



PROJECT #51

CREATE A “GOODNIGHT WORRY” PILLOWCASE!

To create a goodnight worry pillowcase, you will need:

Paper (several sheets per student), pencil and eraser, drawing tools that bleed when water is added (felt tip pens, watercolor pencils, etc...)

Two cups of water (one to wash brushes in, the other to add water to sketches)

Paint brushes or Q-tips to blend your colors

A pillowcase per student (color of the pillowcase should be lighter than your markers)

Permanent markers or fabric pens

Washable markers or pens

Scissors

(optional) A playlist to listen to while working! Here are some suggestions from project creator, Ceyda:

‘Rainfall for sleep’ or sounds from nature

Steel Bird by Ekova in Sleep Lullabies

Dere Geliyor Dere, in And the Weathermen Shrug their Shoulders, by the Ex and Tom Cora

Adriano Viterbini – Imidiwan Afrik Tendam (Tinariwen)



Have you ever lain awake at night, worrying about things, or missing someone who is no longer in your life?

Worry and sadness can not only make us feel miserable during the day, but they can also keep us up at night.



One thing that can help put worry and sadness to bed so you can sleep is creating your own pillowcase with comforting art or words.

Thank you to our friend Ceyda (pronounced Jayda) for sharing this project with us.

Ceyda is an artist who specializes in socially engaged practices and installations. She also designs clothing and knows what it feels like to worry — especially when it comes to moving and changing careers.

You can learn more about Ceyda [here](#).

Step 1 of 13

Let's get started!

To start, let's arrange our workspace, making sure we have 2 cups of water, a rag for spills, and plastic or paper to protect our table.

Now let's think about some things that help us fall asleep, like listening to music or sounds, or writing down our feelings.

Here's something that helps me relax that you can try too: Rub your hands together until they are very warm, then put your warm hands on your eyelids. Does this help?

Do you have ideas that could help others? If you're in a group, you can share ideas with each other, like songs that help you fall asleep or other things you do to relax.



Step 2 of 13

Playing with materials

It's always fun to explore materials!

Let's get out our paper and materials and try drawing different kinds of lines and marks: straight, curvy, zigzag, dots....

Have you heard of counting sheep at night to help you fall asleep? Maybe you can draw or paint some sheep.

Can you think of any other symbols for sleep? What about closed eyelids? Or a moon in the sky?

You can also use the side of your pencil to create a grey area on your paper then erase out a shape, like a sunset!



Step 3 of 13

When you're done, look at all the marks you made. Which ones do you like best?

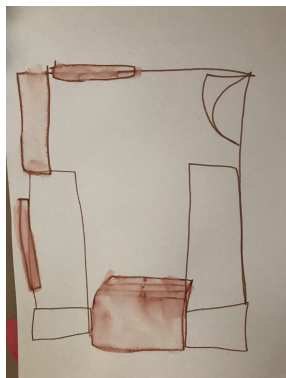
On a new piece of paper, create a drawing that includes your favorites. You can also experiment with cutting out some of the marks you made and arranging them on your paper.

The marks don't have to make sense together. Many artists prefer to make drawings that are "abstract," which means that their drawings aren't based on reality but instead made up of shapes, colors, and lines.

Step 4 of 13

Do you want to try a few more drawing exercises?

If you don't have time to try them all, that's okay. You can skip ahead to step 12 and get started on your pillowcase. Then maybe another day you can go back and try the ones you didn't get to do today!



Step 5 of 13

Drawing exercise 2: soar above your room!

Pretend you are a bird flying over the room you sleep in. What do you see when you look into your room below?

Try drawing a picture of the things you see. You can draw them in a realistic way or an abstract way with just lines, shapes and colors.

Did you know that water has healing powers? We're going to use some of those powers now by dipping our paintbrush in water and blurring out some things in our picture that might be keeping us awake at night. Maybe it's clutter in your room, or maybe it's your window if there's a lot of noise or light coming into your room from outside.

Do you like what you created? If you do, maybe you'll want to put this on your pillowcase!



Step 6 of 13

Drawing exercise 3: Create a "day timeline"

Ready for your next assignment? On a fresh sheet of paper, draw out a line that represents your day, from waking up to going to bed. Along your line, make curves, boxes and other shapes to represent different events in your day like getting up, having breakfast, walking to school, taking a test, having lunch with a friend, going to soccer practice, etc.

What were some parts of your day that may have been hard or caused you to worry? Did you have an argument with your brother? Were you late to school? Were you thinking about someone you miss? Let's add water to those parts where we'd like to send ourselves a little extra love and care!

Did you like this exercise? Maybe you want to add your "day timeline" to your pillowcase!



Step 7 of 13

Drawing exercise 4: waking head & sleeping head

Here's another idea you can try...

On a new sheet of paper, draw a head to symbolize waking up, with energy lines coming out. Next to it, draw feet to symbolize your day. Next to the feet, draw another head with eyes closed to symbolize going to sleep.

Now, on top of your heads and feet, use colors and symbols to draw what you feel when you're:

1. asleep
2. awake
3. unable to sleep
4. dreaming

You can also try drawing with your eyes closed!

Now you have even more drawings to choose from for your pillowcase! And here's another...



Step 8 of 13

Drawing exercise 5: Melt your worries

On a new piece of paper, draw another head shape. Inside the head shape, write out your feelings.

When you're done, dip your paintbrush in water and brush it over your worries to blur out the things that prevent you from sleeping.

Now for the really fun part!...

Tear up your paper into little pieces and put the pieces in the dirty water cup where your worries can melt away!



Step 9 of 13

Drawing exercise 6: sleepy memories

Try to remember some of the times and spaces where you were able to fall asleep easily. Like in the car or snuggled up on the couch.

Do you have some ideas? Choose one or two to draw.



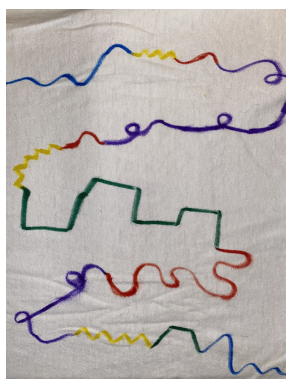
Step 10 of 13

Yay! It's time to make your pillowcase!

First, take some time to look at all of your drawings.

Which ones do you like the most?

You can select one drawing for your pillowcase or you can combine a few of your favorite drawings.



Step 11 of 13

Before you start working on your pillowcase, put a piece of cardboard, paper or a plastic bag inside the pillowcase so that the paint or marker doesn't bleed to the other side.

Also, make sure the pillowcase is slightly stretched to make it easier to draw on — you can tape the sides to hold it in place.

You're now ready to re-create your drawing on your pillowcase!

If you're using fabric paint, follow the instructions on the package to see how to make your drawings permanent. A little secret: sometimes just letting the paint dry for three days then ironing your pillowcase will make paints and markers permanent.

If you're drawing or writing your feelings and you want them to magically disappear in the washing machine, be sure to use washable markers so they can wash away. You can do this again and again whenever you have worries that are keeping you awake at night.



Step 12 of 13

Once your pillowcase is dry, it's time to give it a try!

First, choose a song that you find relaxing. If you're in a group, you can even make a relaxing playlist or sing each other lullabies in different languages!

Now just get into a comfortable position, put your head on your pillowcase, close your eyes and relax.

Sweet dreamszzzz!

Step 13 of 13

Want to inspire others to say goodnight to their worries or sadness? Click below to share your pillowcase in our gallery!

P.S. If your emotions ever feel too big or you ever feel unsafe, please reach out to someone you trust. You can also find links to more support on our [RESOURCES](#) page.