

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

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.

### Overall learning aims of this teaching sequence:

- To explore, interpret and respond to a picture book
- To explore characters and draw inferences to aid our understanding of them
- To explore narrative plots and characters through role-play and play
- To broaden understanding and use of appropriate vocabulary
- To write for a range of purposes, including letters in role, annotations and explanations and stories

**This teaching sequence is designed for a Nursery or Reception class.**

#### Overview of this teaching sequence.

All of the Power of Pictures teaching sequences are aimed to develop an appreciation of art and picturebooks 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 suite of video resources on the Power of Pictures website, where children can be introduced to Alexis Deacon as an author/illustrator, see him read the book aloud, illustrate a character and talk about how he wrote and illustrated the text.

The sequence needs to be carried out in ways that the teacher feels best fits the age and experience of the children in their setting. Some parts might lend themselves to whole class discussions, others will need to be carried out in small focus groups. With this in mind, sessions are ordered to share the thought process but not numbered or showing a specified length of session. Teachers should use their professional knowledge to plan this to meet the needs and interest levels of their children.

#### Teaching Approaches

- Responding to illustration
- Visualising
- Using drawing and modelling to create a character
- Reading aloud and rereading
- Book talk
- Role-Play and Drama – hotseating

#### Writing Outcomes

- Labels, captions and annotations
- Writing in Role
- Thought and Speech Bubbles
- Letters and notes
- Poem
- Explanation Text
- Non-Chronological Report

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- Story mapping
- Bookmaking

- Own narrative retelling - picture book

### Links to other texts and resources.

The Power of Pictures website: <https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>

Alexis Deacon's pages on the Power of Pictures website: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis>

#### 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 texts exploring identity:

- Guji-Guji by Chih-Yuan Chen
- Are You my Mother? by P D Eastman
- A Bit Lost by Chris Haughton
- You're a Hero, Daley B! by Jon Blake
- Tadpole's Promise by Jeanne Willis & Tony Ross

#### Other books exploring friendship:

- 'On Sudden Hill' by Benji Davies
- 'Iris and Isaac' by Catherine Rayner

#### Other Books exploring lifecycles:

- Growing Frogs by Vivian French & Alison Bartlett
- One Tiny Turtle by Nicola Davies & Jane Chapman
- The Emperor's Egg by Martin Jenkins & Jane Chapman
- Caterpillar, Butterfly by Vivian French & Charlotte Voake
- Dolphin Baby by Nicola Davies & Brita Granstrom
- Aaaarrgghh, Spider! by Lydia Monks
- The Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

#### Other books exploring human babies and childhood:

- 'Once there were' Giants by Martin Waddell and Penny Dale
- 'Knuffle Bunny' by Mo Willems
- 'Howler' by Michael Rosen and Neal Layton
- 'The New Small Person' by Lauren Child

**Other high quality picturebooks on the Power of Pictures programme to support ideation:**

- Is there a dog in this book? by Viviane Schwarz (Walker)
- Here Comes Frankie! by Tim Hopgood (Macmillan)
- Bedtime for Monsters by Ed Vere (Puffin)
- Shh! We Have a Plan by Chris Haughton (Walker)
- The Story Machine by Tom McLaughlin (Bloomsbury)
- Grandad's Island by Benji Davies
- Wild by Emily Hughes (Flying Eye)
- Grendel by David Lucas (Walker)
- Traction Man Meets Turbodog by Mini Grey (Red Fox)

**Other high quality picturebooks can be found on CLPE's Core Books online at:**

<https://clpe.org.uk/corebooks>

**Bookmaking and Paper Technology**

- Paul Johnson - <http://www.bookart.co.uk/>
- *Get Writing 4-7* by Paul Johnson (A&C Black)

**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 Alexis Deacon, Benji Davies, Chris Haughton, Emily Hughes, Viviane Schwarz and Mini Grey:  
<https://blog.picturebookmakers.com/>
- The Art of the Picture Book website contains interviews from a range of children's illustrators:  
<https://www.artofthepicturebook.com/>

**Cross Curricular Links:**

**Expressive Arts and Design:**

- Children could explore the sounds made during the contrasting hatching experiences using body percussion, voice and instruments.
- Children can sing a range of songs and rhymes pertaining to chicks, hatching, life cycles and the character animals themselves.
- Children can explore the experiences and behaviour of the animals through movement, dance and imaginary role play.
- Children can recreate the wild where Croc and Bird live, making scenery in the outdoor area in which to engage in their role play. They can help create and build small world scenery and props as well as puppets for re-enactment and retelling. They can create masks, headdresses and simple costumes.
- Children could explore and use a range of natural materials to design and create nests and shelters for croc and bird.

- Children can create artwork in the style of Alexis Deacon, drawing with soft pencil and chalks and experimenting with water colour techniques such as wetting thick paper before dropping paint on - as in the sky - or creating mixed colour washes in which to work over and add detail. They can explore other books illustrated by him from the display.

#### Physical Development:

- Children can demonstrate a balance, a simple dance step or gymnastic movement for a partner to copy. They could use apparatus to balance on, climb up or travel through in different ways and at different levels. How much time does it take to master a partner's balance or movement? Are some more difficult to master than others? Why? Children will have opportunity to develop core strength through balance and movement.
- Children will have opportunity to employ a range of grand and fine motor movements when creating artwork and mimicking the behaviour of a crocodile or bird, such as build nests, climb trees, lie still like logs.

#### Mathematics:

- Children will have lots of opportunity to measure length, estimate number, group equipment into shapes and sensible amounts and count things like feathers whilst transforming junk modelling and craft materials into model birds and crocodiles.
- Children can collaborate to design a nest that would fit both a crocodile and a blue parrotlet. How long is a crocodile? How tall is a parrotlet? How could we find out? What would we use to measure the length of a crocodile? What about as the animals grow older? Use chalk and measuring equipment to support this thinking?
- Children can practice sharing out sweets and refreshments between two friends.
- Children can count in twos, sing songs like 'The Animals went in Two-by-two' and explore pairs of things around them.

#### Before beginning the sequence:

- In order for the sequence to work effectively you will need to 'keep back' the text from the children initially, including the cover of the book and the title. The story will need to unfold slowly and it is best for the children not to know the ending until you are at the culmination of the teaching sessions.
- Prepare a Working Wall in the classroom so that the children can create an ongoing display of their thinking and learning. You may also want to create a small world area with a beach environment and models of the characters from the story or build storyboxes that show the environment to allow children to play out aspects of the story. These could include real sand, twigs and plants so that the children get to feel and smell the elements of the natural environment where the story takes place.
- Make accessible art materials that will support children's own choices to draw and mark make in the continuous provision, indoors and out; for example: soft and oil pastels, pencils, brush-tipped felt pens, and watercolour paints and brushes where the children can explore drawing and painting of natural objects and materials, experimenting with marks, strokes, colours, shades and tones that represent the natural world. Excellent examples of this in practice can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDZB0KoeSGE&list=PL7914115EB65911A5&index=14> (from 2min30) and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZEARBwUU4M&list=PL7914115EB65911A5&index=4> (from 3m50)
- Collect together examples of other high quality picturebooks that can be used as examples 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.
- Create a Working Wall that can become a place to share ideas, inspirations and working process as you move through the process of creating and shaping a text.

### Getting into the story: Exploring prior knowledge and making predictions

*In the best picture books illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a book and are frequently far more observant than an adult reader. Time spent focusing on illustration or key props can contribute to children's ability to read for meaning, express their ideas and respond to the texts they encounter. Introducing a new book with a key illustration or props is a way to intrigue and motivate the children to want to find out more.*

- Have a selection of eggs available, these can be a mix of duck, chicken, quail (hard boil or blow these for safety purposes), chocolate or plastic Easter eggs, a Kinder egg, or decorative stone or wooden eggs.
- Discuss the different eggs. What do the children already know about the different types of eggs? What do they want to find out? Do they know any animals that hatch from eggs? What might be inside?
- Have the children draw or paint some of the eggs and what they think might be inside, mark making and writing annotations. The children can write captions to support their drawings or you can scribe their ideas for them.

### Exploring and extending understanding of the world – an egg hunt

- This session benefits from an outdoor area rich with naturalised areas that are designed to encourage a diversity of wildlife. If this is not available, make provision for the children to visit such an environment which may include a pond, woodland, allotment, heath or meadow.
- Explain to the children that we are going to go on a real life egg hunt. Prior to this, provide ample opportunity for the children to have explored their outdoor area and become familiar with the range of animals that inhabit it. It is advisable to investigate the whereabouts of eggs in the area, such as those belonging to spiders, frogs or butterflies, so that the hunt is fruitful. Or you could arrange for a park or wood keeper to use their expertise to guide the children in their search.
- Talk to the children about what they think they might see, given what they already know. Elicit from the children which of these animals hatch from eggs. *Has anyone ever seen eggs outside or in the garden? What do they look like?* Elicit descriptions and provide them with texts and film clips that can support their thinking, such as:
  - Aaaarrgghh, Spider! by Lydia Monks
  - The Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
  - The BBC Schools programme 'Come Outside' has an episodes on 'Eggs' that can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swQujfPhXd0;>

- also an episode on Spiders: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQ2RzDI0vvM>;
- and one on Butterflies: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7l6nnv9ijBQ>

- You could sing songs with the children that support the children's thinking, such as 'I went to the cabbages' which is performed in the following clip:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shybVatCDKg>

*I went to the cabbages one day,  
What do you think I saw?  
Eggs in a cluster, yellow as a duster,  
What could it all be for?*

*I went to the cabbages one day,  
What do you think I saw?  
Caterpillars crunching, caterpillars munching,  
What could it all be for?*

*I went to the cabbages one day,  
What do you think I saw?  
I saw a super-doooper pupa,  
What could it all be for?*

*I went to the cabbages one day,  
What do you think I saw?  
I saw a butterfly, watched it flutter by,  
What could it all be for?*

*I went to the cabbages one day,  
What do you think I saw?  
Eggs in a cluster, yellow as a duster,  
So that's what it all is for.*

- The children could be helped to decide upon and gather an egg hunt kit with suitable equipment like magnifying glasses, digital cameras, handmade booklets or field journals, writing and drawing materials, collecting jars, and simple texts to reference, such as fact files, nature texts and labelled images.
- As the children conduct their egg hunt, encourage them to record their findings and talk about what they observe. Extend their vocabulary and make links to the book by exploring similarities and difference in the appearance of the eggs as well as their predictions about what might hatch from them.
- Create a display of animals with their eggs both in the local environment and further afield, like those of crocodile. The children could continue their research over the coming weeks and add their findings to the display. Allow opportunity for the children to talk about and share what they have found out.
- Explore the end papers of the hardback edition in 'Croc and Bird' in which the children can guess which animals hatch from the eggs drawn at the front of the book and make their discoveries at

the end. Can the children identify any animals in the end papers? What do they know about them? How could you describe them? How could they sort them? Give children opportunity to sort the animals according to their own criteria and using their descriptions as stimulus. Some children might like to research particular animals in more depth. They could record what they have found out with photographs, writing and drawing in handmade books or as posters for others to read.

### Responding to illustration

*The books on The Power of Pictures have been chosen because of the quality of illustrations they contain and the ways in which the illustrations work with and beyond the text to create and enhance meaning for the reader. Children will need time and opportunity to enjoy and respond to the pictures, to talk together about what they contribute to their understanding of the text and to illustrate themselves as an aid to thinking and organising language and planning for writing. As the sessions unfold, there could be opportunities for children to develop their responses by drawing or painting in a similar style to Alexis Deacon's illustrations, exploring media and techniques used as part of Art sessions. You can find other examples of his work on his blog at: <http://alexisdeacon.blogspot.co.uk/>*

- Give children time to look at and talk together in pairs about the first double page spread illustration of the two eggs on the sand, **but do not yet reveal the accompanying text**. Allow time for them to make meaning from the image, and discuss related to the session with the eggs yesterday.
- Ask the children what they have noticed about the picture. Is there anything in particular that they have noticed about the eggs? Where do we usually see eggs? Where are these eggs?
- Ask the children to look again at the image and consider whether they think the eggs are the same or different? What do you notice?
- Have the children consider what they think is inside these eggs, before revealing and reading the accompanying text. Does this change their thinking?
- Scribe or have the children write their predictions on sentence strips to add to a working wall around the illustration of the eggs. You can support the children to extend ideas and justify responses using prior knowledge.

### Responding to illustration

*Children's interest in images and their ability to read them can be developed through carefully planned interventions with an emphasis on talk. Discussions of this kind can include all children and help to make a written text more accessible.*

- Look at the next page of the text, revealing each image in turn. What is inside the first egg? Was it what you predicted or a surprise? What do you now think will be in the other egg?
- Reveal the image where the crocodile hatches. *Was this what you expected? Why? Why not? How could this have happened? Where are their mummies?* Elicit suggestions from the children. They could go on to role play or re-enact with small world ways in which the eggs could have ended up together on the sand.
- What was different about the ways in which they hatched?
- Compare and contrast the two hatching experiences, reading aloud and rereading only the illustrative 'CRACK' and 'RRRRRIP' (but hiding any other text). Emphasise the onomatopoeic

quality of these words with voice and body percussion. Encourage the children to join in with the reading or create their own sound effects for each of the hatchings, such as ‘WHOOOOOSH’. The children will enjoy mimicking both the bird’s and particularly the crocodile’s movements helping to clearly demonstrate the contrast and enable them to talk about it.

- Consider and discuss what was similar and different about the bird and the crocodile as they were hatching and as they emerged from the egg? Elicit descriptions and record the children’s ideas around the pertinent illustration.
- Provide the children with small world figures, egg shells in a tray of sand so that the children can re-enact the scene and perhaps explore their ideas and questions about how two different animals could hatch in such close proximity, why the bird’s egg wasn’t in the nest, and where the mummy bird and crocodile could be. The children could help you create the eggs from thin papier mache in which they could fit the figures and re-enact the hatching. They could build up the natural features in and around the sand from imagination, drawing on prior knowledge or as the book unfolds and they find out more about the place that the two animals inhabit.
- The children might be interested in discovering more about the way in which birds and crocodiles hatch, so you can show them film clips that could generate talk and further imaginary play (including the babies’ usual relationship and reliance on their mother):
  - bird hatching <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BC8bHVyauQY>
  - alligator hatching <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a25kikvEpOw#t=33>

### Drama and Freeze Frame

*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.*

- Revisit the two hatching experiences, discussing the children’s ideas about the ways in which they emerged from each of their eggs.
- Ask the children to look closely at the first illustration in the sequence of the bird trying to push itself out of the top of its cracked egg. Have them adopt the pose of the bird and its facial expression, eyes tightly closed and beak shut.
- Ask them to freeze in this position and ask them to imagine what bird is thinking at this point. Tap children on the shoulder and ask them to voice bird’s thoughts. Scribe their responses on blank thought bubbles.
- Now look at the second illustration in more depth. The children may focus first on the crocodile’s explosive exit from his egg and enjoy emulating this sudden shooting movement. Draw attention to what the bird is doing at the moment the crocodile hatches. What do they think happened to the bird between the first image and the second? How did it fall on its back? Children might like to explain or demonstrate what they think happened.
- Ask pairs of children to take on the role of the baby bird and crocodile, re-enacting their emergence from the eggs, and Freeze Framing each of the illustrations to voice their thoughts in role. The children could also provide a conversation between the two as they recover from each

of their births. This could be recorded on speech bubbles or the children could be voice recorded digitally.

- Take photographs of the children in each of their Freeze Frames so that they can be displayed in sequence with the thought bubbles, revisited and for which the children can provide captions. The photographs and voice recordings could be combined with text to create a simple PowerPoint book.

### 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, thick colouring pencils, or crayons.
- Ask the children where they think the words and pictures in a book like this come from. *Do they know what an author and illustrator are? Do they know what these people do?* Look back at the inside title page and share Alexis Deacon's name at the top of the page and explain that in this book, Alexis Deacon is the person who wrote the words and drew the pictures to tell this story. *What do they think it would be like to be an author or an illustrator? What would they need to be able to do? What would they need to help them?*
- Explain that in this session, they will be seeing the author on a video and learning how to draw the character of Crocodile. Watch the video 'Illustrating a character from Croc and Bird' on the Power of Pictures website: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis> *Have they seen someone drawing like this before? Does it look like an easy thing to do? What do they think they would need to think about to do a drawing like this themselves?*
- 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>
- Now give each child a clipboard, with a piece of paper and an appropriate drawing implement to match their fine motor development. Ferby or other triangular pencils are ideal for this. Cheap but quality cartridge paper for drawing can be sourced from Budget paper supplies: <http://www.budget-paper.co.uk/>
- Watch the video for a second time, pausing at appropriate points, and model to the children how to draw the character of Croc. 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.

- 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.
- Repeat the process, this time, looking at how to draw the character of Bird.
- Display the artwork prominently on the Working Wall.
- Provide art materials and more drawing paper in the creative area for the children to continue to practise their drawings of Croc and Bird, or to draw other baby birds and crocodiles from photographs.

### Reading aloud and discussion

*Reading aloud is one of the most important ways that children are motivated and supported to become readers, It is essential that children experience hearing texts read aloud in the classroom as a regular part of each school day. By reading well chosen books aloud, teachers also help classes to become communities of readers, sharing in the rich experience of a growing range of books they enjoy, get to know well and talk about.*

*Conversations about books help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.*

- Re-read the text from the start up to the double page spread "I wonder what food looks like..."
- Give some time for the children to talk and respond to what has been read and to ask questions about the text.
- What is different about the way these two animals get food? What would happen if they carried on waiting with their mouths open?
- You could watch film clips of the babies feeding:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQO6-gFP1vs> – Mother feeding baby bird  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpyLh\\_0sDK4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpyLh_0sDK4) – Baby Crocodile stalking crickets to feed
- Scribe the children's responses and add to the working wall around the illustration of croc and bird waiting with their mouths open.
- Discuss the differences in the ways in which the two baby animals feed. Investigate crocodiles thought "I wonder what food looks like..." *What do you think the two animals might eat? Will they like the same things or different things?*

- *What else might Croc and Bird need?* Draw on the children's prior knowledge of these animals as well as making links to their first-hand discoveries and observations of animals in their outdoor environment. What have they discovered about what they might need to look after themselves? *Does a spider have the same needs as a bird? What do all animals need to survive?* Relate these discussions back to the children's own basic needs and how these have changed from birth to childhood.
- Read to "Me too," said Bird.
- Children could draw or find things that they could take to their small world crocodile and bird that would help them survive, such as water, food from the home corner or snack tray and natural materials to make nests or shelter.

### Responding to an illustration through poetry

*Illustration is a natural aspect to combine with poetry. After all, poetry deals with image and imagery, and many poems are based on the sort of close observation of real life subjects which can also be the basis of work in art.*

- Look at the illustration of the two animals watching the sunrise on the next spread. What does this spread make them feel or think about? What colours can they see here that they haven't seen before? What do you think the characters might be thinking or feeling in this moment?
- Give the children time to think of words and phrases to describe the sunrise. You could also watch a video to give the children further stimulus if they haven't watched the sun rise, particularly on the beach setting where Croc and Bird experience the magic of the sunrise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NFsGYAtAeY>
- Collect up some of the children's words and phrases and write them on to sentence strips. Arrange the strips to form a free verse poem about the sun rising, as 'a song to the sunrise', e.g.

*Waves rippling on the sand,  
The sky is red, purple and orange.  
A golden ball emerges from the hills.  
An explosion of light!  
Morning is here.*

- The children could go on to perform their words to appropriate music with the sunrise video playing in the background.
- You could go on to make an anthology of 'songs for the sunrise' where children present their poetry for publication, alongside their own sunrise illustrations, using watercolours in the style of Alexis Deacon.

### Responding to an illustration leading to explanation writing:

*In the best picture books illustration and text work closely together to create meanings. Children are naturally drawn to the illustrations in a book 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 of this kind can include all children and help to make a written text more accessible.*

- Re-read the text up until ‘Crocodile and Bird grew big together.’ Focus on this double page spread. What is happening to bird over the course of the four illustrations? How long do you think this takes to happen?
- Look at the PowerPoint resource ‘Parrot development’. *What have we learnt about how parrots grow and change?*
- To enable them to consolidate their understanding, the children could make models of bird as he grows into adulthood using pink play dough and blue feathers. What do they think should happen next?
- The children could go on to investigate the lifecycle of a crocodile. You may find the following resource useful: <http://teacherweb.com/CAD/NotreDame/MrsParr/The-Life-Cycle-of-a-Crocodile.pdf>
- Provide large-scale paper, writing and drawing materials. Support the children in drawing, mark making and writing about the changes a crocodile goes through in its development.

### **Extending this learning through home learning and role play - exploring significant milestones and personal experiences**

- Read books that help to support their understanding of how they have grown and developed and what is to come as they grow older:
  - ‘Once there were’ Giants by Martin Waddel and Penny Dale explores the stages of life and development.
  - ‘Knuffle Bunny’ has helpful illustrations on the inner title page as well as tracking a young girl’s milestones through her early years
  - ‘Howler’ by Michael Rosen and Neal Layton illustrates the anticipation and the arrival of a new baby.
  - ‘The New Small Person’ by Lauren Child about the arrival of a new sibling.
- Families could be encouraged to look at photographs with their child of them as a ‘bump’ inside a pregnant mummy, as a newborn, throughout babyhood and into childhood.
- You could invite a confident parent and baby into the setting to meet the children so that they can experience, first-hand, the care a baby might need as well as comparing it to themselves in terms of physical, social and intellectual development.
- Children can help set up the home corner that enables them to explore the needs of a tiny baby, toddler and older child, engaging in imaginary role play involving themselves in role, a variety of dolls that reflect the diversity of the children and activities such as protecting from danger, washing and dressing, and providing food and water and a comfortable place to sleep.

### **Comparing and Contrasting Characters**

*Acting as scribe, the teacher works with a small or large group of children to create a text together, enabling them to concentrate on their ideas and composition. Teacher and children work as active*

partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper. Shared writing gives children a model for their own independent writing and can introduce them to unfamiliar genre or style of writing. Children can then present their written work in a range of literary outcomes such as a poster, digital text, big book or factsheet.

- Re-read the text, up until “I’m glad you’re my brother,” said Crocodile. *What does bird mean by this? Are they brothers?* How are they the same and how are they different, physically and in their nature? What shared interests do they have that bring them together?
- Look at crocodiles and parrots in the wild. How are they different and similar? You could look at features of the two animals that are similar and different; e.g. they both hatch from eggs, they both breathe, they both move or one has feathers, one has scales, one is a bird, one is a reptile. Use non-fiction texts and digital texts to find out other information about parrots and crocodiles, making notes as you shared read these texts.
- In shared writing, model how to craft a non-fiction text about either a crocodile or a parrot.
- The children can add to their previous mark making, writing and drawing about birds and crocodiles. You could make bird or crocodile shaped books for the children could write their own texts to present the information they have found.
- Read the blurb on the back of the book. Focus on the final question: *‘But a bird and a crocodile can’t be brothers – can they?’* Allow time for the children to discuss and debate this issue. You may want to record responses in a shared journal, around a copy of the blurb statement.

### Exploring feelings and sharing personal experiences: diversity and friendship

- Provide opportunities for the children to talk about their experiences of friendship. They may feel more comfortable having this kind of discussion in small groups with their key person. You could create a kind of ‘golden’ or special time in which they are able to explore social and emotional aspects of their life, dedicating a quiet, cosy space in which to sit and relax.
- Reread the story again to the point when the two friends part ways. Ask the children why they think they thought they should say goodbye. Ask the children to talk about their own friends. *Do we all look the same? Do we all sound the same? How do we communicate if we speak different languages? Do we have to be the same as our friend? What is the same and what is different?* The children could be supported in talking about and celebrating difference and diversity through talk. Making drawings of themselves with their friend will help them to explore the language in which to describe physical differences and similarities positively. You could invite members of the children’s families to visit and teach the children about their home language, food or heritage.
- Explore what they think makes a good friend. Talk about why their friend is a good one. *What do they do that makes them feel good? What do they like to do with each other?*
- Explore the spread that illustrates all the things that Croc and Bird teach each other and the activities that they both enjoy. *Who else like to dance?* Talk about all the activities that the children enjoy and what they like to do with their friends. *Are they always the same thing? Can we do everything our friends can do? Can we teach a friend how to do something we are good at?*

- You could read other stories, such as ‘*On Sudden Hill*’ by Benji Davies or ‘*Iris and Isaac*’ by Catherine Rayner which provide a safe way in which the children can talk about issues around friendship without having to talk about themselves.

### Representing an illustration through drama, 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.*

- Prior to this session you could ask the children to help you create a number of crocodile masks and blue parrotlet headdresses, using blue feathers stuck to strips of paper.
- Read on until ‘to a lake full of crocodiles by a forest full of birds.’ Give time for the children to look carefully at this particular image, reflect on the words and respond.
- Look again at the body language of the two animals. Do they react to this scene in the same way, or differently?
- Freeze frame the image in small groups, with two children taking on the positions of Croc and Bird and the others being the other parrots and crocodiles. They can wear their masks and headdresses. Swap roles so that all the children get to experience being Croc or Bird. What do you think each might be thinking or saying?
- Scribe or have the children write a speech or thought bubble to show what bird or croc is thinking or saying.
- *How do the other animals react to their arrival?* Children can go on to role play this scene using their masks and headdresses. Provide blank thought and speech bubbles so that they can record their ideas. They can also photograph or film each other using the setting’s digital cameras and be supported in providing captions upon revisiting.

### Response to illustration: hotseating

*In hotseating, somebody role-plays a central character from a poem or story and is interviewed by the children. This activity involves children closely examining a character’s motivation and responses. Before the hotseating, they need to discuss what it is they want to know and identify questions they want answering. If children have no experience of hotseating, the teachers may initially need to take the role. As they become more confident, they can take the role themselves.*

- Read on to “I suppose we have to say goodbye,” said Bird **covering the rest of the text on the page.**
- Show the children the illustration of Croc and Bird contemplating their dilemma. Have a note arrive in the classroom from the characters, asking the children for their advice. Read it aloud and ask the children: *What do you think they should do? Why do you think that? Do you have any questions that you would like to ask either Croc or Bird?* Give time for the children to reflect on and discuss this in pairs or small groups to consolidate their thinking. Help the children formulate pieces of advice or questions for the characters.

- Invite Croc and Bird to come in to visit the children so that the children can offer their suggestions and clarify anything puzzling them. This could be two unfamiliar adults dressed in green crocodile or blue feathered headdresses or costumes or familiar adults taking on the roles the moment they sit in the 'hot seats'.
- 'Croc' and 'Bird' can answer any questions the children might have. Together, they should think out loud and about which advice was helpful or important to them as they listened and share this with the group.
- After the characters have left the room, read on; revealing what happens with Croc and Bird's decision. Do the children agree or disagree with what Croc and Bird did? Why? What do they think the consequences will be of the choice they made? (This could be part of a bigger PSED discussion around actions and consequences and exploring emotions, perhaps during special time with the Key Person group.)
- The children could be supported through shared writing in composing a letter to either Croc or Bird warning them of the consequences of their actions, perhaps asking them to reconsider. They could post the letters in the class postbox and await a reply.

### Response to illustration: Exploring issues and dilemmas

*Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different view point and involves them writing in a different voice. In role, children can often access feelings and language that are not available to them when they write as themselves.*

- Re-read the whole story aloud from the beginning until Croc and Bird have parted.
- Explore the following two illustrations of Bird with the flock and Crocodile with the basket. Can the children decide which animal in the group is Bird and Croc? Why have they chosen the one they did? *What do you think they are thinking or saying? Do you think they are thinking the same or differently about being back in a group of animals who are the same as them?*
- Children can act out and Freeze Frame the scene to enable them to experience being the character with whom they are trying to empathise. Support them to write a speech or thought bubble in role as this character. Add these to a display alongside the illustrations.
- You could expand this by shared writing a letter in role from Croc to Bird or vice versa then provide attractive stationery for the children to write messages in role between the two 'brothers'. Participating in imagined role play and small world play with the children would be highly supportive prior to writing in role.

### Role Play and Drama

*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. Freeze-frames are still images or tableaux. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. Thought tracking is often used in conjunction with freeze-frame. Individuals are invited to voice their thoughts or feelings aloud using just a few words. This can be done by tapping each person on the shoulder or holding a cardboard 'thought-bubble' above their head.*

- Reread the book from the beginning to “We don’t fly at night.” Discuss with the children what has happened when Croc and Bird went back to the group. Why were the other animals angry, disgusted, uncaring?
- Today, take the viewpoint of the rest of the group. Have one child act as Croc, singing and building a nest and one as Bird catching a buffalo and flying at night while the other birds are roosting. Freeze Frame the scenes. What do the other animals think or say about this behaviour? Use thought tracking to share responses from different children in the flock or bask. Add the writing to a display alongside the illustrations.
- Children could be encouraged to think from the viewpoint of Croc or Bird. How do they feel about the reactions to their behaviour? How would they respond?
- The outdoor setting could be dressed to emulate the forest and riverbank environment and the children encourage to role play the scenes, imagining conversations. Photograph, film or record what the children are saying to each other to revisit later. Provide blank speech bubbles so that the children can write a contrasting response and add it to the display.

### Summarising and mapping the story

*Mapping a story and its setting helps to develop a sense of the story world. Making a story map is a way of retelling the story. It is a graphic means of breaking a story down into episodes and sequencing its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently so they can re-tell it orally or in writing.*

- Read the whole book all the way through.
- Did the story end as you thought it would? What did it make you think about? How did it make you feel?
- Now ask the children to reflect on the main characters in the book. *Who were they? Did you like or dislike them? Why do you think he chose a mouse and a fox as characters for this story?*
- Look at the body language and facial expressions of the characters. *What does this say about their relationship at the end of the story?*
- 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.
- Support the children in mapping the story in words and pictures so that they can use the map to retell the story to another person or in groups as a story circle.

### 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.*

- Listen to the author, Alexis Deacon, read the text all the way through: <https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis> *How did it feel to hear the story read by the author?*
- Now look at the final endpapers and compare these to the first endpapers. *What are the similarities and differences? What more do we find out about from these endpapers? What other characters could have been in the eggs? What might have happened in their story?*
- 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?*
- Allow the children to respond to the text as a reader – *what would they want to tell other people about this book? What might they not choose to share as it might spoil the story for them?* Allow children to write or record digitally their responses to the story and display these around a copy of the text in the book corner. Have copies of the text available for children to re-read and explore at their leisure; individually and in social groups.
- Open up a conversation about picturebooks more generally. *What other picturebooks do they know? Do they have favourites from at home or in school?* Collect together examples of the children's favourite texts in the class reading corner, making use of the school library, schools library service or local library to broaden the range of choices.
- Collect photographs of the children reading picturebooks they enjoy and scribe their thoughts about these to make a display in the reading area.

### **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.'*

- Re-read *Croc and Bird*. Provide opportunities for children to replay the story in various ways:
  - Making story maps to share the big shapes of the story;
  - Orally retelling the story in groups;
  - Playing out the story in small world play;
  - Using role-play with character signifiers, such as masks, tails, costumes or props;
  - Making puppets to retell the story.
- Ask the children to reflect on the main characters in the book. Who were they? How did they make you feel? Which characters did they like best? Why?
- Now ask the children to describe their reactions to the book in their own words. Have enabling adults on hand to capture these responses. Did they have any personal connections

with the book – did it make them think of experiences or feelings they’ve had, other books they have read or films or TV programmes they’ve seen?

- In large or small groups, during regular read aloud sessions, spend some time reading aloud other high quality picturebooks, or returning to favourite picturebooks you’ve shared as a class previously. Ensure these showcase 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 time for the children to discuss the stories, drawing attention to characters, themes and summarising the big shapes of the story in order to retell the main events. Ensure all children have ample opportunities to hear a range of picturebooks read aloud, especially those children who may not be read to as often as others

### Thinking about own story ideas

*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 where they think picturebooks come from. *Who makes them?* Encourage them to get to know Alexis Deacon by sharing a photograph of him on a display, next to the book cover and re-watch him reading *Croc and Bird* aloud:  
<https://clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/deacon-alexis>
- Talk together to think about and discuss all the jobs an author/illustrator might have to do to make a finished book. Think about how to explain this process clearly so that young children can understand, e.g.
  - Have an idea for a story
  - Share your ideas with other people
  - Write it down and draw the pictures to see the story on the page
- Explain to the children that they are going to create their own picturebooks. Talk about the things they might want to write about. Focus first on characters and think together of the kinds of characters they may want to create. These may revolve around:
  - Animals, as inspired by *Croc and Bird*
  - Favourite characters they already have from books or popular culture
  - Characters related to particular current interests such as dinosaurs, robots, fairies
  - Themselves – to retell a personal narratives or a fantasy story involving themselves
  - People around them, family, people who help us etc.
- Share how an illustrator like Alexis explores and experiments with characters to come up with and develop their ideas, drawing lots of different versions of characters.
- Ask the children if they have any ideas for their own potential characters, inspired by their own lives, or from other things they have read, seen or experienced.

- Allow time and space for the children to use drawing and writing to come up with some initial ideas for their own characters, making their thought processes visible on the page. You can reference specific examples from Alexis's own work, as seen in the video, e.g.



- Give children access to rough drawing materials, such as quality coloured pencils, 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, as Alexis talks about in his video. 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.
- Create alongside the children, so they can see your process as you work. Explore and experiment with adding props, or drawing different facial expressions and body positions. As they work, encourage the children to talk about the character in more detail, to gain a picture of what they are like and their ideas of a story that might involve this character. You may wish to record this by helping to scribe some of these ideas down for them. Depending on their age and experience, you could 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.

### Creation - 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, support them in thinking about how their character's story might unfold. Come back again Croc and Bird, and summarise the main parts of the story. What happened at the beginning? What happened next? What happened at the end of the story?
- Now get the children to think about the characters they have worked on. Can they think of how to tell their story simply to someone else? Clearly model this using your own character, sharing how to use simple sentences to orally share the big shapes of the story. You could show how to

do this in no more than 5 sentences by holding up a hand and counting down your way through the story from the start to the end.

- Now allow the children to work in pairs and do the same with a talking partner, orally sharing the stages of the story their character will go on.

### **Creation & Reflection – Mapping story ideas in more detail, and responding to each other’s work.**

*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.*

- Come back again to the children’s characters and story ideas and have your own ideas ready to use as a model.
- Now think about how you will work through each stage of the story to get from one big shape to the next. The stages should broadly:
  - Introduce the character
  - Talk about the world of the story
  - Share a problem faced by a character
  - Resolve the problem
- First hone an oral retelling, showing again how to make the narrative steps as simple as possible so that the children can internalise and hold these in their memory.
- Now, show how to share this in words and pictures on a storymap. As with all the other stages, the children should be allowed to work flexibly in words and/or pictures at this stage. Share how to simply map the main story events in no more than five parts to get their story from beginning to end.
- When the maps are complete, allow the children to use these to remember and retell their story to someone else.
- Allow time to talk about what they liked about each other’s stories and whether they have any questions to ask the writer.

### **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 a simple origami book or handmade stapled books. In time, this is something the children should be able to make for themselves, but in the initial stages, you may wish to pre-make these for them or support them in making these themselves, using a long armed stapler to place the staple(s) in the centre of the text and using card for the front cover to provide durability and a quality finish.
- Think with the children about how to move the story from their map into their finished book. Think with the children about what would be on the front cover – what will they call their story?

Where will they write their name so that others know who wrote it? What will they draw on the cover so that we have an idea about what the story is about?

- Now think about how to transfer the story on the story map to the handmade book. Model this with your own story, sharing how to make decisions about where the text and illustrations will go, what the text will say and how to get the words from your head onto the page.
- Give plenty of time for the children to complete the publication of the inside of their books. Allow them to choose from and use a variety of materials, exploring and experimenting with these first to test 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.
- Go back to the original book to explore and work on adding features of published texts on the front and back covers. 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), dedication, publication details, blurb, bar code and 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. You may wish to arrange reading partner sessions where children can share their books with children in other classes in the school.
- 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.