

## Croc and Bird by Alexis Deacon (Red Fox)

Croc and Bird hatch out from eggs lying side by side on the sand and assume that they are brothers. They nurture and shelter each other but the day comes when they realise that they are not brothers after all. Will they follow nature's course or allow the behaviour they have learned from each other and the interdependency of their early lives to influence what happens? A touching portrayal that would complement other picture books about identity.

### Part 1: Understanding how a picturebook works

#### Overall learning aims of this part of the teaching sequence:

- To explore a high quality picture book which allows children to put themselves inside the story and empathise with characters and their issues and dilemmas.
- To engage with illustrations throughout a picture book to explore and recognise the added layers of meaning these can give to our interpretation of a text.
- To explore issues of change and difference in story.
- To reflect on a range of picturebooks, thinking about the characters, storyline, the illustration techniques, how the illustration and text work together to tell the story and how each book engages the reader.
- To explore how to use drawing as an approach to enhance thinking for writing and developing vocabulary.
- To explore and follow the authentic process that an author/illustrator goes through when developing a picturebook.
- To develop characters, dialogue and plot using illustration and text.
- To understand how a picturebook can develop reader engagement.
- To write a picturebook using paper technology.

**This teaching sequence is designed for a KS2 class.**

#### Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is 2 weeks long spread over 10 sessions. All of the Power of Pictures teaching sequences are aimed to develop an appreciation of art and picture books across age ranges. The sequence will have a strong emphasis on spending time exploring and responding to illustrations, drawing and illustrating as part of the writing process and will exemplify the process of picturebook making, allowing children to gain an understanding of how ideas are developed and carried through for impact on the reader. The work done in the sequence will be further enhanced by the planned author visit to allow children to develop their own ideas for characters and narratives.

### Teaching Approaches:

- Close observational drawing
- Response to illustration
- Gallery walk
- Role-Play and Drama
- Illustrating characters
- Close reading of illustrations
- Freeze Frame
- Booktalk
- Sketching ideas
- Storyboarding
- Responding to writing
- Bookmaking

### Writing outcomes

- Notes in response to picturebook spreads
- Annotations
- Performances of storylines
- Character illustrations
- Reflections on characters and their behaviour
- Analysis of picturebook spreads
- Writing in role
- Draft page layouts
- Complete page layouts
- Book reviews
- Annotations
- Sketches of characters and scenarios
- Storyboard
- Sample picturebook spreads
- Published picturebook

### Other useful texts and resources:

#### Other books by Alexis Deacon:

- Slow Loris Red Fox
- Beegu Red Fox
- Jitterbug Jam (by Barbara Jean Hicks) Red Fox
- While You Are Sleeping Red Fox
- A Place to Call Home (with Viviane Schwarz) Walker
- Soonchild (by Russell Hoban) Walker
- Cheese Belongs to You (with Viviane Schwarz) Walker
- The Selfish Giant (by Oscar Wilde) Hutchinson
- Jim's Lion (by Russell Hoban) Walker
- I Am Henry Finch (with Viviane Schwarz) Walker
- Geis: A Matter of Life and Death Nobrow

#### Alexis Deacon's Website:

- <http://alexisdeacon.blogspot.co.uk/>

### Other books/tales which explore issues of difference and unexpected friendship:

- *The Ugly Duckling*, Hans Christian Andersen (various versions)
- *Something Else*, Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell (Puffin)
- *Lost and Found*, Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins)
- *The Garbage King*, Elizabeth Laird (Macmillan)
- *Amos & Boris*, William Steig. OP
- *Charlotte's Web*, E. B. White (Puffin)

### Websites to support children's own knowledge about crocodiles

- <https://youtu.be/a25kikvEpOw>
- <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/nile-crocodile/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Crocodylus>
- [http://www.wwf.mg/ourwork/cssp/speciesprojects/nile\\_crocodile/](http://www.wwf.mg/ourwork/cssp/speciesprojects/nile_crocodile/)

### Websites to support children's own knowledge about birds

- <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/parrot/>
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/True\\_parrots](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/True_parrots)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Kea>
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Pygmy\\_parrot](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Pygmy_parrot)
- <http://www.arkive.org/african-grey-parrot/psittacus-erithacus/video-00.html>
- <http://www.livescience.com/28071-parrots.html>

### Websites to support understanding around picturebook creation:

- The Picturebook Makers blog gives lots of useful insights into the creative processes of a great number of author illustrators, including Power of Pictures partners Benji Davies, Chris Haughton, Viviane Schwarz and Mini Grey. Alexis Deacon's entry is here  
<http://blog.picturebookmakers.com/post/100575630631/alexis-deacon>

### Before beginning the sequence:

- Complete the children's and teacher's questionnaire about picturebooks and illustration. Make sure the children know that they are to be honest and direct are not expected to give any particular answers. They should be honest reflections of their own experiences and they will not be judged in any way for what they write on the forms. The same applies to the teacher questionnaire.
- Prepare a working wall display or a shared journal in which you can collect children's responses and examples of work that is produced alongside the sequence.

- Watch the video: 'An introduction to the author and illustrator Alexis Deacon' on the Power of Pictures website: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis>. Talk about the author/illustrator with the children.
- Do they know any of his books? Have they read anything by him before?
- What interested them in the video? What surprised them?
- What do they think his life is like as an author/illustrator? What have they learnt about how and why he writes?
- What questions would they like to ask him about his job and how he works?
- Allow time and space for children to discuss these questions, either in mixed groups or pairs and to make a record of their responses, in a concept map or some other kind of visual organiser.
- After seeing the video, what are you now expecting from a book written by Alexis Deacon? Jot down children's responses on sentence strips on the working display or in the shared journal.

### Session 1: Close Observational Drawing

***The children's books featured on the Power of Pictures have been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text, as well as time to create and focus on illustrations of their own.***

- Prior to the session collect a sample range of eggs such as duck, quail, chicken and ostrich. If these are difficult to come by you can substitute photographs for these. Also provide a range of media for drawing and colouring, including where possible: coloured pencils, felt tips, pastels, watercolours, poster paints, and fineline pens.
- Alexis Deacon, the author/illustrator of the book the children will be investigating, says "You only really begin to understand what you're looking at when you start to draw it." This session will support the children to explore this idea for themselves.
- Initially invite the children to hone in on some detail on an egg of their choosing – (this might be supported by use of a viewfinder) and to try the different media to recreate that detail. You could invite the children to annotate each attempt with the pros and cons of using that medium. Having explored a range, invite the children to choose the medium that is most effective.
- Now encourage the children to take the time to look closely at the details, shapes, patterns and distinctive features of their egg and create an image of the whole egg, using their chosen media.
- Invite the children to discuss the details, colours, shape, size and other features they noticed when drawing their eggs and how this might inform their thoughts in relation to the origin of the egg. Invite them to consider where the eggs came from and who or what might be growing inside each of the eggs. Encourage them to provide reasoning for their response, drawing on their prior knowledge and their observations from the drawing activity.

- You might invite the children to create a setting for their egg on a new piece of paper, considering where it might be found, what the weather would be like, whether anyone would be there and once they are happy with the setting the children could cut out their eggs and place them in the setting.
- Invite the children to look at each other's drawings – what do they notice about the detail of the eggs and their settings?
- Display the drawings on a working wall.

## Session 2: Responding to Illustration

***In the best picturebooks illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a picturebook and are frequently far more observant than an adult reader.***

***Children's interest in images and their ability to read them can be developed through carefully planned interventions with an emphasis on talk.***

***Discussions about illustrations can include all children and help to make a written text more accessible. Time spent focusing on illustration can contribute to children's ability to read for meaning, express their ideas and respond to the texts they encounter.***

- Colour photocopy or project on the smart board the first double page spread of the book featuring the two eggs positioned side by side with the text omitted.
- In pairs or groups invite the children to discuss and note what they notice, what if anything they like or dislike about the image, what questions they might have and what connections they make with the image. Once the children have had time to talk in their groups, open up the discussion to form a whole class conversation. Note some of their reflections and extend the discussion through the use of the following types of questions:
  - In what ways are the eggs similar and how do they differ?
  - What might this suggest?
  - Where are the eggs? What clues are there?
  - What does the setting indicate about who or what might be in the eggs?
  - What time of day is it? What does this suggest about the story?
  - Consider the size and placement of the eggs on the page – how does this make you feel? What does it make you think? What would be different if the eggs were seen in close up?
  - Consider the placement of the eggs to each other – what does this suggest? Is there a relationship between them? What makes you think this?
  - What does the colour palette suggest about the mood of the story?
  - What does meeting the characters from the story as eggs first suggest to the reader?

- Annotate the illustration with the children's responses and predictions. Encourage them to use detail from the illustration to add detail to their ideas and be as specific as possible.
- Share the text that accompanies the illustration and invite the children to consider in what ways this sentence complements the illustration. You may want to encourage consideration of the use of alliteration and its effect as well as the symmetry of the structure of the sentence and what this might imply in terms of how the plot might unfold and the dynamic of the relationship.
- Invite children to write their ideas down to display on the working wall or in the shared journal around a copy of this double page spread.

### Session 3: Gallery walk leading to Drama

***A gallery walk allows children to walk the story of a picturebook or part of it. The illustration spreads without text are displayed in sequence around the classroom or larger hall space and the children walk individually or in groups around the room building their own picture of the narrative through the illustration. Children can discuss their different interpretations of the story by discussing the images, working out what is happening and possible motivations of the characters. They can also empathise with different characters and situations by drawing on personal experiences.***

- In advance of the session prepare the next 8 images, colour photocopied and enlarged, showing Croc and Bird hatching.
- Reveal each image without sharing the text. Invite the children to speculate what the implications of each image are and what they think the next image will reveal.
- Display the 8 images around the classroom with large pieces of paper underneath divided into four with the headings
  - Hear
  - See
  - Think
  - Feel
- Invite the children to visit each image and spend time looking closely at what is happening. Encourage them to consider the implications of character position within the frame and in relation to the other, use of text within the image, colour choice, clues within the setting and the direction of the character's gaze to understand what the characters are experiencing.
- Provide groups of children with green (for Croc) and pink (for Bird) post-it notes to jot their thoughts about what is happening for each of the animals in each image. Support the children in making observations about each of the images under the four headings. Give the children time to deeply consider each image and encourage them to use draw on specific features of the illustrations to make their points.
- Once each group has responded provide them with one of the eight images to focus on. Using the jottings from their peers to support them, invite each group to create a freeze frame of the image

with sound effects. The children that are the characters will need to focus on their body position and facial expressions to convey the moment. The other children will need to consider what sound effects best suit the mood, to incorporate some of the sounds that are incorporated in the pictures and the mood of each image too.

- Perform these images back to the group. Invite the class to comment on the mood of each image and the transition from one to the other. Invite them to consider in what ways the hatching differs for Croc and Bird. What can we infer about their characters from the way in which they hatch and their body language? Ask them to reflect on how the two characters might view one another. Is there a character they feel more sympathy for? If so how has this been created? Ask them to make notes about their ideas.
- Show the children the images on the page as they appear in the text. What impact does having multiple framed images on the page have? What do the frames do for the story? How is this different from having a single image on the page like the one they saw before? Consider the passing of time, the focus on the characters and the role of the reader.
- Share the text that accompanies the images and ask them if this changes their views of the characters and if so why and in what way? Provide time for the children to record their ideas about the characters from their thoughts on the illustrations and text and the notes they made after the freeze frame activity.

#### Session 4: Illustrating Characters:

***Illustrating characters alongside an illustrator or enabling adult gives children a starting point into the process of how to bring characters to life through illustration. Children who are less confident to begin this process can see where starting points are, the shapes that are used to build up characters and how detail such as proportion, facial expression, clothing and props can add layers of understanding about character and emotion.***

***Drawing characters focuses attention on them: how they look; what they say; how they behave. To build their ideas of what a character is like, children have to refer to the text. They can also be encouraged to draw on the language of the text in making annotations around the drawings.***

- Prepare for this session by providing cartridge paper, HB pencils and softer pencils, charcoal pencils or sticks of charcoal or drawing ink with fine brushes, thicker brushes and watercolours.
- Look back at the spreads from yesterday's session, ideally large scale on the IWB or with copies for children to explore – again without revealing the title of the book.
- How do you think the illustrator has created the pictures? What materials have they used?
- How has the illustrator used body shapes to tell us more about the characters? e.g. The speed and ferocity at which Croc hatches, compared to Bird; the fact that although Croc seems larger and stronger, he looks to Bird for what to do; the way they sit bolt upright to wait for food, then end up flat on their stomachs.

- How does their facial expression enhance this further? e.g. Bird's barely open eyes and wide mouth, Croc's, bright, alert eyes, wide open mouth and sharp teeth, the way Croc looks to Bird, mirroring his positioning.
- Watch the video 'Illustrating a character from Croc and Bird' on the Power of Pictures website: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis> Look at the materials he uses to create the illustration, how he changes from a fine brush to a thicker brush with more defined bristles and why he chooses and uses these for different purposes in the illustration. Look at how he layers up the colours as he works, leaving the layers to dry in between to create depth, then putting in finer details for definition.
- Notice how Alexis talks about how he went to a zoo to look at and study real crocodiles when he was preparing for the book. Show the following clip of a real bird hatching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BC8bHVyauQY> pausing the clip at intermittent points and inviting the children to suggest words or phrases that describe each moment and also to pull out details that Alexis has used in his drawing of Bird. Repeat the exercise using this clip of an alligator hatching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFephRXoWf4>
- Model to the children how to follow Alexis Deacon's process to create one of the characters from the hatching spreads using soft pencil, charcoal pencil, charcoal or drawing ink to draw the head, body, arms and legs. Encourage the children to work alongside you – it will therefore be important to work on a large scale on a flip chart or under a visualiser, so that the children can clearly see what you are doing at each step and follow the process. Talk carefully about shapes, and patterns as you work and what you are focusing on to allow the children to see the process of creating this character live. Where will you start? Will you set a scene by adding the eggs around the characters? With the hardest part as suggested by Alexis? What do you think this might be? What body part will you move to next? How will you shape it to add expression? What does this make us think about the character and its behaviour as well as its appearance?
- When they have completed their outline, provide watercolours for the children to try out colouring the scene. Provide a range of brushes, soft sweeping brushes for large swathes of colour, fine brushes to add detail and think about the time needed to dry each layer in between.
- When you have finished your illustration, step back and look at the character you have created. Write your thoughts about them as words and phrases around the picture or as a character description to accompany it, drawing on their thoughts from the previous session. Encourage the children to do the same.
- Display the artwork prominently on the Working Wall.

### Session 5: Deepening understanding of characters through close reading of illustrations

***Children should be given time and space to look deeper at the illustrations in a picturebook to take them a step beyond what pictures literally represent to having an idea of how pictures are able to express and metaphorically display what cannot be pictured directly; ideas, moods, abstract notions and qualities.***



- Turn the page and read the text from the next spread: “I wonder what food looks like...?”
- Give the children the chance to conduct a close reading of this illustration, giving mixed groups or pairs a copy of the illustration and time to read and discuss. Investigate the techniques that Alexis Deacon has used to deepen our understanding about these characters using prompts as necessary. Look at the scale used in the illustration, how small Croc is in relation to the crab and plants in the dense forested area, but continues to walk toward them. Talk about how the perspective used makes us view Bird. Look at the differences in what is placed in the background on both sides of the spread and the colours used. How do all these things make us think about the dynamic between Croc and Bird? In the previous spreads, Croc looked to Bird for what to do, how has this changed? How would you describe each character now?
- Now look at the next double page spread. Compare the use of a large double page spread and the small vignettes you see here. What does the first image and text tell us about Croc? What does the second image and text tell us about Bird? How do we know this? Encourage the children to look at where they can evidence their responses using techniques used in the illustrations or from what they can read in the text.
- Now look at the third image, what does this tell us about their relationship? Why do you think Alexis Deacon has chosen not to include any of the background features in this last image? What does this make us do as a reader? Give mixed groups or pairs a copy of this double page spread and allow time for children to annotate the spreads with their ideas about the relationship and dynamic between the two characters.

## Session 6: Exploring the relationship between words and images

***Authors of picturebooks make deliberate choices about what they will show in the words and what will be viewed in the illustrations. In the best picturebooks, the illustrations will not merely complement the text on the page, they may also elaborate and extend it, contradict the text or be used to show feelings that the words may only imply. Children should be given experiences that allow them to tune into the function of both the text and illustrations and how they work together to bring the story to the reader.***

- Re-read the book so far, until “Me too,” said Bird.
- Now turn the page – what effect does the page turn have on you as a reader? Why does it have this effect when juxtaposed against the previous image? How does the way the characters are presented in this illustration change our perceptions of them? Allow time and space for the children to explore and discuss this image, either with a large copy visible on the IWB or with a copy for mixed groups or pairs to share. What does starting the opening sentence on this spread with ‘Then’ do for us as readers? How does it change how we feel about the characters and their story? What is the effect of combining this with the image of the rising sun and the large shadows behind the characters, leading us to turn the page?

- Now read on up to, “I’m glad you’re my brother,” said Crocodile. Look carefully at the new things Croc and Bird are trying out. In each instance establish whose natural behaviour it is and how the other is reacting. Discuss whether they are happy trying out each other’s behaviours; how do the children know? Look carefully at each animal’s body position, facial expression and the direction of their gaze to add detail to the discussion. Is the text telling the same story as the illustrations? What impact does the alternating of each animal’s behaviour have on the reader?
- Give the children chance to re-read these spreads for themselves from ‘Then the sun rose.’ to “I’m glad you’re my brother,” said Crocodile, in mixed groups, discussing what they can tell about the characters of Croc and Bird, their home and the relationship between them from the text and the pictures. To hone their attention, split them into groups to look at one specific aspect.
  - The character of Croc
  - The character of Bird
  - Their home
  - The relationship between Croc and Bird
- To ensure they are looking carefully at both the words and pictures, you might give them a grid that focusses their attention and ensures they comment on both, such as:

**What do you learn about the character of Croc?**

<b>From just the words?</b>	<b>From just the pictures?</b>

- Come back together to share each group’s insights by relating these to the spreads as you share them again. Discuss what the text does and what the images do and why both come together to contribute to and extend meaning for us as readers.
- Discuss with the children the mood of this sequence? How do they feel it’s intended to be read? How is the reader meant to respond? Once you have had this discussion you might want to share Alexis Deacon reading the story up to this point at: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis>. Does this change their view?

### Session 7: Freeze Frame leading to writing in Role:

***Role-play and drama provide immediate routes into the world of a story and allow children to explore texts actively. Through role-play and drama, children are encouraged to experiment with the 'what if?' of plot and make it their own. Role-play is a particularly effective way for children to inhabit a fictional world, imagining what the world of the story would be like, and illuminating it with their own experience. It enables children to put themselves into particular characters' shoes and imagine how things would look from that point of view. Through drama and role-play children can imagine***

***characters' body language, behaviour and tones of voice in ways that they can draw on later when they write.***

- Re-read the story and read on to 'to a lake full of crocodiles by a forest full of birds'.
- Provide children with a copy of the spread 'Then one day when they were out hunting, the river carried them far away' or display on the IWB. Give the children time to look at the image carefully.
- Invite the children to respond to the illustration, discussing what they notice, is this illustration similar to or different from the ones which have come before – how? What does the body language indicate? In what ways is colour used to convey meaning? How does the positioning of the animals inform our view of this scenario? What are the different characters thinking in this moment? What are they looking at? What does this suggest? Can you tell what they are feeling? What is the focus of this image? What draws your eye? What might this suggest about what happens next? What do the reflections suggest?
- Allow children to work in groups to freeze frame this image in pairs as Croc and Bird. Place the second half of the spread up on the IWB so that they can see the sight Croc and Bird are faced with and have them assume the body positions of the two characters looking in on this scene. What do you think your character is thinking of saying? How do they think this scene might affect the rest of the story? What is the impact of this being a double page spread? Allow time for the children to collect their thoughts whilst in role and then take a piece of paper and create a thought or speech bubble for their character, writing the words first, then deciding whether this is something the character is thinking or saying out loud before drawing a thought or speech bubble around their words.
- Follow this with a longer piece of writing in role as the character they embodied for the freeze frame exercise, sharing their reactions to this scene, connecting this to the story that has come before and considering what might happen next. Explore possibilities, making notes of suggestions around the illustration on post-it notes.
- Give the children the chance to draft their writing, then read it aloud to their partner, who worked in role as the other character. What did their writing have in common? Could they see some of the same thoughts or feelings emerging? What was different? Did one character react differently to another? What was in the story that supported the reaction, thoughts and feelings you chose?
- Display the writing prominently in the classroom or in a shared area for all to read and respond to.

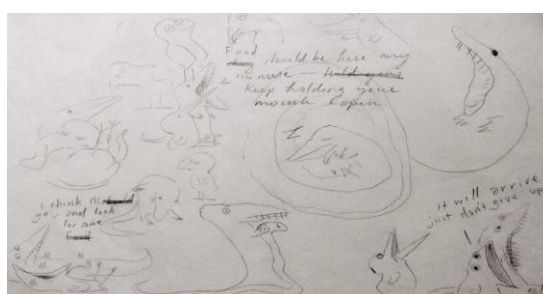
## **Session 8: Evaluating the reader's interaction with the text**

- Read on until 'They looked at them and they looked at each other.', being careful to cover the next page of the book so that children do not see the layout or text.

- What do you think the two characters are thinking now? Give each child a piece of plain paper and allow them to construct a thought or speech bubble to add to this illustration related to a character of their choice. How might these thoughts compare to the initial reactions of the characters in the previous spread. Compare and contrast the children's ideas, what similarities and differences were there in their ideas?
- Now allow time for the children to discuss, in mixed pairs or groups, how they think this scene might affect the next part of the story. What might happen after this point? Why do they think this?
- Now focus the children on what they think the next page of the text might look like. Give them time to go back to the book so far and record the different ways of arranging text and image that they have seen so far, and record this, e.g:

Spread	Arrangement
1	Double page spread, full image, one line of text on second half of spread at the bottom of the page
2	Double page spread, 4 frames each with text underneath
3	Double page spread, 4 frames each with text underneath
4	Double page spread, one large frame, one line of text on second half of spread at the bottom of the page
5	Two spreads, vignette images, text by each image
6	Double page spread, full image, one line of text on first half of spread at the bottom of the page, text in frame at the top on second half of spread

- Ask them now to predict what they think the next page might look like and why. Give time for them to sketch out initial ideas roughly. Show some ideas of what Alexis's rough work looks like so they gain an idea of how quickly this should be done and that they don't have to include finished illustration, just an idea of what this might look like. There are some fantastic examples of his development work on the picturebook makers blog at: <http://blog.picturebookmakers.com/post/100575630631/alexis-deacon> such as:



- Pin their ideas up around the room, looking at the different ideas children have had and comparing similarities and differences. Allow time for children to discuss their choices.
- Now reveal the actual page from the text and read up to 'Crocodile swam off to be with the crocodiles. Bird flew off to be with the birds.' Does this page surprise them? Why do you think the author has chosen to only display text on this page and no illustration? What does this do for you as a reader?

### Session 9: Devising own ideas for a picturebook spread

- Re-read the story so far, up until 'Crocodile swam off to be with the crocodiles. Bird flew off to be with the birds.' What are you picturing in your mind when you hear these last sentences? What do you think will happen as they go off separately? How might they interact with the other crocodiles and birds? Why do you think this? Allow time for children to discuss their ideas, making notes on post-its that can be displayed around the text on the working display or in the shared journal.
- Now provide children with some rough plain paper, some thick A3 paper, folded in half, and appropriate art materials. Tell them that they are now going to predict what will happen in the next spread and how this will be laid out. Flick back through the entire book, so that the children can see the lead up to this spread again. What do they think might follow a single page of text?
- Give time for the children consider initial ideas, making rough drafts on the rough paper before deciding on a finished composition and drawing this out on the thick paper in a more finished style. You can track how Alexis's illustrations develop on the Picturebook Makers blog: <http://blog.picturebookmakers.com/post/100575630631/alexis-deacon>
- When the children have had the chance to work up and develop their ideas, pin these up around the room and give time for the children to walk around, observing and reflecting on each other's ideas to reflect on different choices made and evaluate their impact. Consider the different ways they have chosen to use text and illustration and invite the children to comment on how the spreads support the reader's engagement with the narrative through words and pictures.
- Finish by revealing the double page spread that comes next. Are they surprised by the author's choice? What is the impact of having the two illustrations with no text? How does this make us engage?

## Session 10: Reviewing the text as a whole

***Discussion about books forms the foundations for working with books. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this, the better they get at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them.***

***This booktalk is supportive to all readers and writers, but it is especially empowering for children who find literacy difficult. It helps the class as a whole to reach shared understandings and move towards a more dispassionate and informed debate of ideas and issues.***

- Read the whole book all the way through.
- Did the story end as you thought it would? How were you meant to feel as a reader? How did you feel?
- What do they notice about the colour palette as they reach the end of the book? Compare this back to the choices used at the start of the text. Why do you think Alexis Deacon has chosen to go back to similar palette choices here?
- Look at the final illustration, what do you notice about the shape that he has chosen for this final vignette? Why do you think he chose this shape? What does it make you think of or feel?
- Look at the body language and facial expressions of the characters. What does this say about their characters at the end of the story? Allow time for children to make notes about all their thoughts around a copy of this final illustration.
- Talk with the children about their responses to the story and to the illustrations. What did they like and/or dislike? How did the style of the illustrations support the telling of the story? What questions might they like to ask the author after reading? What connections do they make with other picturebooks or other texts they have read?
- Have the children write comments or book reviews about the text to display in the book corner, as part of the display Alexis Deacon's books, in the school library or on a class blog. You could look at an example of one someone else has written first, such as:  
<http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/193/childrens-books/reviews/croc-and-bird>  
<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13561022-croc-and-bird>
- Reflecting on the book as a whole, who do they think the book is for? What might a younger child get from the story? What might they miss? It would be helpful if they could pair up with some younger children to read and talk about the book to gauge their reactions and opinions. Did these match what you get from the story? Can people of different ages engage with this book in different ways?
- What do you think the purpose of the book is? What does it do to engage the reader? What messages might it give the reader? Record these ideas to refer back to and compare across the class.
- What have they learnt about picturebooks from engaging with this text? Can they summarise this in a concept map or visual organiser?

## Session 11: Ideation - Building inspiration from known picturebooks

***The children's books featured on the Power of Pictures have been chosen because of the quality of the illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with the text to create meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunities to enjoy and respond to the pictures and to talk together about what the illustrations contribute to their understanding of the text and how the words and pictures work together to tell the story. When creating a picturebook, the author must consider the relationship between words and images. The roles of the text and the pictures need to be carefully considered, rather than one being a duplication of the other. As Perry Nodelman (1990) states, 'The words tell us what the pictures do not show, and the pictures show us what the words do not tell us.'***

- Collect together examples of other high quality picturebooks that can be used as an example of the kinds of characters, themes, storylines, text and image presentation that will inspire the children's own writing in this part of the sequence. Suggestions are made in the list above or can be sourced throughout the collections on CLPE's Corebooks website: <https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks>
- Collect together different kinds of art materials, e.g. coloured pencils, watercolour paints, acrylic paints, collage materials, brush pens, pencils, tracing paper, drafting paper, publication paper and card for the children to use to plan and create their picturebooks. If you have stock, providing each child with a sketchbook would be useful, or they could hand make these themselves.
- Re-read *Croc and Bird*. Ask the children who they think the book might be for and record their responses around a copy of the book. Ask them whether their opinion on picturebooks has changed since filling in their initial questionnaire. *What did they think before? What do they think now? What consolidated or changed their opinions?*
- Now ask the children to reflect on the main characters in the book. Who were they? How did we relate to them? Do you think the crocodile and bird were good choices of characters for this story? How did the author encourage us to engage and empathise with the characters?
- Now ask the children to think of words and phrases that best describe the book for them. Encourage them to respond to the storyline, features of the book and their reactions to it as readers when choosing words and phrases.
- Together, work on how to summarise the big shapes of the story in no more than 5 or 6 parts. Really encourage the children not to think about tiny details, like where they went or what they said, but the main structural features of the story, e.g.
  - We see the eggs, they look the same.
  - They hatch into a crocodile and a bird.
  - They look after each other and grow up together as brothers.
  - They realise they aren't brothers at all and go off with their own species.
  - They realise they miss each other as they really are brothers and come back together.



- Now explore with the children why the publishers might have chosen this story to publish. Why might it appeal to readers initially? What elements of the story might engage readers? How might they connect the story with their own lives?
- Now share a selection of high quality picturebooks, showcasing a range of characters, themes and types of story. You might choose books that are funny and immediately engage the reader like *Is there a dog in this book?* or *Bedtime for Monsters*, books that have a deeper message and make us think like *Wild, Shh! We Have a Plan*, *Grandad's Island* or *Croc and Bird*, books that are based on known experiences like *Here Comes Frankie*, *Traction Man Meets Turbodog* or *The Story Machine*, or books that are drawn from other known stories like *Grendel*.
- Allow the children to work in pairs or groups to focus on a picturebook and to think about the characters, words and phrases to describe the book and the big story shapes as they did with *Croc and Bird*. Then allow time for the children to present their book back to others in the class.
- Create a class concept map or infographic to share the different kinds of picturebooks explored that the children could draw on for their own ideas. Allow time for the children to explore and discuss the books. *What makes them different? What do they have in common?*
- Come back together to discuss the kinds of things the children think they might need to consider when are thinking of ideas for their own picturebooks. *Who are they writing them for? What might they need to do to engage their readers? What sorts of stories engage them as readers themselves and why?* Make notes to add to a Working Wall and allow children to make their own notes to come back to as they work through creating their text.

## Session 12: Ideation - Sketching initial ideas in words and pictures

***When planning and developing ideas for picturebook narratives, children may wish to approach the process in different ways and should be supported to do so. Some children, like some authors, may think of the words in writing first and then the images that will accompany them. Others may think of the pictures first before composing accompanying text and others will work with a combination of the two. Throughout the writing process it is therefore important for children to be given materials and space to allow them to plan and compose ideas in different ways. You may wish to give each child a personal sketchbook to develop ideas in and out of taught sessions.***

- Talk with the children about how they think picturebooks are made. Encourage them to think about the whole process from the author's idea to the finished book. Split the children into groups to come up with a diagram to explain what they think the process might be.
- Now watch the video: Alexis Deacon – The Writing Process  
<https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis> *What did they already know about how picturebooks are made? What else have they found out?*
- Explain to the children that they are going to create their own characters and stories for their own picturebooks. Think back to the books they looked at during the previous session, *what sorts of characters did they encounter? Children? Family members? Animals? Fantasy characters?* How many main characters were there on average? Why do you think that the stories all have limited casts?



- Reflect on the workshop they attended with Alexis Deacon. What did they find out about how he works up ideas for his characters? Does he start with perfect, finished drawings? Recap on what Alexis discussed in terms of creating roughs and exploring and experimenting with shapes and characters to stimulate ideas, and that the best scenes had limited numbers of characters.
- Ask the children if they have any ideas for their own potential characters, either from work they started in the workshop, or ideas they have had since.
- Allow time and space for the children to use drawing and writing to come up with some initial ideas for their own stories. If possible, provide each child with their own sketchbook that they can use to plan and develop their ideas as they work through the bookmaking process. As the children work, work alongside them sketching out and discussing your own ideas and concepts.
- Give children access to rough drawing materials, such as the coloured pencils they had in the workshop, soft drawing pencils 4b-6b, pastels or charcoal and time and space to try out ideas for different characters. Allow them to draw characters they connect with over and over again so that children can see their characters in lots of different ways. There are some lovely examples of Alexis's preliminary drawings on his Picturebook Makers blog: <http://blog.picturebookmakers.com/post/100575630631/alexis-deacon> You might also want to have some tracing paper on hand for children to trace characters they are particularly pleased with so they can replicate them. Model how to do this using characters you have created that you are particularly happy with.
- Encourage the children to spend time creating their character in different poses and adding different facial expressions and poses as they do so. For some of the children this may stimulate story ideas and they might want to write a list of behaviours or poses before they start sketching. Encourage the children to mix their sketches with text as they are coming up with ideas and celebrate their different ways of working. Create alongside the children, so they can see your process as you work. Vocalise when ideas work or don't work, explaining why this is for you as the writer.
- Invite the children to carefully consider how the reader will get to know these characters and their different traits. How will you use body positions, facial expressions and props to tell us more about your character, and the story that may unfold around them?
- Once the children have a character/s they are happy with invite them to start giving them a voice by recording possible pieces of speech in speech bubbles to put on your drawing, or to place them in a setting or scenario that suggests a story event. Show the children examples of how Alexis begins to expand on some of his ideas in his sketchbook, such as in the image below, taken from his website:



- Allow time and space for the children to do the same in their own sketchbooks.

### Session 13: Ideation - Building the big shapes of your story

***In order to plan their picturebook writing coherently, children will need to be supported to break their story down into episodes and sequence its events. Working on the broadest structures first will enable them to see if the story outline as a whole works, before they invest too much time in the finer details and then work out that their ending isn't right or something doesn't fit in the structure or their characters***

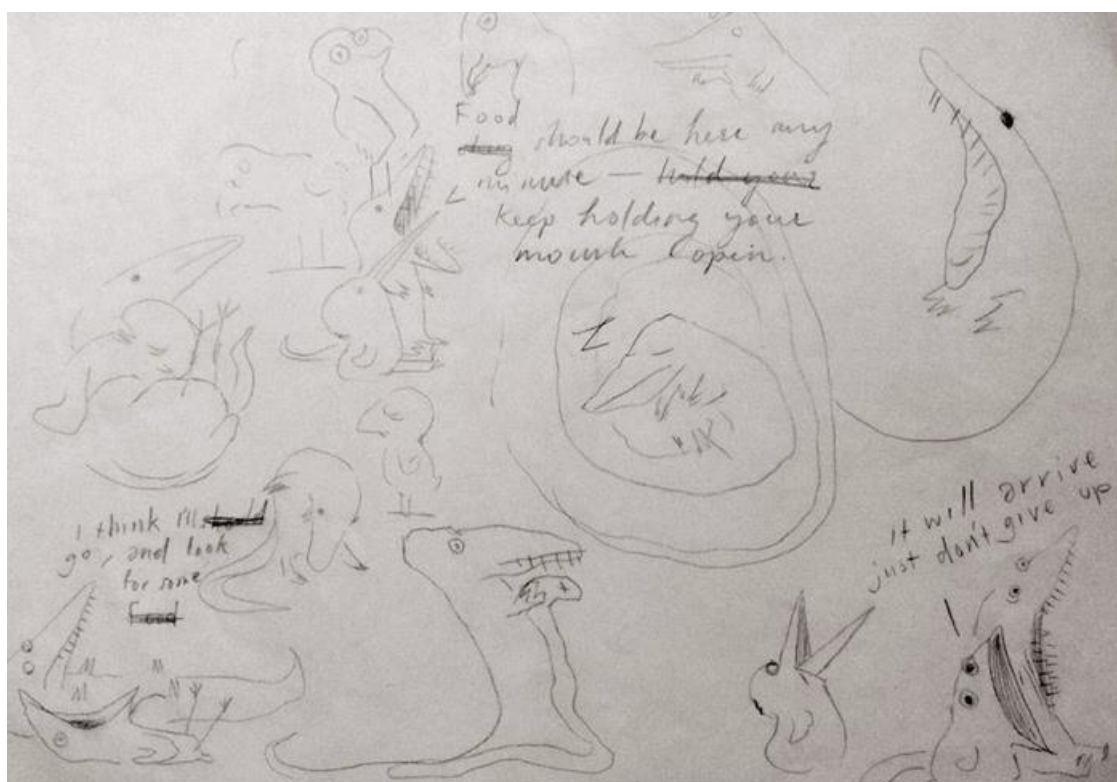
***or subject matter as a whole do not appeal to their intended audience.***

- Once children have had time to explore and experiment with different characters and scenarios, share with them how to really hone in on consolidating the big shapes of their story. Think back to the picturebooks explored in the first session, *what shapes did these stories have? Did they follow particular patterns? How were you introduced to the characters? How did we get to know the characters more? Was there a problem that the character(s) had to overcome? How did this happen? How was the story drawn together at the end?* Encourage the children also to think about the emotional journey of their story. *Where were the highs and lows? Why do you think this is important for reader engagement?* Structures, patterns and emotional journeys will vary from book to book, this is something to be explored. Be wary of trying to hone all stories down to one particular story structure or formula, but look for common patterns and allow space for children to play with and experiment with their own ideas, ensuring that they understand that the structure will engage a reader and allow the story to make sense.
- Give time for the children to plan the big shapes of their own story, as they did with the picturebooks they looked at previously. As before, encourage them not to go into detail at this initial stage, but to define the broad structure in 5 or 6 summary sentences.
- Now give time for the children to work with an initial response partner. This could be another child in the class or a supportive adult. At this initial stage, the response should work on the reader's initial feelings about the story concept and structure. Supportive questions to focus on might be:
  - Are they engaged with the characters and theme?
  - Does it work as a story?
  - Are the big shapes and characters right before you flesh out the detail?
  - How does a reader engage with your initial concepts?
  - What do they like about it?
  - What do they want to see in more detail?
  - How do your characters work for your reader?
  - What do they like about them, what do they want to know more about them? What questions do they have about them?
  - Which parts of the story work best for them? Which parts might need further development?
- Following the response partner session, give time for the children to reflect on their initial ideas, revising where necessary.

## Session 14: Creation – Mapping story ideas in more detail

***Children can make story maps as a form of planning, to prepare for their own writing. Making a story map is a graphic means of breaking a story down into episodes and sequencing its events, mapping out key scenes in the story through drawing and annotation. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently.***

- Now think about how you will add detail to these events and work through each stage of the story to get from one big shape to the next, adding extra layers of detail where they feel it is needed. As with all the other stages, the children should be allowed to work flexibly in words and/or pictures at this stage, using whatever format best supports their planning. They may choose to storymap, flowchart or box up their story into sections, they may just work in words, draw dominant images or use a combination of both words and pictures to plan ideas in more detail. Model and demonstrate how you could do this with your own story ideas.
- Model the process of starting to sequence your story in more stages, adding detail and considering the emotional journey their reader will experience through the story, and how one event will flow on to the next. Encourage them to think in broad terms, not planning the exact writing that will appear in the text, but getting the shape and structure of the story right, working on from the session with their response partner and incorporating suggestions. If they have ideas for lines, or things characters say, they can note these but encourage them to be loose with their ideas at this point. If there are any images forming in their mind about what this might look like in the book, encourage them to make rough sketches alongside, but, as with the text, keep these loose. You can see an example of how Alexis did this in his Picturebook Makers blog:



## Sessions 15 & 16: Creation - Planning ideas in more detail through Storyboarding

***When planning a picturebook, it is important to work out how the story will develop over the given number of pages. The simplest way in which to do this is using a storyboard.***

***Used by author/illustrators as part of their planning process, it is particularly useful for marking out the key spreads in a story within a given number of pages, usually 32 pages or 16 spreads. Less experienced writers might want to work with fewer spreads to help begin to structure their story.***

***Working on small 'thumbnails' allows children to experiment with and work out ideas for how to develop a visual sequence, how spreads will look in a finished book, whether spreads will be single or double paged and how words and images will work together on the page. Children can also plan ideas for book covers, front and endpapers, title pages and dedications, allowing them to use understand the language of picturebook publication in an authentic process.***

- Lots of author/illustrators will work using a storyboard on a single sheet of paper, representing the whole book in small thumbnail sized squares. Within the squares, they can plan the basic design of each page, plan how the story unfolds over the pages, see how the words and illustrations work together, and consider how the illustrations work together.

- Go back to the picturebooks the children have looked at and look at the way the text and images are used across the books. Consider here:
  - Reader engagement
  - Characterisation
  - The overall structure of the story and how it flows
  - How events are planned to encourage page turns
  - Use of language, questions, sentence structure, how the text is presented and how we are encouraged to read it
  - How the illustrations provide story detail beyond the text
  - Where interactive elements promote deeper engagement with the narrative
- For more verbose writers the economy of the text in a picturebook can be challenging. Spend some time modelling the thinking about what will be said in the image and what will be said in the picture – will they give the same message? (one emphasising the other), will they be a literal representation of each other? (this is unusual in a published picturebook), will they show the same thing but from a different point of view?
- Have a storyboard with a maximum of sixteen spreads (this is the usual number for a published picturebook) marked out on a flipchart or IWB for you to model marking out a story.


- Show the children how to work with the spread diagram to develop one of the stories on paper or in your own sketchbook. Look at how to swiftly mark out the rough illustrations like in this example by Alexis:

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- Looking at Alexis's storyboard, discuss with the children how the possible editing ideas are noted around the thumbnails. These could be added using post-it notes or thumbnails could be cut out and stuck onto another piece of paper which is annotated to provide enough space.
- Model and demonstrate carefully how to transform your story ideas onto the spreads, talking through each step of the thinking involved – what the pictures will look like on the page, the size and scale of elements within illustrations, what words will accompany the pictures and where the best place for the words will be. Also consider where you will place your defining moment for your character and what will shift the emotions in the story.
- Give children a large storyboard frame (or allow them to draw their own) and plenty of time for having a go at roughly planning out their story.
- At this point the drawings only need to be rough sketches, but the children should think carefully about the images they will draw, words they will use, how they will be written and where they will appear on the page.
- When they have completed their storyboard, ask the children to re-read as a whole. Then to read again, this time, giving careful consideration to the reader – at each moment what do they want their reader to be thinking or doing? What will make them want to turn the page? What effect do you want your story to have on the reader? Allow time for the writer to make rough notes about what they want their reader to think, feel and do as they read, ready for a reflective discussion about their ideas in the next session.

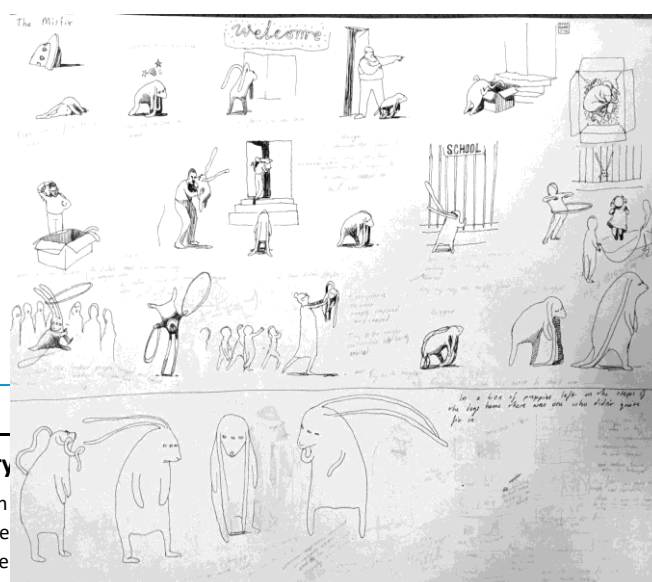
### **Sessions 17 & 18: Reflection – Feedback on final ideas and planning spreads in more detail**

***Just as an author would work with an editor, children should be given opportunities to help each other by reading their writing aloud and responding as readers. This allows them to support each other as they compose and structure their ideas. Writers can tell response partners what they are pleased with in their writing, particular concepts or parts of the story they may be struggling with and gaining a picture from the reader of how their writing impacts on them. Response partners should be encouraged to reflect on the impact of the narrative and illustrations on them as a reader. Children can then re-draft sections of their work, based on these conversations.***



***At the final stage of the writing process, it is important that children are given time to support each other with transcription proofreading, looking at spelling, punctuation and grammar and consider the quality of their illustrations before publication.***

- Use your own writing or negotiate with a child to share their storyboard, under a visualiser if you have one, to model a process for responding to writing. Look back at the reflections of the picturebooks they analysed at the beginning of the process reminding the children of the shapes and structures of published books. Open up a reflective conversation about the overall structure of your story, gauging their responses as readers. You might use key questions to target their thinking, such as:
  - Does the story make sense?
  - Do you engage with the characters?
  - What parts make sense, what parts could be refined or improved?
  - Does the story flow?
  - Are you engaged as a reader, would you want to turn the page and find out what happens next?
  - Are you emotionally engaged with the story?
- Consider revisions that could be made and why.
- Now, share with the children what you were trying to achieve with your story as a writer, and what effect you wanted to have on them as readers. Open up a reflective discussion around your own work as a model for children pairing up and reflecting on their own work. Encourage them to make suggestions that will achieve the effect the writer is looking for as well as an effect on the reader.
- Now give plenty of time for the children to pair up, looking at and reviewing their draft ideas, to evaluate the effectiveness of their writing for another reader. Allow time to make changes or
- enhancements. By looking back at Alexis Deacon's process work, children can see how he makes changes and additions as he plans each spread in more detail, exploring how the text and images work together. This would be an effective way of sharing the impact and purpose of the reflection process with the children:





- Come back to your own storyboard and share the decisions you will start to make to take this through to the publication stage. Revisit the illustration spreads, still working in roughs, to consolidate finer details, staging and setting, props, use of colour to reflect mood, use of framing to show the passing of time, whose perspective the reader sees spreads through, the scale of the characters on the page, the colours used and how this adds to our interpretation of the story and our emotional engagement with it. Will interactive elements like flaps or pop ups add to the story?
- Now think about the words needed on each page. Sparsity is key here, many picturebooks will have less text, as the pictures are doing the weight of the work. Children will have to think about their text differently, for example, if they have used framing to show the passing of time, they will not need to use fronted adverbials for this, if they have depicted a character's emotion in the illustration, they won't need to do this in the words. They should be encouraged to think about the right words for each page that allow the text and image to both contribute to the storytelling. They will need to think about where the text will be placed on the page and may wish to use tracing paper to try out different arrangements.
- Allow time for the children to work here with an editing partner, where two children or a child and an enabling adult support each other with transcription; reading the story aloud, looking at the potential impact of the illustration, proof reading, looking at spelling, punctuation and grammar and to consider the quality of the writing as a whole, prior to publication.
- After working with their partner, allow children time to make any further changes, again using a different colour pen or pencil to track changes made.

### Sessions 19 & 20: Publication – Bookmaking

***Publishing their work for an audience helps children to write more purposefully. Bookmaking provides a motivating context within which children can bring together their developing understanding of what written language is like; making written language meaningful as they construct their own texts. The decisions that all writers have to take and the processes of redrafting, editing and punctuation can be demonstrated and discussed as teachers and children write together in shared writing.***

- Demonstrate to the children how to make an origami book with dust jacket and modify to increase the number of spreads. The Never Ending books technique from *Get Writing! 7-11* by Paul Johnson

(Bloomsbury, 2008) gives a good example of how to make a book which suits this activity. Making each spread before taping together and covering the book allows children to be able to redo and replace spreads if needed as well as redoing the cover art if this goes wrong.

- Using one of your own spreads, model the difference in the quality of illustration from the storyboard to the finished book. Think about the options for adding the text, will you use presentation handwriting, or type on a word processor, cut out and stick?
- Give plenty of time for the children to complete the publication of the inside of their books. Allow them to choose and use the materials they think best fit the style of their illustration, exploring and experimenting with these first to test these and explore their effects. If the children want to make watercolour illustrations, model how to sketch, paint, dry, then add pen detail on each spread before moving on. You might also want to explore the children creating spreads outside of their books, then scanning and resizing on the computer before printing and sticking into their books. This will enable the children to work on each spread without worrying about spoiling others.
- Go back to the original book to explore and work on adding features of published texts on the front and back covers. What will they call their book that will interest the reader without giving the whole story away? What illustration will they place on the front cover to give the reader an idea of the story? Where will they place their name as the author/illustrator? This is a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate more complex book language in action, such as publisher logo/name (this could be agreed as a school or class name publishing house), spine text, dust jackets and endpapers, dedication, publication details, blurb, bar code, price.
- Encourage the children to share their own made books with a different response partner. They can swap books, read each other's stories and share their opinions on them. This should be a positive experience, so you may want to model this with another adult responding to your book with what they liked about the story and illustrations first.
- Give lots of time for them to swap with a number of different people. The children could then pick their favourite comment that they got from someone else to write as a quote on the back of their book.
- You may wish to arrange reading partner sessions where children can share their books with children in other classes in the school. They could see how their book appeals to readers of different ages and what each reader gains from their text.
- Display the books prominently in the class reading area, library or an appropriate communal space so that they can be shared with and enjoyed by a wider audience.