



Examples of drawings where children have drawn the seat of a chair when they could not actually see the seat. They knew it must be there, so they drew it

**TRY  
THIS  
IDEA!**

## How the left side of the brain causes problems

**Time**  
15–20  
min.

**Resources**  
Sketchbooks  
Pencils

**National  
Curriculum**  
5a

### Introduction

*'As you may know, our brains have two sides – a left and right side. The left side is very good at knowing and labelling things. It is logical and ordered; it is very good at maths and language. At school it gets much more exercise than the right and so it is strong and it tends to take over whenever it can. However, it is the right side of your brain that you need to use most in drawing. The left side can make you draw things you think you see, rather than what you actually do see.'*

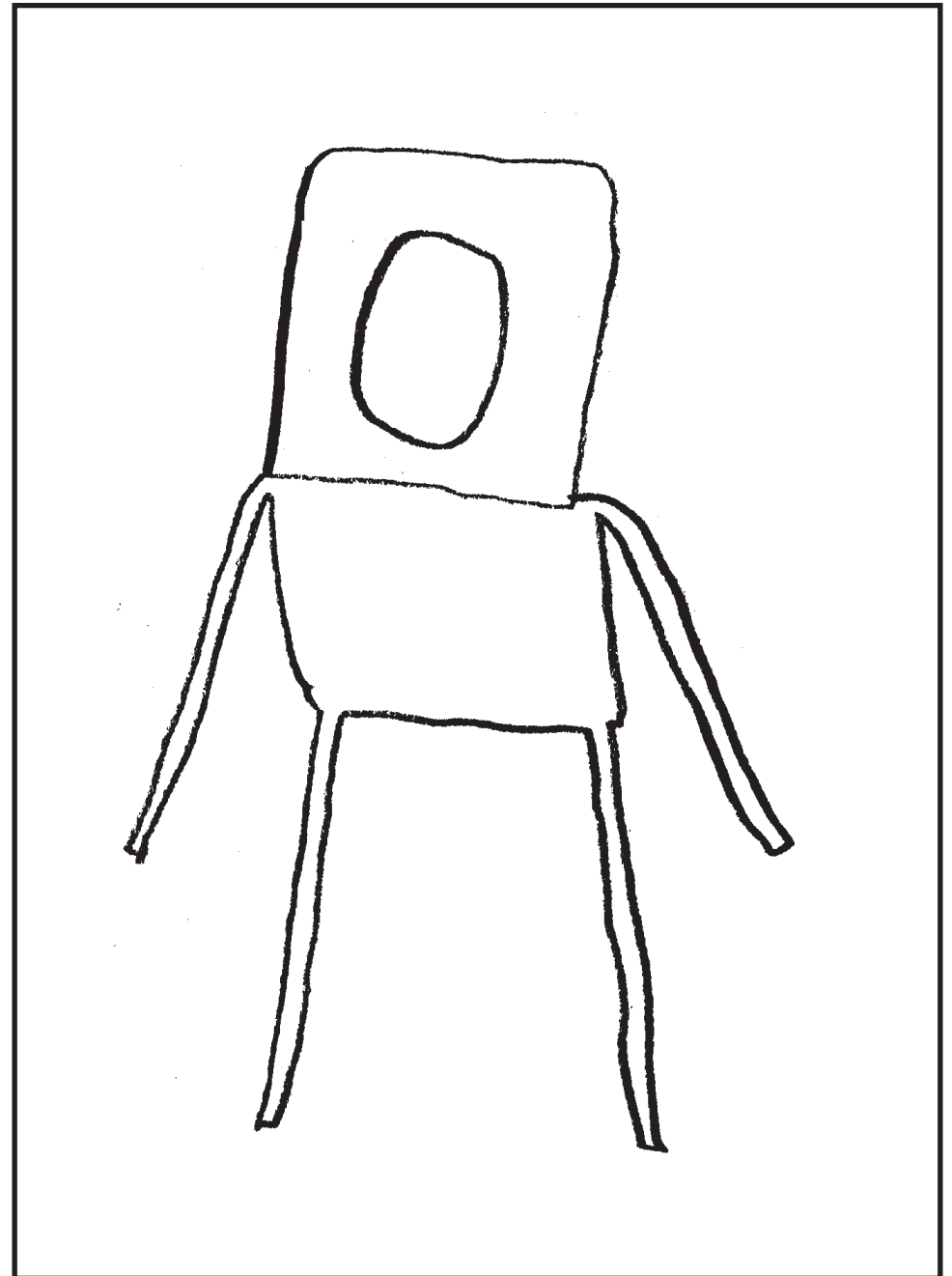
### Practical activity

- ☐ Place a chair on a table so that it is at eye level for the children. They should be able to see the edge of the seat but not the seat itself. *Do not draw their attention to this.*
- ☐ Tell them to do a quick line drawing of the chair in their sketchbooks, just the main features, no pattern or detail.
- ☐ A fair number of them will draw the seat, which they cannot see. Few will have drawn the underside of the seat although it could be seen. The more able children may have drawn the view correctly.
- ☐ While children are drawing, walk round and glance at the drawings to note how many have drawn the seat of the chair. Make no comment.
- ☐ Without naming names, say that some children have drawn the seat of the chair although they cannot actually see it.
- ☐ Explain that this is an example of how the left side of their brain has muscled in and taken over. The left side knows that a chair has a seat, four legs and a back and, because it is dominant, it takes over and tells you to draw them even if you can't see them.

- ❑ Say that the solution to this is to develop the right side of the brain, and there are exercises you can do to help.
- ❑ This can be repeated with a quick full-length figure drawing. A considerable number of children will draw a full facing view although they may well have a side view or partial side view.

'Believe what you see,  
don't see what you believe.'

*Meg Fabian, the author*



*Another example showing the seat of the chair*