

# A Character ~ Emotion ~ Story Drawing Exercise for Students

by Jennifer O'Connell - [www.JenniferOConnellArt.com](http://www.JenniferOConnellArt.com)

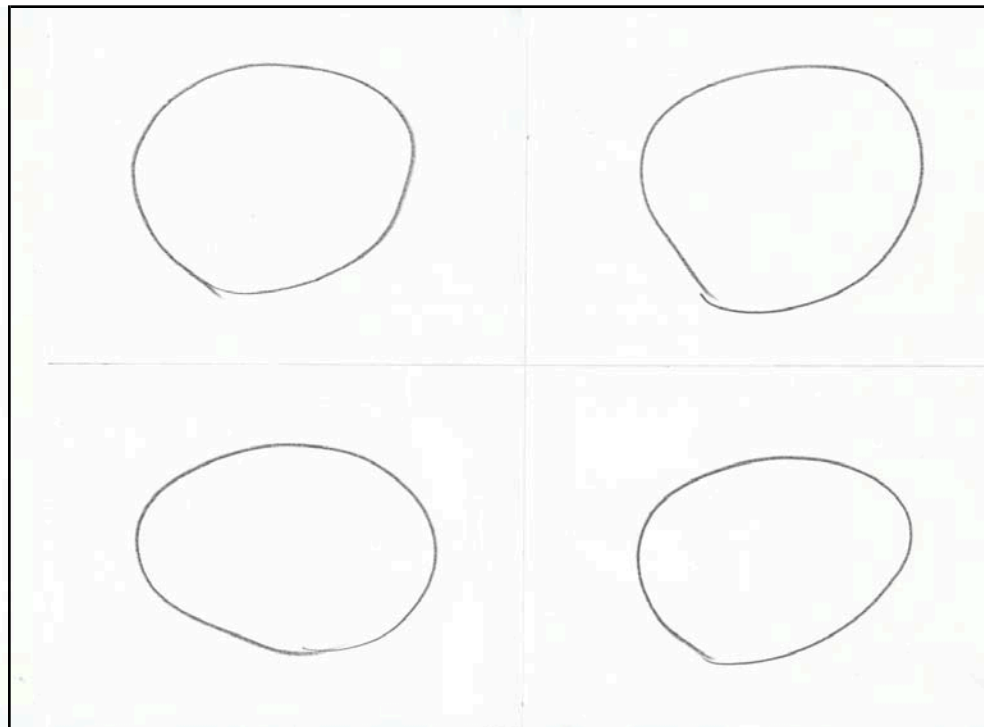
This exercise has been universally successful and fun for all children. I have given it to pre-K through 5th Grade students. It is important to say each step as you draw it, as this helps students when they are following each direction. I often hear students say each step out loud to themselves as they are drawing it.

You should have a large newsprint (or white) pad (I use 24" x 36") on an easel, placed where all the students can see it. Use a thick black marker and make lines to divide your rectangular paper into quarters.

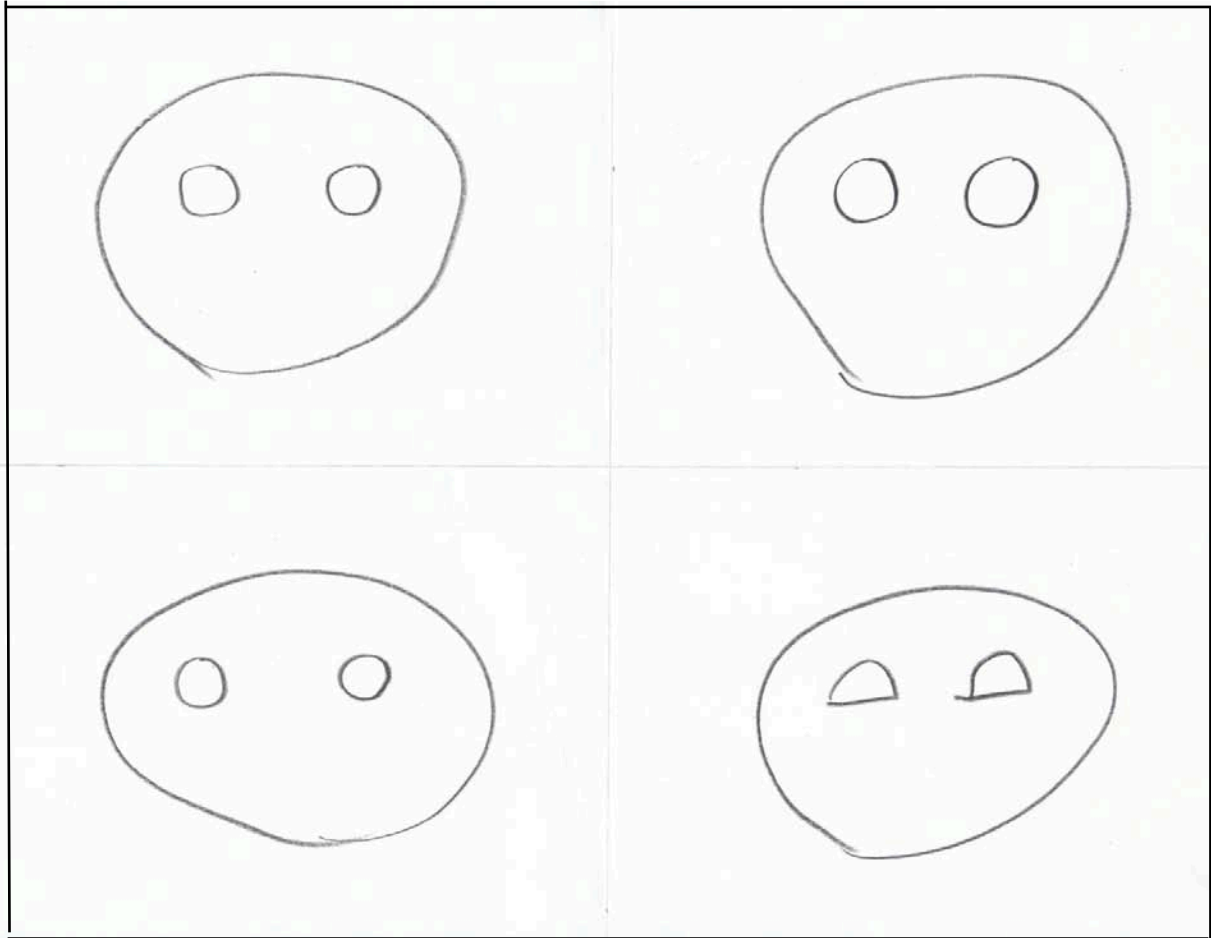
First, have the students fold their 8 1/2 x 11 piece of copy paper (can be scrap paper) the long way and then the short way so that they have 4 rectangular boxes marked with the folds.

Have them put their names on the top of the opened up paper and placing it horizontally, have them draw in each rectangular area:

"Circle, circle, circle, circle." (Don't try and draw perfect circles. You want to convey to your students that any rounded shape will work.)

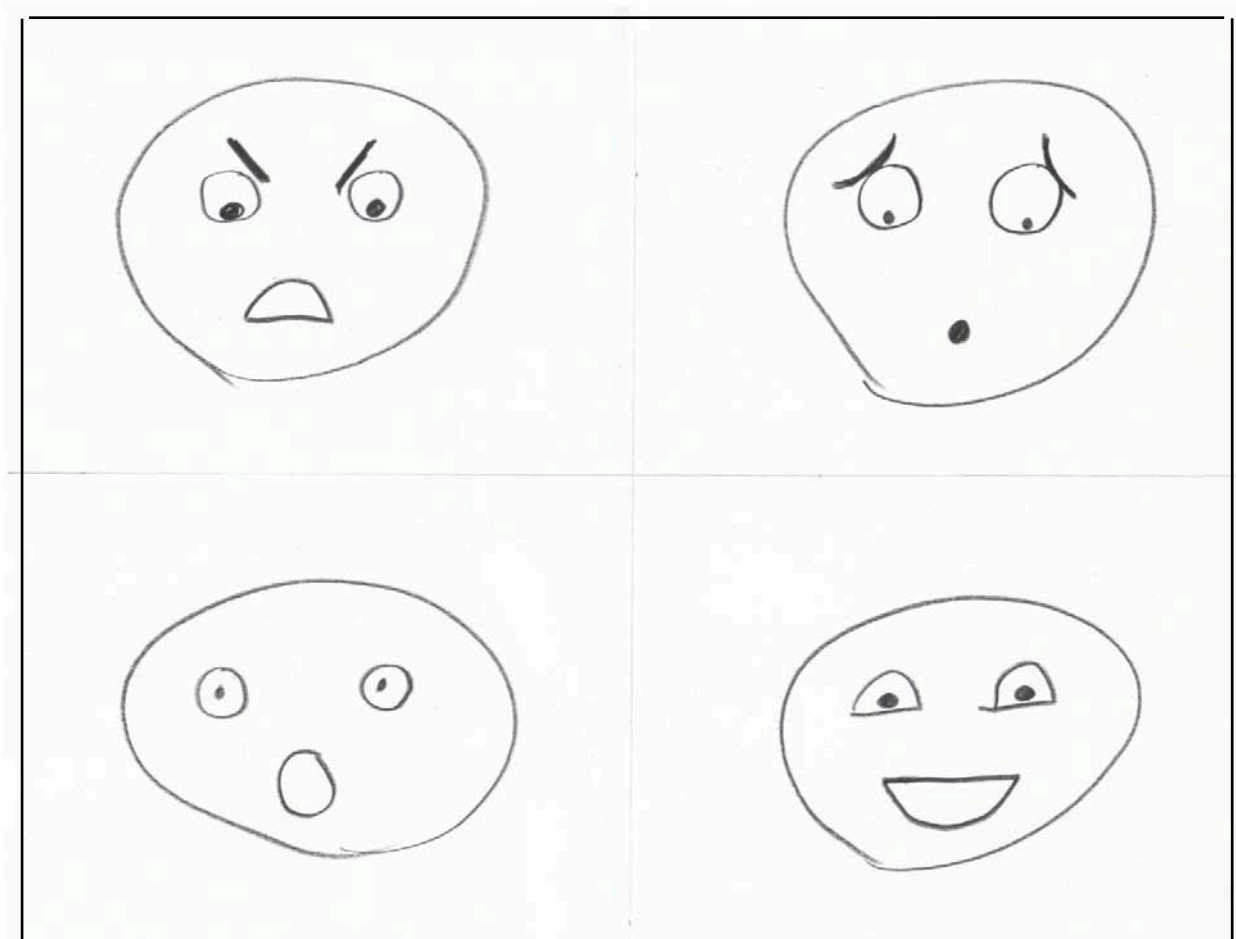


Then: "in each circle, draw a circle, circle; circle, circle; circle, circle; half circle, half circle."

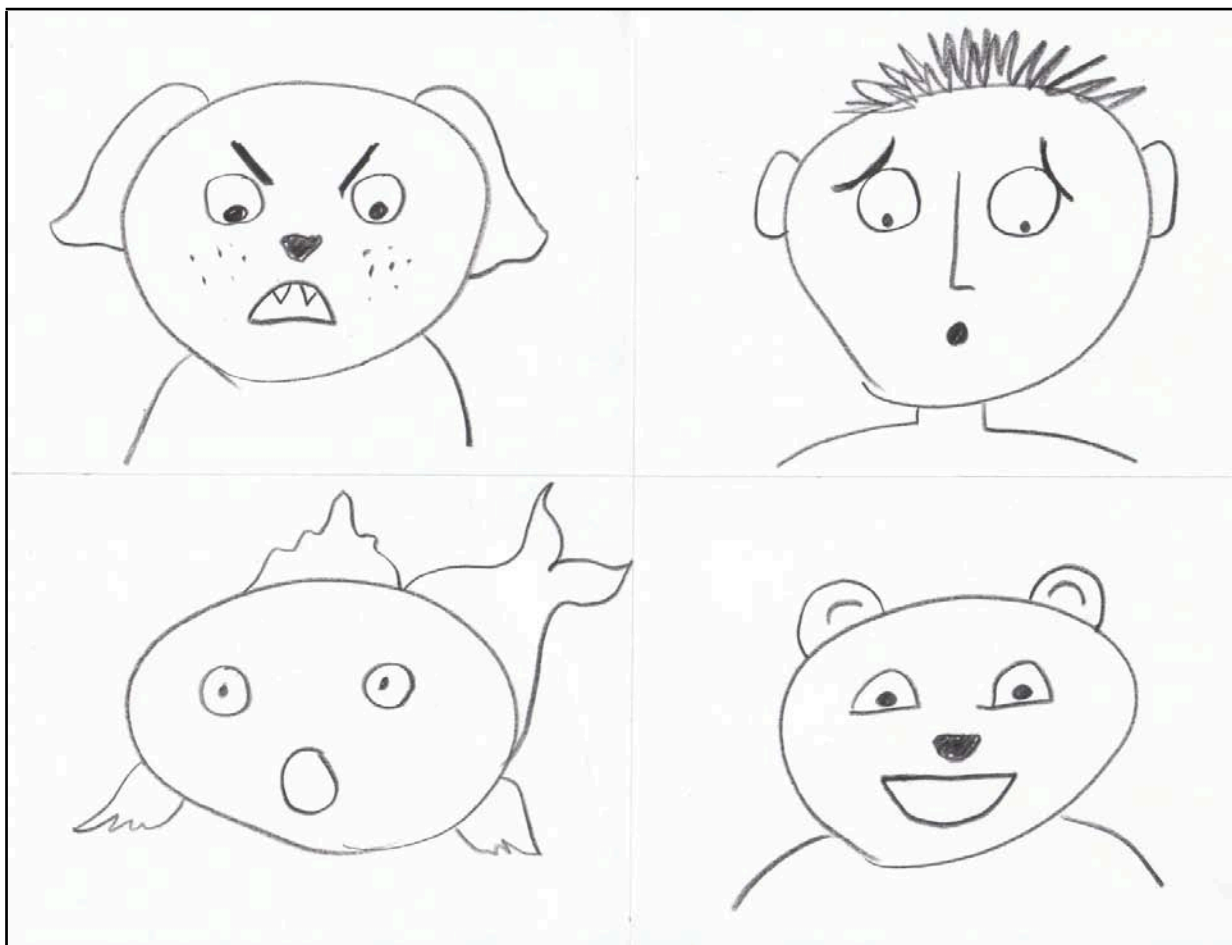


In the top left circle draw: "line, line, dot, dot, half circle"; below it: "dot, dot, circle"; top right: "curvy line, curvy line, dot, dot, dot"; bottom right: "dot, dot, half circle."

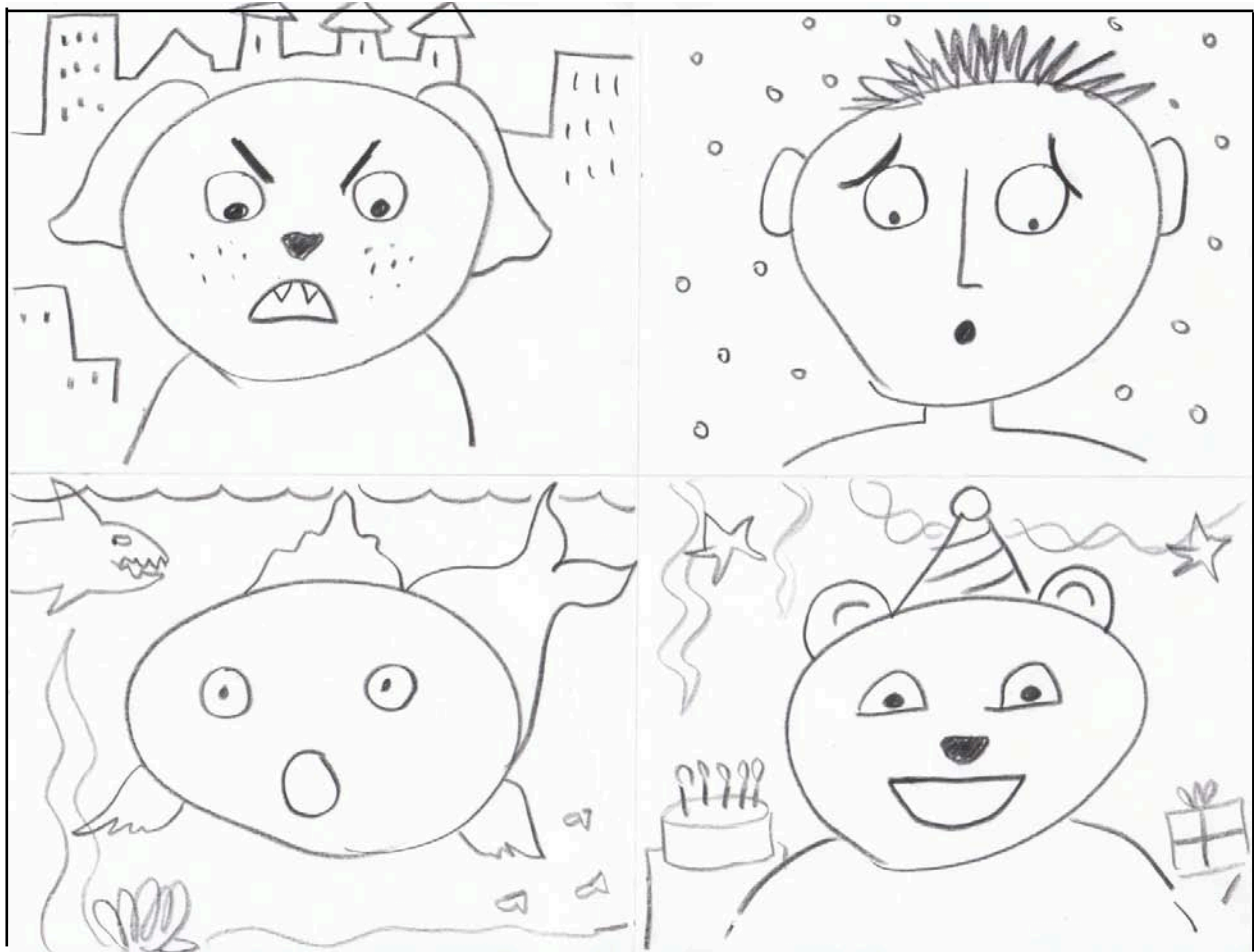
Point to each circle and ask the students, "what is this character feeling?" Go through all the characters, and hear what the students have to say about what they think each character is feeling. They might have different ideas.



Then tell the students that they can add noses and ears and any other details that they'd like, to make their own characters. "For example, you can do this" and show them how you can make each character into an animal or person. Some students will follow what you draw, but the exciting thing is that their character will be unique to how "they" do it. Other students will make up their own characters. THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO DO THIS! The goal is that the students relax and have fun with it.

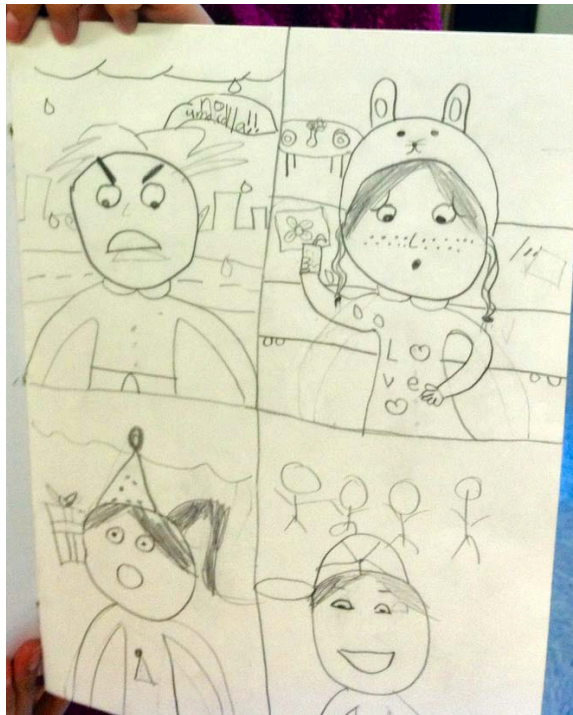
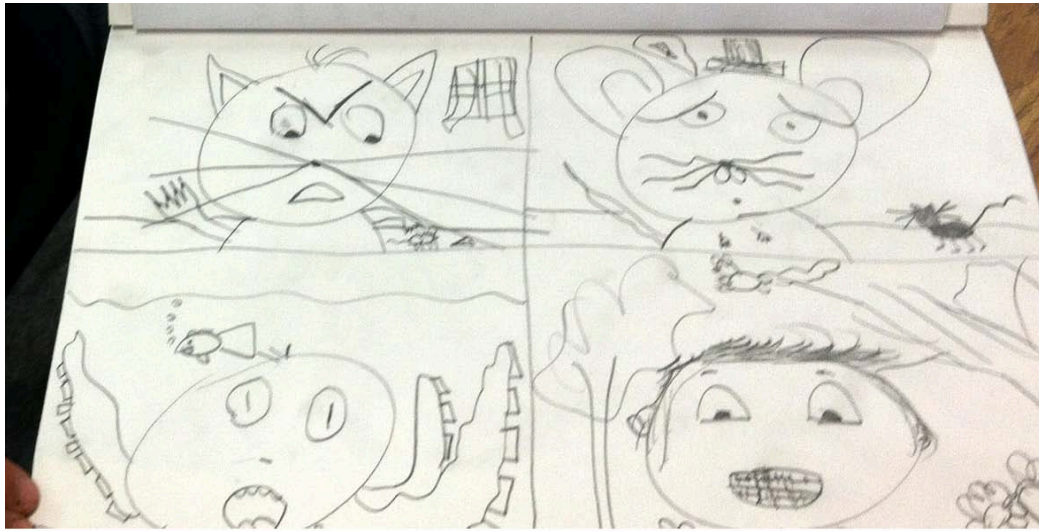


Now, comes the WHY. Ask the students: "Why do you think this character is angry?" And the answer can be illustrated with the background setting. For example: "The top left dog might be mad because he is lost in the city. The fish could be surprised that there is a shark nearby." The boy is worried that the snow will cause his soccer game to be cancelled. The bear is happy because it is her birthday." Stories begin to form....



Many children will enjoy making up stories about their drawings. This exercise can be taken further by having them write (or dictate) a story about one (or more) of their characters and scenarios.

Color can be added. *Have fun!*



(Note: sometimes the students end up drawing their page in a vertical format - and it's fine either vertical or horizontal, but probably best for them to use the format that *you* are using on your pad.)