


# DESIGNING A COVER

*To use DTP software to create a design for a special purpose. To use a variety of fonts, including rotated fonts, and clip art or graphic files produced in an art application.*

 Pairs.

 45 minutes at the computer; 10 minutes discussion.

## **Previous skills/knowledge needed**

Familiarity with DTP software will help the children in this task, together with knowledge/experience of mixing graphics with text.

## **Key background information**

The technological revolution has had a huge impact on the design and printing world. The facility to use IT in the

# Communicating information

classroom to produce the high standards possible today was unimaginable until relatively recently. The computer in your classroom can probably be used to produce professional quality labels, covers and simple designs. Children are enthusiastic about their favourite books and music, and so designing a cassette case insert, a CD cover or a book cover gives them an opportunity to combine IT tools and their imagination to good effect. The use of DTP tools, especially font manipulation, rotation and shadowing, provides visually exciting results well within the children's reach.

## Preparation

Make a collection of a variety of attractive book covers and CD and cassette inlay cards.

## Resources needed

A computer with a desktop publishing package, a hand-held scanner (optional), a printer, paper, pencils, conventional art materials (felt-tipped pens and paint), examples of book covers, CD/cassette inlay cards.

## What to do

Begin this activity by showing the children examples of the various book covers and inlay cards that you have collected. Draw their attention to the importance of clarity of design, especially with reference to the title and author, and how pictures or graphics enhance the product. Some modern designs leave much to the imagination by being unclear in the title, especially some pop music material which relies more on images. Consider the audience each

cover or inlay is aimed at, and encourage the children to comment on how clear the titles are. Look at other information such as the publisher, cost and contents.

Tell the children that they are going to design their own book covers or CD/cassette inlay cards. Ask them to think about their 'product' and, in pairs, allow them to rough out their ideas using pencil and paper. Then give them access to the computer in pairs. They may want to rotate fonts and you will need to demonstrate how to do this. However, it is best for them to concentrate on clear labelling and accuracy of content rather than attempting to be too sophisticated.

Children are adept at discovering the possibilities of IT software when left to their own devices. If they are new to the software, do not be too insistent on printed results, as several attempts may be necessary to begin with. In certain cases, children may use IT to produce only the words and turn to conventional means to produce the background and/or artwork. Inevitably, the IT task may take some time, but it may be a good idea to change over after 45 minutes.

If the children have access to a hand-held scanner, images from photographs can be inserted into their designs. Artwork can, of course, be produced within a graphics package, or the children may make use of available clip art to enhance their covers. Use their results to further discussion on style and presentation and to spur on the next pair of children using the computer.

## Suggestion(s) for extension

Some art packages offer sophisticated facilities for font and image manipulation and confident children can be given



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further opportunity to explore these. They can extend their skills by designing covers for imaginary books, for example, 'Rocket Engine Manual', 'Time Machine Engine Diagnostic Booklet', 'Bungee Jumpers' Handbook' and so on.

### **Suggestion(s) for support**

Limit expectations with less confident children, perhaps to using IT for the production of text only. Pairing them with a more confident child may offer additional support.

### **Assessment opportunities**

This activity will enable you to assess children's ability at combining text and graphics. Look for their ability at finding the graphics images and inserting them into the appropriate place within their design. Are the text and images balanced, meaningful and correctly sized? There are also opportunities to make assessments in art as to how well the children select appropriate resources and experiment with the possibilities that these offer, and their selection of visual elements appropriate to the purpose.

### **Display ideas**

A collage consisting of a variety of the children's cover designs will be interesting and attractive. Enlarged examples imaginatively displayed will show off their efforts to good effect.