CFE Level 2 (Ages 8-11)

Laura Ellen Anderson learning resource

Comic creation activities and other tasks inspired by *Evil Emperor Penguin*

Resource created by Scottish Book Trust

About this resource

This resource is full of cross-curricular activity suggestions inspired by Laura Ellen Anderson's fabulously funny graphic novel *Evil Emperor Penguin.* Most of the activities are focused on creating mini comics, but there are also some Technologies activities towards the end.

Adapt and use as you see fit! Even if you don't own a set of the book, we hope you'll still be able to find lots of ideas in here for cross-curricular learning.

About Laura Ellen Anderson

Laura is a hugely exciting talent in the world of children's writing and illustration. She has illustrated David Solomons' smash hit *My Brother is a Superhero*, as well as books by Peter Bently, Cerrie Burnell and others. She has come into her own as a writer and illustrator, first producing a range of adorable picture books for younger children and then celebrating the release of *Evil Emperor Penguin*, her first graphic novel, in 2015.

Laura writes *Evil Emperor Penguin* stories for the phenomenally successful *Phoenix* weekly comic, and has another Evil Emperor Penguin graphic novel due out in March 2017. You can find lots of artwork and information at her website: lauraellenanderson.co.uk/

For other fantastic cross-curricular resources visit scottishbook trust.com/ resources

Activities inspired by *Evil Emperor Penguin*

Create a comic character
LIT 2-31a

Creating comics is a fantastic vehicle for pupils to learn about how to put a narrative together. First though, they need to learn how to create and illustrate a comic character!

There are several things which make Evil Emperor Penguin, Eugene and Number 8 memorable characters. First of all, they're visually memorable with distinct appearances, and second, each of them has at least one surprising element. You wouldn't expect a penguin to want to take over the world, and equally you wouldn't expect an aspiring master criminal to be so incompetent! Discuss with your pupils what makes the characters appealing and surprising to them.

Now it's time for the pupils to create some surprising characters of their own. Give them some sample characters, and ask them to think of something that would be surprising for that character. For instance, if you give them a very strict and scary head teacher as a sample, the surprising thing could be that he or she has a very sensitive side and has a menagerie of cute animals.

After that, see if pupils can come up with a few characters for themselves, using this method to provide inspiration. They can flesh out their characters using some of the ideas in this excellent blog post by writer Lari Don: bit.ly/LariCharacters

If you're writing a comic inspired by *Evil Emperor Penguin* then animal characters work well!

Showing character emotions
EXA 2-03a

Evil Emperor Penguin shows a large variety of emotions, from anger to fear to delight. Yet Laura Ellen Anderson is able to depict all of these emotions through very simple touches – round eyes to show delight (see page 9), raised eyebrows and open mouth to show fear (see page 11), and so forth. She also uses simple body language – shaking fists are used to show anger on page 8.

Have a look at the following video, in which illustrator Martin Brown does a simple exercise to practise depicting different emotions: bit.ly/MartinBrownDrawingTips. Ask your pupils to try this out for themselves. After they've tried it in the way shown by Brown, they can try it for the characters they created in the previous task.

The first few activities in this resource are also a good way to get pupils thinking about how to depict different emotions: bit.ly/illustrationresource

Create a four panel comic
EXA 2-03a, ENG 2-31a

Making a four panel comic is a great way to teach pupils about story structure. It also helps reinforce the skills developed by the previous activities.

Read the following blog post by Adam Murphy, a comic creator who also contributes to *The Phoenix* weekly comic: bit.ly/AdamDrawComic. Here, Adam gives his top tips for drawing a simple comic, including the use of a simple four panel layout to create a story.

Tell pupils that they are going to create a four panel comic using the characters they have created in previous tasks. Model the process the in the following way:

- Come up with a simple character as a class (you can repeat the process from the first activity where you invented characters with a surprising element);
- In the first panel, ask the class to come up with something the character is doing – something simple like going for a walk, or something more elaborate like inventing a time machine;
- In the second panel, ask the class to come up with something surprising that could happen to the character, preferably something that creates a problem for them. For instance, a character on a walk could discover a giant hole in the road or be attacked by a ninja!
- In the third panel, pupils can show what the character does in reaction to the surprise or problem;
- The fourth panel should show how everything turns out and how the character feels at the end.

If you want to continue discussing plot structure with your pupils, the *Evil Emperor Penguin* story 'Cat-astrophe' on page 13 is another great example of a story that uses the kind of four-part structure described above.

Extension – Comics across the school
HWB 2-14a

Once your pupils have created their four panel comics, you could get them to distribute them to another class or around the whole school for others to read.

Having a genuine audience and purpose for their work can be really motivating for pupils and encourage them to work to high standards. You could encourage pupils to produce weekly serialised comics over a short period, perhaps working in author-illustrator teams.

This also creates an opportunity for enterprise activities such as designing marketing materials.

Evil Emperor Penguin Diorama, STEM challenges, and Stop Motion Animation
TCH 2-12a, EXA 2-02a, TCH 2-03a, TCH 2-04a

The characters, objects and setting of the comic can be recreated in various ways by pupils to form a diorama.

First, they'll need to recreate the outside of the igloo. This CBeebies video shows them how to do it very simply: bit.ly/BeholdIgloo. However, if you want to challenge pupils to think about engineering concepts, this librarian's blog post shows how this can be done: bit.ly/StrongIgloo.

Of course, if you want them to recreate the inside of the lair instead, this also presents opportunities for thinking about engineering: for instance, they'll need to design a chair for Evil Emperor Penguin. Again, you could create a STEM challenge by asking them to design a strong structure with limited materials. Tell them that the chair should be able to support a set weight – 500 grams is a suitable challenge. Allow them to work in groups of three or four, and limit their materials. Here's a suggested list:

● Scissors
● Paper
● Card
● Art Straws
● Tape

You can ask your pupils for suggestions as to how the three main characters can be best recreated. However, you could use plasticine, which would give pupils the opportunity to create an *Evil Emperor Penguin* stop motion animation.

There are lots of videos on YouTube which you can show pupils to introduce them to stop motion animation.

This resource from iPad Art Room has a really useful explanation of how to create simple animations using iMotion. There are lots of different apps available to create stop-motion animations or you can just use a phone video recorder or digital camera to capture still frames. ipadartroom.com/clay-mation/

Wikihow has a simple step-by-step guide to creating clay animations: wikihow.com/Make-a-Simple-Claymation-With-a-Webcam-and-Windows-Movie-Maker

If you and your pupils loved *Evil Emperor Penguin*
LIT 2-11a

You could check out some of the titles on our list of other great graphic novels for 8-11: bit.ly/9GreatGN

You could also take a look at these recommendations from comic creator Adam Murphy: bit.ly/ComicsinClassroomPart5