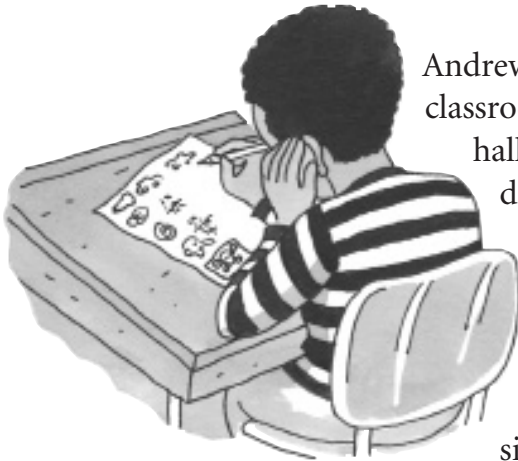


Doodles



Andrew sat at his desk in the classroom at the end of the hall. Doodle rockets and doodle race cars filled the top margin of his math sheet. A doodle penguin and pirate's flag decorated the bottom. Down the right side ran doodle cubes, springs, and arrows. Down the left appeared doodle designs, mazes, and goofy faces. But despite all this artwork bordering Andrew's paper, only five of his multiplication problems were finished.

In the front of the room, the tall teacher looked up from his large metal desk. "Andrew, get busy," he called out. "Let's start working."

Andrew nodded. He filled in two more answers before doodling a vampire with fangs dripping blood in the upper corner.



“Stop wasting time, Andrew,” called the teacher. “If that math work isn’t completed by recess, you’ll stay inside doing it.”

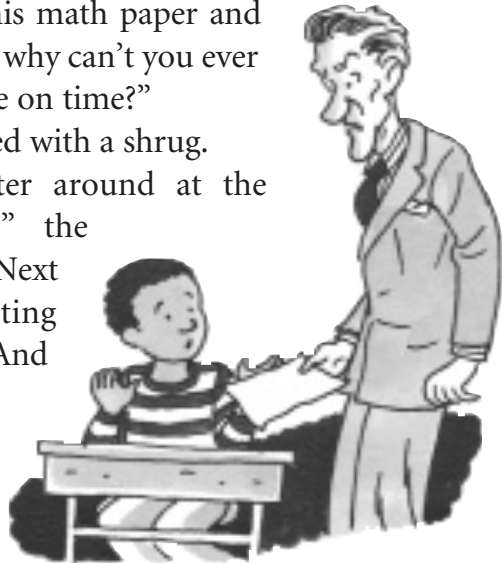
Andrew counted the remaining problems. “Let’s see, I have seven minutes to do twenty more problems,” he told himself. “That’s ... let’s see, seven times sixty is four hundred and twenty seconds divided by twenty. That’s only twenty-one seconds per problem. How can I ever get all this math done in that time?”

After answering three more problems, Andrew started doodling again. This time he drew his favorite doodle, one that appeared on all his papers and notebooks, a beast with five arms, three legs, and two heads.

When the recess bell rang, the tall teacher strolled back to Andrew’s desk. He took one look at his math paper and scowled. “Andrew, why can’t you ever get your work done on time?”

Andrew answered with a shrug.

“First you putter around at the pencil sharpener,” the teacher went on. “Next you dawdle getting back to your desk. And those doodles, Andrew. What’s with all those doodles?”



Andrew raised his palms for another answer.

The tall teacher's ears turned red. "Andrew, you'll remain at this desk until you've caught up on your work. Understand? First, finish that math. Then do the handwriting and adjective worksheets from this morning, and the spelling. And you still haven't turned in your story from yesterday."

With that, the teacher grabbed his coffee mug and left the room.

Andrew blew out his cheeks and lifted his desktop. He pulled out the half-finished handwriting paper, the adjective worksheet, the spelling book, and his story with only two lines written.

"How did I get so far behind?" he muttered to himself. He managed to do two more problems before doodling a Cyclops on the cover of his spelling book.

The recess minutes ticked away. Perhaps Andrew would have doodled the entire time if a loud whistle hadn't startled him. He paused to listen. Yes, someone very close was whistling "Yankee Doodle."

Andrew squinted at his math sheet. Was he seeing things? Every doodle on the paper was now moving. The pirate flag fluttered. The doodle springs coiled and uncoiled. The doodle race car's tires spun, and the doodle jets dropped doodle bombs that made doodle explosions at the bottom of the page.

Andrew fell back in his chair. "Doodle cartoons," he said under his breath. "This can't be happening." He checked the paper again. "But it is!"



At that moment, his favorite doodle, the three-legged, five-armed, two-headed beast, bent forward.



As it did so, its two heads rose right out of the paper.

The five arms flapped and emerged as well.

After the doodle's three legs advanced,

the entire figure was standing on Andrew's

desktop. Although still resembling a pencil

cartoon—lead-colored with scribbly skin—the creature appeared three-dimensional

and strutted about the math paper as if alive.

The beast turned, and two of its hands waved to Andrew.

“How ya doing, mate?” said the head on the right side. “Me name’s Dilly.”

The one on the left said, “My name’s Dally. And we’re ready to start doing your schoolwork.”

Andrew’s eyes widened. “Dilly-Dally?” he exclaimed. A grin spread across his face. “You mean you’ll do my work for me?”

The doodle creature paced across the math paper with all five hands behind its back.

“We can do the whole kit and caboodle for ya,” said Dilly. “That’s what doodles are for. If you’ve wasted time, we’ll find more. If a teacher says, ‘Get busy,’ we’ll go get him for you.”



“Doodles are a kid’s best friend, Andrew,” said Dally. “All doodles except cousin Graffiti. He can get you in big trouble.”

Andrew shuffled the papers and workbooks on his desktop. “Well, Dilly-Dally, I have a ton of work to do,” he said. “I guess I could use some help.”

“Then hand me some pencils, mate,” said Dilly.

“And let the doodles do your work,” said Dally. Andrew took a

pencil box from his desk. He put a pencil in

each of Dilly-Dally’s hands.

At once the beast began plodding around the math paper, filling in answers.

“I hope you’re good at math,” said Andrew. “If an answer is wrong, the teacher makes me do the problem all over again.”

“Don’t worry, mate, we always use our doodle noodles,” said Dilly.

“But this work would get done much faster if you drew more doodles to help us out,” Dally added.

Andrew picked up his pencil. “More doodles?” he said. “Sure, I can do that.”

He drew a rooster at the bottom of the hand-writing sheet. Instantly the bird sprouted from the paper, calling, “Cock-a-doodle-dooooo!”

Andrew handed the rooster a pencil and watched



it write a neat row of capital Q's. Nodding in approval, he regarded his story paper.

"Dilly-Dally, can doodles write stories?" he asked.

"I sure would like to get caught up on this work by the end of recess."

"Doodles'll do it all for ya, mate," said Dilly.

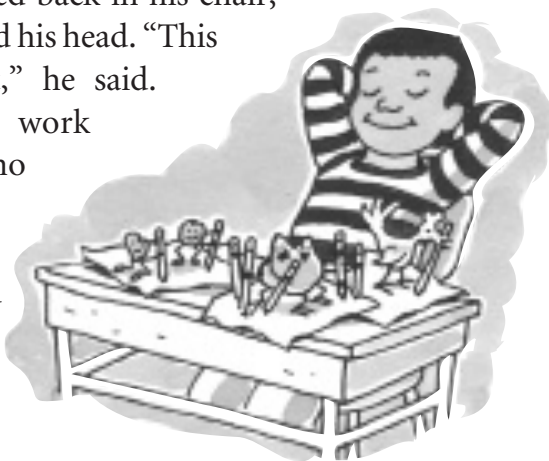
"Draw oodles of doodles, Andrew," Dally added.

At the top of the story paper, Andrew drew a heart and a smiley face. He added arms and legs to both. Sure enough, the figures popped out of the paper, and after Andrew handed them a pencil, they began waddling along the blue lines, composing a story.

Andrew leaned back in his chair, his hands behind his head. "This is more like it," he said. "I'll have my work completed in no time."

Five minutes later he checked the doodles' progress.

"Math ... done. Spelling and handwriting ... all finished. And my story is long enough. OK, Dilly-Dally, you and the other doodles can quit working now."



The creature, however, ignored Andrew. Rather than stopping, it flipped the math sheet over and began doing more multiplication problems.

Andrew tapped his pencil on the desktop. “That’s enough, Dilly-Dally!” he said. “You’re doing tomorrow’s math. The teacher gets mad when we work ahead.”

“These problems are no problem for us, mate,” said Dilly.

“A doodle’s work is never done,” said Dally.

In the meantime, the other doodles had leaped off Andrew’s desk. They landed on Kate’s desktop and began completing answers in her spelling workbook.

Andrew’s eyes widened. “Hey, stop!” he cried out. “What are you doodles doing? Don’t do that. Get off of there!”

He rechecked the clock. In four minutes the playground bell would ring.

“What will the teacher think when he comes back?” Andrew asked himself. “He’ll know I had help! I gotta get rid of these doodles!”

To make matters worse, each doodle now started drawing its own doodles. In turn, a doodle robot and a doodle rabbit rose from Kate’s spelling book. “Hoo! Hoo!” went a doodle owl that appeared shortly afterward. A doodle dragon breathing doodle fire popped up next. Each doodle grabbed a pencil, jumped to another desktop, and started working.

Andrew got to his feet. He raced around the room





waving his pencil as if conducting a band. “Stop, doodles! Don’t do that! You doodles skedaddle!”

On Morgan’s desk a doodle octopus completed a crossword puzzle. On George’s desk a doodle poodle finished writing a limerick.

“Singing polly wolly doodle all the day,” sang a doodle parrot, flying onto the reading table.

A doodle dinosaur, angel, and teddy bear appeared. Each doodle drew more doodles that drew more doodles. By now every desktop in the classroom had doodles swarming all over it.

“What can I do about all these doodles?” asked Andrew.

“Toot! Toooooot!” went a doodle train circling his feet.

A monkey on a skateboard scooted by, shouting, “Yahooo!”

At that moment Andrew’s luck changed. As he waved his pencil in front of him, the eraser brushed up against a doodle snowman on Hari’s desk. Wherever the eraser touched, the doodle dis-

appeared. There stood a snowman with a top and bottom, but minus a middle.

“That’s it!” Andrew exclaimed. “That’s how to get rid of these doodles! I can erase them as if they were still on paper!” He reached inside his desk for a large pink eraser. “So now it’s time for *me* to get to work. Doodles, prepare to do battle!”

As if engaged in a lively sword fight, Andrew swept around the room brandishing his eraser. On Mimi’s desk he erased a dancing tin can. He rubbed out a pig with wings that was flying past his nose. He erased a doodle pumpkin and pair of lips roaming round Richard’s desk. Away went a doodle walrus wearing a top hat and a doodle duck swimming in the sink.

“So long, sucker,” Andrew snarled as he erased a doodle anteater.

“Cock-a-doodle-dooooo,” crowed the rooster, and it too disappeared.

Next Andrew pounced on a bounding doodle kangaroo. He dodged doodle arrows to erase a doodle Cupid and chased the doodle poodle into the coat closet. When he had it cornered, the poodle did a doodle piddle before he could wipe it away.



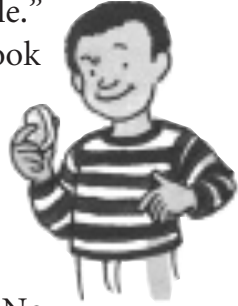
Breathing hard, Andrew checked the clock. “One minute until the bell,” he said. “But I have more work to do.” He hastened from desk to desk, erasing any evidence that a doodle had been there.



Finally only Dilly-Dally remained. The beast was still on Andrew's desk, filling in math answers and whistling "Yankee Doodle."

As Andrew approached, Dilly shook its head. "Ya wasted some good doodles there, mate," it said.

Dally nodded and added, "But if you ever need any of us again, just pick up a pencil and doodle."



Andrew sat down exhausted. "No thanks," he said, raising his eraser. "Toodle-oo, doodle." And the creature was gone.

When the tall teacher returned to the room he headed straight to Andrew's desk. He looked at the papers and workbooks and nodded.

"Andrew, you really applied yourself during recess," he said. "All your work is completed. I also see that you erased those doodles. Good for you." Then the teacher walked up to the blackboard to write the next assignment.

Andrew blew out his cheeks. "Schoolwork," he grumbled. "As soon as you get done with one assignment, another one comes along."

He started doodling a rattlesnake on the back of a workbook when he caught himself. He looked up at the blackboard.

"So maybe I'll just start working on it. I'd hate to fall behind."

