

23<sup>rd</sup> May

### Memory Verse

**In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.** Colossians 2:3

More about today's memory verse in tomorrow's lesson.

Two animal themed topics today!

### Make your own zoo

Have you ever been to a zoo? It is a wonderful thing to have a trip to the zoo and a very special treat. The word zoo is short for zoological gardens. At first a zoo was more like a garden with animals in cages and small enclosures. London Zoo at Regent's Park in central London was originally such a zoo.

One of the most famous zoos in the world first opened on **23<sup>rd</sup> May** 1931. This was Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire. The London Zoological Society founded Whipsnade Zoo with the idea of having a different type of zoo. It would be a zoo where animals had a more natural habitat and where they could roam more freely than was possible in a location such as the society's London Zoo. A farm on Dunstable Downs was purchased in 1926, roads and fences were set up and the first animals were settled in in 1928.

During the Second World War the animals in Regent's Park Zoo were in danger from bombing so they were evacuated to Whipsnade. One bomb did fall on Whipsnade Zoo but although some buildings were damaged the animals were not hit. However, one poor giraffe was so frightened by the noise that it died shortly afterwards.

Today the zoo has up-to-date facilities that provide plenty of space and comfortable living conditions for creatures such as its herd of nine elephants. There is an area that concentrates on animals believed to have lived wild in Britain that no longer do so. Here visitors can see creatures such as bears, wolves and reindeer. The zoo also has a sea lion pool where sea lions perform tricks for visitors as well as a Children's zoo where domestic animals such as chickens and goats can be petted. The zoo also houses a pride of seven lions, as well as cheetahs and rhinos.

As the zoo enclosures at Whipsnade are large and the animals can roam about, innovative ways have to be found of allowing the public to get close enough to see the animals. The Lemurs, for instance, are housed on an island which visitors can access via a bridge, while the lions can be viewed through huge windows which form part of their enclosure. There is even a steam railway so that visitors can view the animals from the train.

Zoos can do much to help save animals from extinction. Many zoos have breeding programmes for endangered species as well as programmes for re introducing animals into the wild where they have become extinct. Having animals in zoos also enables them to be studied by researchers and this in turn can help with management and protection of animals in the wild. With so many people living in cities, zoos fulfil a key rôle in helping people see living animals and learn about them. Visitors coming to see the animals are just as important as they were in 1931. There would be no zoo without the visitors whose entrance money pays for the care of the animals!

Younger children who have toy animals may like to make a zoo for them today. You can use plain wooden bricks to make enclosures or use Lego or similar construction toys. Plan your enclosures to give your animals the space they will need. What kind of shelter from the weather is appropriate? How will you lay out your zoo so that you can balance the needs of the animals with the demands of visitors?

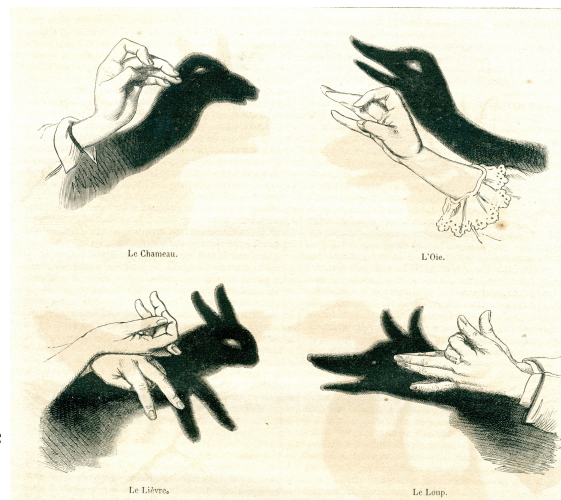
## A game to try

Have you ever tried making shadow animals? This used to be a popular entertainment. The French entertainer, Félicien Trewey (1848-1920), was born on **23<sup>rd</sup> May**. He was one of the first to make this ancient art popular in more modern times. As a child, Trewey became very good at doing conjuring tricks and other forms of entertainment and he spent his life travelling Europe and Britain giving performances. These often included hand shadows at which he was extremely proficient. He could make the shadows of cute rabbits, birds and even a galloping horse appear on a screen simply by positioning and moving his hands in front of a lamp. You can see him making a dog shadow in the picture.

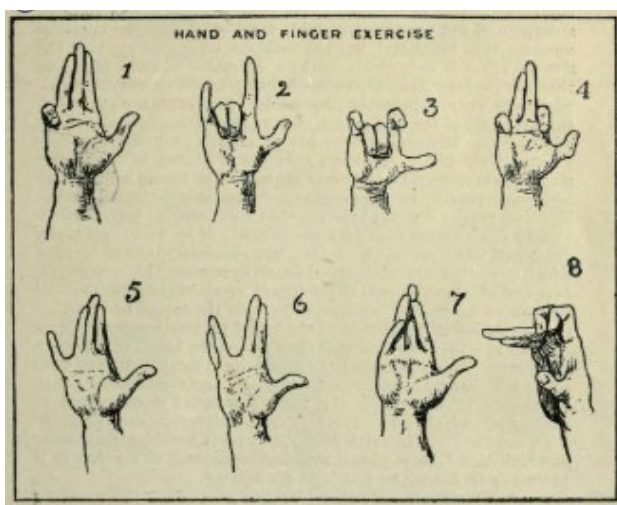


If you want to try this yourself you need a darkened room so draw the curtains. You also need a good source of light. An LED bike light can be suitable but even a table lamp or a desk lamp will do. The light must shine at a nice white wall or a screen. You could hang up a white bed sheet if all your walls have patterned paper. Now you must experiment to position your hand. Near the light source the shadows will be large. Nearer the “screen” they will be smaller but sharper too.

On the right you see how to make a camel, a goose, a rabbit and a wolf. Notice how the light shining through a gap in the fingers makes the eye.



Once you have your shadow you can experiment with moving it. The camel can open and shut his mouth. The goose can open its beak. The rabbit can waggle its ears and move its legs. The wolf can snap its jaws and move its ears. This is not as easy as it sounds.



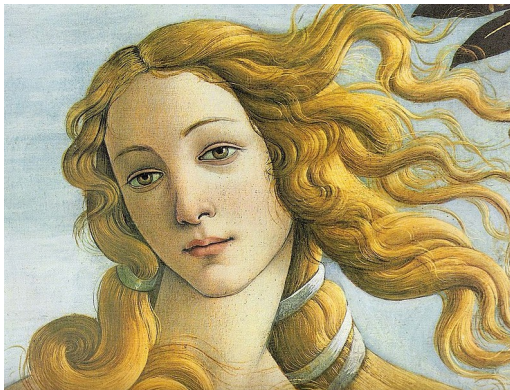
Experts like Trewey spent a lot of time training their fingers to move independently by exercising them. On the left you can see a diagram of eight hand positions which he recommended that one practised to help prepare the hands for the work of shadow-graphing. They are not easy to do! If you practice until you can make your hands do this you will have attained a very high degree of control over your individual fingers.

## Something to read from history

Today is the anniversary of the death at the stake of one of the strangest and most controversial figures of the Reformation and pre-Reformation eras, Girolamo Savonarola (1452 – 1498.) If you have been using these lessons for a while you will have already come across John Wycliffe (c.1330-1384)<sup>1</sup> and Jan Hus (c.1372-1415).<sup>2</sup> These were men who, ahead of their time as it were, challenged some of the core errors of the Roman Catholic church. The later reformers such as Martin Luther (1483-1546)<sup>3</sup> and John Calvin (1509-1564) recognised in them men who had discovered truths that they themselves were discovering. Luther wrote admiringly of Savonarola, calling him a martyr and “That godly man of Florence” but Savonarola seems never to have taken up the teachings of his forerunners Wycliffe and Hus. It is not for shedding key catholic errors that Savonarola was noted but for crying out against immorality, especially among those who were church officials.



Savonarola was born in Ferrara and became a Dominican Friar. He had a prodigious memory and could repeat much of the Bible by heart. He also took on board the writings of Thomas Aquinas,<sup>4</sup> whose fusion of the teachings of the pagan philosopher Aristotle with the teachings of Christianity was one of the bedrocks of Catholicism. He went to Florence in 1490 where his fiery preaching against immorality had a great effect on the city.



A French invasion of Florence led to the expulsion of the ruling Medici family. Savonarola urged the establishment of a republic. The year 1500 was nearing and the superstitious people were wondering if the change of date portended the return of Christ, the end of the world or at least some intermediate judgement. Savonarola himself believed he had prophetic powers and his preaching terrified great and small into better behaviour. Under the new republic, Savonarola organised the children of the city into a kind of moral police force and had them collect lewd pictures and books together into a great pile which was then set alight as a “bonfire of vanities”. Even today art historians are still complaining that the artist Botticelli (1445-1510) brought many of his paintings to be burned after hearing Savonarola preach. You can see a detail from one of Botticelli's pictures that did survive above.

Savonarola continued to urge people to live moral lives and his power in the city of Florence led him into conflict with the pope. He was summoned to Rome but refused to go and was excommunicated.

Now the tide turned against Savonarola. It was decided that his claim to a divine mandate over Florence would be tested by an ordeal of fire. One of his three most powerful supporters offered to walk through fire. One of those who opposed Savonarola would also do so. The one who was unharmed was obviously in the right! The trial never actually took place, to the rage of the watching populace who wanted a spectacle. The preparations broke down over wrangling about whether the

<sup>1</sup> See lessons for 1<sup>st</sup> February, 22<sup>nd</sup> May and 10<sup>th</sup> June.

<sup>2</sup> See lessons for 26<sup>th</sup> June (coming soon), 21<sup>st</sup> June and July 16<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> See the lesson for 16<sup>th</sup> July.

<sup>4</sup> See the lesson for 24<sup>th</sup> December (coming soon).

pro Savonarola participant had magic clothes that would protect him and whether he would be allowed to carry “the host” (bread and wine of the mass) with him. Savonarola and his three supporters were imprisoned and then, on **23<sup>rd</sup> May** 1498, they were hung and publicly burnt.

The Florentines went back to their immoral ways, one even shouting gleefully as the bodies burned, “Hooray! Now we can practice our vengery again!” Once Savonarola's powerful personality and preaching were removed so was his influence. There had been no true repentance for he had not plainly told them their need of a Saviour.

At the base of the great monument to Martin Luther in Worms, are four figures from the era that preceded him: Peter Waldo, Jan Hus, John Wycliffe and Savonarola. Savonarola, his arm upraised as he preaches his stern morality, is definitely the odd one out.

