bottom, right and left.

Visit the web site from the beginning of the lesson . Go to the second row of maps and click on the one titled "The World Turned Upside Down." What looks familiar to you in this map? Does it look like another planet, or can you figure out what you are looking at? Do you think there is a reason that maps made in Europe or North America would place these two world regions on top? If you were a cartographer living in Africa or Australia, what would your map look like? Write a paragraph explaining your perspective. Then draw a map of the state where you live in the U.S., or of your country of origin, in your notebook, but have it be oriented differently than what we think is "normal" – make the south north, or the east west. Label it with a compass rose appropriate to your perspective.

oriented – to align or position with respect to a point or system of reference
(for example, a compass is oriented to the North)

compass rose – a symbol on a compass or map that is circular with graded

points for the directions

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 21, "The Sultan and Me"
& p. 29, "Signature"
Activity #23

OBJECTIVE: Students learn the importance of Arabic calligraphy by considering different styles of signature, and how a signature can express personality.

The fancy style of writing that the author employs on page 21 is a highly ornamental script used by sultans in the Ottoman Empire. In the middle of the page is the tughra of one sultan in this style of Arabic calligraphy, and at the bottom of the page is the signature of Mr. Ellabbad, in this same style. In both tughras, the words "always victorious" appear after the name. If you had two descriptive words that always appeared after your name, as part of your signature, what would they be? Sign your name and include those words near or within your signature in your notebook. Try to make it a fancy and decorative signature, with flowing lines.

Look at your fancy signature and think about other ways you might sign your name. How would you sign it when you are happy? Sad? Angry? If you were famous? Experiment with different styles in your notebook and label each one.

Now read the essay on page 29, noting how great Arabic calligraphers showed their modesty in the sentence they used to describe themselves after their signatures. Read the last paragraph on this page, which is how Mr. Ellabbad signed his first drawing. Think of a sentence that would describe you, and write that after your name in your notebook. You can use this the next time you sign a drawing!

ornamental – decorative

script – the characters or letters used in writing by hand; any system of writing

sultan – a ruler of a Muslim country, especially of the former Ottoman Empire

Ottoman Empire – a former Turkish empire that was founded about 1300 and reached its greatest territorial extent in the 16th century; it collapsed after World War I

tughra – Arabic word for "signature"

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 21, "The Sultan and Me"
& p. 29, "Signature"
Activity #24

OBJECTIVE: By reading an online reference, students learn about the art of Arabic calligraphy and then attempt it themselves, in Arabic and English.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Refer to pages 21 and 22 of the following web site:

<http://www.asia.si.edu/education/islam.pdf>

Arabic calligraphy (also called Islamic calligraphy) is an old art form that started with artists writing the pages of the holy book of Islam, the Qur'an. These scribes developed different styles of calligraphy over the centuries, and these styles continue to evolve to the present. The flowing lines and shapes of Arabic letters, as well as the dots and accents, lend themselves well to this art form. Read the essay on calligraphy on page 21 of the web site above. Answer the following questions in your notebook:

- What is the literal meaning of the word "calligraphy"?
- In Arab and Muslim countries, where can one find calligraphy?
- What languages, other than Arabic, use the Arabic script?
- Is calligraphy only used for religious purposes?

Notice the different styles of writing on this page. On page 22 of this same web site, there are directions for writing the Arabic phrase, *assalamu alaykum* ("peace be with you"). You might have already chosen to write this phrase in the beginning of your notebook (Activity #3). Follow the directions and write this phrase in your notebook. Then write "peace be with you" (in English) under it four or five times, each time writing the phrase in a different style of English calligraphy (you might choose cursive, block letters, all capitals, bold, letters squished together, letters far apart, etc.). Choose the style you like best and put an asterisk next to it to indicate that it is your favorite one.

calligraphy—the art of writing beautifully
scribe—a professional copyist of manuscripts and documents

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 22, "Tasteful Writing"
Activity #25

OBJECTIVE: Students learn about the Islamic expression called the "Basmala" and reflect on what it means in everyday life.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Go to this website for some examples of the Basmala in different styles of Arabic calligraphy:

www.geocities.com/arabclipart/basmala

The essay on page 22 builds on the previous discussion of calligraphy and introduces the idea of calligraphy illustrated in particular shapes. The special phrase that Mr. Ellabbad talks about, and which is written in the shape of a pear, is "Bismillah ar-rahmaan ar-rahim." This Arabic phrase is found at the beginning of almost every sura (chapter) in the Qur'an, the holy book of Muslims. It is recited very often and its calligraphic forms are found in art and architecture throughout the Muslim world. "Bismillah ar-rahmaan ar-rahim" is so frequently stated and seen that there is a short-hand form of the phrase, the "Basmala." It is like an Arabic acronym.

In thinking about how this phrase applies to Muslim youth in the United States, it might help you to know that the Boy Scouts of America, in its Religious Emblems Programs, gives an award to Muslim scouts that says "Bismillah ar-rahmaan ar-rahim."

Like many Muslims, Mr. Ellabbad says "Bismillah..." often during his day, when he prays as well as when he does everyday things, like eating a pear. Many people—Muslims, Christians, Jews, and many others—believe that saying the name of God throughout the day is a way to remember the spiritual side of life, and to ask God to be with the individual in everything that she/he does.

When you visit the web site above, you will see that styles of Arabic calligraphy (all of which depict the Basmala) can vary quite a bit! Some examples can be found on the next page.

Basmala—shortened expression for the Muslim Arabic phrase which states "In the name of God, compassionate and merciful" (or in the book, "mild and merciful")

sura—a chapter of the Qur'an, the holy book of Islam

acronym—a word formed by the first letters of words in a phrase, as in MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Think about when Muslim teenagers might use this phrase in their daily lives. This could be when they are performing simple actions, like eating a pear, or when they are about to do something a little more challenging, like trying to score a goal in a soccer game. Create a series of four drawings that show different situations when a Muslim teenager might say "Bismillah ar-rahmaan ar-rahiim," drawing characters for each slide. You can use PowerPoint to do this, or you can do it by hand. Here is an example:



If you would like to use some Arabic names for the characters, here are some possibilities (note that some of these names are used by Arab Christians, too):

Some male names used by Muslims in Arab countries: **Muhammad, Ahmad, Hussein, Hassan, Ali, Abdulkarim, Abdulrahman, Hamza, Hisham, Nabeel, Sameer, Musa, Issa.**

Some female names used by Muslims in Arab countries: **Aisha, Khadeeja, Amina, Kareema, Abeer, Layla, Sakeena, Afeefa, Hoda, Salwa, Maryam, Maha, Zaynab.**

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 24, "The Palm Tree's Memory"
Activity #26

OBJECTIVE: By referring to an article about child artists, students reflect on the nature of the imagination.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Refer to the following web page:

<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/198205/tapestries.of.harraniya.htm>

Read the essay on page 24, then read the following paragraphs excerpted from the article (titled "Tapestries of Harraniya," located at the website above) and answer the questions that follow.

"...In 1952, Ramses [Wissa Wassif], Habib [Gorgi] and Sophie [Ramses's wife] bought a small piece of land beside a canal outside the village of Harraniya, not far from the pyramids of Giza, and began an ambitious project to revive the ancient art. In a setting of vegetable gardens and fields of corn, they built a small studio, domed, vaulted and whitewashed in the traditional manner, to which they invited the children of Harraniya to come and play. They then picked 18 children - the eldest 10, the youngest 8 - none of whom had ever had a lesson, or touched a loom, and provided each of them with a small upright loom and supplies of locally grown wool.

"At first, the only images to appear on the looms were irregular lines of color—a line of red, a line of yellow or perhaps black. One girl made two "legs" and said it was a bird. Another made four and said it was a cow. They could not, at first, make forms. Then, suddenly, the miracle happened: the children began to create—actually create—what must be called works of art. Madame Sophie Wassif says that, "one child made a complete tree with a bird alongside...the bird...as big as the tree. This was the beginning."

"Because Wassif regarded adult criticism as a paralyzing intrusion on the child's imagination, no criticism was allowed. In the closely guarded environment of the studio, each child was free to work at whatever came into his or her mind - and they were thus able to develop confidence in their work, and to depend solely on their own imaginations.

"To stimulate the children's imaginations, however, Wassif often took them on outings to the banks of the Nile, or on picnics in the desert, and once to far-off Alexandria -to experience the sight and sound of the sea for the first time in their lives. As a result, in a little more than a year, a profusion of images began to emerge from the children's looms: geese and ducks seen every morning on the nearby irrigation canal, Ahmad's water buffalo coming to drink and Shahira's chickens. But there were also fantasies: pink

tapestry—a heavy cloth woven with rich, often multicolored designs or scenes, usually hung on walls for decoration and sometimes used to cover furniture

loom—a machine for weaving thread or yarn into cloth

sheep, purple horses, and birds that fly without opening their wings—all woven with an imaginative power and vision that only children possess.

“From the beginning, Wassif forbade the children to make preliminary drawings. The child had to visualize his picture and keep it in mind until the weaving was finished. As each tapestry progressed, the completed portion was rolled up so that the child was compelled to retain the initial purity of his conception until it was finished. Then, when the tapestry was completed and unrolled, the children exclaimed: “How did this happen?”.. .“Did I do this?” A sense of triumph began to possess the children.

“As each child explored and mastered weaving techniques, his, or her, expressions became bolder, yet at the same time more subtle - and individual styles began to emerge. Some exaggerated their subjects, as children do, while others delighted in realism. And though the great pyramids of Giza were just across the fields, the children ignored them; their thoughts were focused on the village life around them, never on the past...”

Questions:

- 1) Explain what this sentence means: “...Wassif regarded adult criticism as a paralyzing intrusion on the child's imagination...”
- 2) How did Wassif try to stimulate the children's imagination?
- 3) Why do you think Wassif wouldn't let the children make preliminary drawings of what they wanted to weave?
- 4) Why do you think the children ignored the great pyramids of Giza and didn't include them in their drawings?
- 5) Do you think that people inherit the imagination to create and be artistic?

preliminary—coming before, and preparing for, something

triumph—success

inherit—to receive by genetic transmission; for example, one might say, “I inherited my good eyesight from my mother”; one can also inherit land or money from relatives who have died

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 27, "A Living Painting!"
Activity #27

OBJECTIVE: Students learn about a traditional art form while exploring their own creativity.

FOR THIS ACTIVITY

To get some ideas of henna designs, you can visit the following web site:

<http://www.hennapage.com/>

Look at the lovely designs on page 27, then read about Mr. Ellabbad's experience with "a living painting."

Henna is a plant that is crushed, mixed with sugar and lemon, and made into a paste. It is then used to "draw" on skin. Henna makes a brown impression on skin that lasts several days. It is not a tattoo, because tattoos are permanent; henna, on the other hand, is only painted on the skin and wears off after a while.

Women in different parts of the world, especially the Middle East and South Asia, use henna to decorate their hands and feet. This is often done in preparation for happy occasions, such as weddings. The person who does the designs with henna has to have a steady hand and a good artistic sense.

Place your hand, palm down, on a page in your notebook, and trace the outline of it with a pencil. Then use your pencil to come up with some designs similar to those on page 27.

At the web site provided above, click on "Henna Patterns Step by Step." You will get many ideas for drawing simple henna designs that repeat to make larger patterns.

You can also draw a foot on your page, like the one on page 27, and fill it with designs in a similar way.

Henna — a reddish brown dye obtained from the leaves of the henna plant and used especially on hair and skin

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 28, "The Fool"
Activity #28

OBJECTIVE: Students will learn about a character from Arab culture and examine the meaning of a folk story.

Mr. Ellabbad writes on this page, "Have you noticed that we invent characters who have all the worst faults so that we don't suffer from the same faults?" What do you think he means? Write the quote in your notebook and your own ideas about it.

In Arab culture, there is a "wise fool" character named Goha (or Juha, or Joha—there are several spellings of his name in English). Stories about Goha almost always include his donkey in the plot. This same character is also part the popular culture of non-Arab countries in the Middle East, including Turkey and Iran. In Turkey he is known as Nasreddin, and many people believe that the stories everyone tells about him at present are based on a real person who lived in the 13th century.

There are two elementary-level books that feature stories that people tell about this character: *Goha*, by Denys Johnson-Davies (Cairo: Hoopoe Books, 1993), and *Goha the Wise Fool*, by Denys Johnson-Davies with Art by Hag Hamdy and Hany (New York: Philomel Books, 2005). Note that even though they are geared for upper elementary students, the stories in these books will delight all ages. The illustrations in *Goha the Wise Fool* are particularly interesting, as they are photographs of hand-sewn images of Goha tales by traditional tentmakers in Cairo.

Here is a story that is sometimes told about Goha:

Goha often rode his donkey backwards, so that he would face the opposite direction from the way the donkey was walking. One day, a crowd of people stood by laughing at him for being so silly. One of them shouted out: "Goha, you look ridiculous riding your donkey backwards! Why do you do it?" Goha answered: "Sometimes when I am heading somewhere, I like to look at where I have been, rather than where I am going!"

What do you think about Goha's answer? Can you find some wisdom in it? Write a paragraph about this story and if you think it has a larger meaning. You might also think about other answers that Goha could have given—write two or three in your notebook.

The Illustrator's Notebook p. 26, "Some Room for the Reader" and
p. 30, Untitled Final Page
Activity #29

OBJECTIVE: Students reflect on their lives and write their autobiographies.

Look at how Mr. Ellabbad laid out page 26, and design your page in a similar way, using about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the page (vertically) and not all of it. Draw a picture of yourself in the top third of this space.

Now read the author's biography on page 30. Write two or three paragraphs about yourself, mentioning many of the important parts of your life. Where and what year were you born? How old are you now? Where do you live, and what school do you attend? What are your favorite subjects in school? What do you like to do outside of school? What artistic efforts are you involved in? What are your hobbies? Who is in your family and what are their names? Who are your good friends and what are their names? What would you like to be when you are an adult? What makes you laugh? These are some of the questions you can think about and answer when you write about yourself.

The Illustrator's Notebook: Writing to the Author
Activity #30

OBJECTIVE: Students think about their impressions of the book in the form of a response letter to the author.

Write a letter to the author/illustrator, Mohieddin Ellabbad. Tell him what you liked most about his book, *The Illustrator's Notebook*. Which pages made you think the most? Which pages had drawings that you liked a lot? What kinds of things did you learn about Egypt and Arab culture that you didn't know before? Did you enjoy reading and looking at *The Illustrator's Notebook*?

After finishing this letter, add a picture on the other side of the page to send Mr. Ellabbad. It can be a copy of something you drew in your notebook, and if you do this, explain what this picture was about. Or, it can be a completely new drawing, perhaps of yourself, or of something you enjoy drawing. Label it and explain what it is. Send the letter to the following address:

Mr. Mohieddin Ellabbad
C/O Outreach Program
Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
241 ICC
Georgetown University
Washington, DC 20057-1020

We will be sure to get your letter to Mr. Ellabbad. If you would prefer to write an e-mail message to him, send it to seikaluz@georgetown.edu and we will forward the message to him in Egypt.