



Exploring illustration with Nick Sharratt

Learning activities for
Caveman Dave and *Tracy
Beaker*, illustrated by Nick
Sharratt

Age 5-11

CFE Levels First and
Second Phase

Resources created by
Jennifer Buchan
(Stenhouse Primary School)

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About this resource

This resource is full of cross-curricular activity suggestions to help you explore the world of illustration books, with a focus on *Caveman Dave* and *Tracy Beaker*, illustrated by Nick Sharratt. The resource has been produced to help you get the most out of our online [Authors Live event with Nick Sharratt](#), but you can use them at any point.

***Caveman Dave* activities**

These activities are based around *Caveman Dave*, written and illustrated by Nick Sharratt.

What emotion? LIT 2-02a, ENG 1-03a, LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-10a, HWB 2-01a

In the [Authors Live event](#), Nick Sharratt discusses and shows how he conveys emotion through his drawing. He focuses on the face of *Cave Man Dave* and explores expression. Divide your class into pairs. Give them a list of different emotions, including happy, sad, angry, shocked, confused, anxious, ecstatic and so on. Ask the pairs to take it in turns to act out the emotions using their facial expression. As a group discuss what happens to their face during each emotion. What happens to their mouth, eyes or eyebrows? Hand out paper and ask pupils to draw a face to show each of the emotions. Pupils can keep these expression sheets as reference to help them when illustrating other stories or creative writing in class.

Rhyming words LIT 1-21a, ENG 1-31a

Read the story aloud to the pupils and ask them to note down the words they hear which rhyme with the word 'cave'.

Divide the pupils into pairs and ask them to work with a partner to think of as many other words which rhyme with cave as they can. Ask them to choose their favourite word from their list and create a line of text which could be used in the book. Remind them to make sure their line ends with your word which rhymes with 'cave'. For example, 'Caveman Dave loves to rave'.

Alternatively, as a class, you could create your own cave man name such as Caveman Jake and think of as many rhyming words as you can which could be used in lines in the book (rake, stake, make, bake, lake, take ...). Pupils could work in pairs and take a rhyming word each.

Once the pairs have a line each, combine them all to create your own story as a class!

Create your own *Caveman* book EXA 1-07a

Following on from activity above, ask pupils to create an illustration to go along with the line they have written.

First, look carefully at the illustrations in the original *Caveman Dave*. Make a list of all the words/phrases that you could use to describe the style and the colours. These might include simple, bold, clear, bright, few colours or funny, for example.

Ask pupils to use similar colours and styles to illustrate the lines they wrote in the previous exercise, in the style of Nick Sharratt. Put all of the pages together to create your very own class *Caveman* book.

Textures in illustration EXA 1-03a

Nick Sharratt uses different types of line in his illustrations in order to create different textures. Look closely at the different lines he uses. Discuss the types of line and how each is used, for example:

- Short straight lines – used for grass, bristles, spikes and fur
- Curly lines – woolly coat of the mammoths
- Squares/circles packed together – scales on the dinosaur
- Watercolour patches – cave and stones

Using the textures in illustration worksheet (available to download from [Nick's Authors Live event page](#)), draw an example of each type of line in each of the boxes. You could experiment with different media and use a combination of pens, watercolours, pencils and crayons to see with which you enjoy working and to compare their effects. In each box, also draw an animal or object of your own which has the same texture. You might choose a hedgehog, a sheep, a lizard and a cliff, for example!

Brave like Caveman Dave HWB 1-01a, Eng 1-30a

Ask pupils to think about a time that they or someone they know has been brave. They could even think of an example of bravery shown by a character from a book they have read.

Sit in a circle and pass a talking object around the circle. When you have the talking object, share your example of an act of bravery with the class. Put your experience into a cartoon strip, showing what happened and what you or the character did. You could use similar, simple illustrations and colours to those used in *Caveman Dave*.

***Tracy Beaker* activities**

These activities are based around *Tracy Beaker*, written by Jacqueline Wilson and illustrated by Nick Sharratt.

Create your own character EXA 2-04a, EXA 2-07a, LIT 2-20a

Look at the illustrations of the faces of the different characters in *Tracy Beaker*. Discuss with a partner what they all have in common. For example:

- Very simple
- Pin/dot eyes
- Single line for nose and eyebrows
- Patches for cheeks
- A range of hairstyles
- A range of simple shapes used for mouths

Use the same techniques to create your own character. Use the [drawing tips on Nick Sharratt's website](#) and read the [step-by-step guide](#) to help you. See how many different expressions you can create by altering the angle and shape of the lines.

Pupils could also think about how their character would fit into Tracy Beaker's world, and how Tracy might react to their character. Would they be friends, or would they find each other annoying? Try writing a short scene where Tracy and the pupil's own characters meet for the first time.

Comparing illustration styles EXA 1-07a

Compare the simple character illustrations of Nick Sharratt with the heavily detailed character illustrations of illustrator and author [Chris Riddell](#) (author and illustrator of the *Goth Girl* and *Ottoline* books). Pupils can watch the [Authors Live Illustration Slam](#) to learn more about the work of illustrators Chris Riddell, Debi Gliori and Piet Grobler.

Use the comparing illustration style worksheet (available to download from [Nick's Authors Live event page](#)) to compare and contrast the styles of Chris and Nick and their effects.

In small groups, discuss which illustrations you prefer and why. Can you imagine Chris illustrating *Tracy Beaker* and Nick illustrating *Goth Girl*? Why, or why not?

Experiment with both styles by drawing a character from *Tracy Beaker* in the detailed style of Chris Riddell and a character from *Goth Girl* or *Ottoline* in the style of Nick Sharratt. Can you convey the same characteristics, personalities and emotions as shown in the original style?

Make your own notice board HWB 2-05a, EXA 2-05a

On page 119, we see an illustration of the notice board that Tracy has in her room. Discuss the different things that are shown on the board.

Create a notice board about your life, showing similar things. For example:

- The most important person/people in your life

- Your likes and hobbies
- Any important documents – e.g. letters, postcards, concert or travel tickets
- Things that you dream of (consider places, objects, people, pets, jobs ...)
- Friends and pets

Create each separate part of your notice board on an A5 piece of paper, and stick these onto an A3 piece of paper to create your notice board.

Think about and plan carefully how you will arrange and display the different items on the board. For example, you could show the most important person/people in the centre, as Tracy does. Alternatively, you could think of different ways of giving special importance to some aspects (some could be in colour, for example, or could be placed at the top or in the corners of the board). Experiment with placing things at different angles, or overlapping each other, like Tracy's board.

Display the notice boards around the room and spend time looking at the work and ideas of others. Divide into groups of 4 or 5 and discuss the following questions:

- Is it important to have hobbies? Why/why not?
- Why do we keep mementoes?
- What makes a person important to us?
- Are dreams important? Why/why not?

Activities for any Nick Sharratt book

Book hunt LIT 0-01b, LIT 0-11b, EXA 2-07a

Go on a Nick Sharratt hunt! Go to the local or school library and try to find as many books as you can which have been written and/or illustrated by Sharratt. Make a list of the books and hold a class survey to see how many have been read. Make up a reading list of books by Sharratt that you would like to read as a class.

As an extension activity, choose 3 words that you would use to describe common characteristics in his illustrations. Compare these with the 3 words written down by others and see how many of your friends came up with the same or similar adjectives.

Describing and drawing characters HWB 1-20a, HWB 2-20a, Eng 1-31a, Eng 2-31a

This activity can be done with one class, or a combination of classes with pupils across first and second level. Explain that pupils are going to think about the way in

which an illustrator and author have to work closely together. Tell pupils that they are going to create a character of their own in the style of Nick Sharratt, in pairs.

Hold a group discussion first to ascertain key characteristics like in the 'creating your own character' activity above. Pupils can create any character they like.

Each pair should draw and colour their character and write a character description, including details about the character's personality and appearance. Each pair must keep their characters and descriptions a secret from other children!

Give all pairs a new piece of blank paper and ask them all to join up with another pair. Label pairs A and B. Explain that pair A will start by being the authors and should read aloud their character description. Pair B will be the illustrators and should try to draw the character being described onto the blank paper. Pair A must keep their illustration hidden at all times!

Once the description has been read and pair B has drawn its illustration, compare illustrations to see if they are similar. Repeat the activity so that pair B now reads its description and pair A tries to draw it.

Following the activity, bring the classes together and ask the following questions:

- What was trickiest about this task?
- What surprised you about this task?
- Did the character's personality have an effect on its illustration?
- What has this activity taught you about how an illustrator and author work together?
- Why is it important that the illustrations are in the same style and fit the descriptions created by the author?