



CFE Levels 2 to 4 (Ages 8-14)

Martin Brown – the world of the illustrator

Explore the job of a children's
illustrator through creative
activities

About this resource

This resource has been written to support the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour with Martin Brown, illustrator of the well loved Horrible Histories series. However, the resource has been designed so you can use it at any point to engage pupils with Martin's illustration work.

To find out more about the Tour and how to apply for upcoming tours, please visit www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teachers-librarians/scottish-friendly-childrens-book-tour.

About Martin Brown

Martin Brown is best known for his humorous illustration of the Horrible Histories series.

Growing up in Melbourne, Australia, Martin was an avid drawer of cartoons, and when he left school his first port of call was a training course to become an art teacher. However, he never finished the course, instead travelling the world and settling in London. His first major illustration job was for Peter Corey's book *Coping with Parents*. Horrible Histories followed soon after, and Martin has been illustrating these hugely popular books for over twenty years.

Discover Martin's books

Lit 3-11a

Martin is best known for his work in the Horrible Histories series of books. Find out which of these books are in your school library and encourage your pupils to borrow them. Get your pupils to find out more about the books and pick out a few that they might like to read.

Explain to your pupils that children's illustrators all have different styles. Look at the cover illustrations of some of the Horrible Histories books with your pupils, and compare Martin's style with those of other illustrators (you'll find examples in other activities in this resource). Why do they think Martin was chosen as the illustrator for these particular books? Why does his style work well for them?

Draw some facial expressions with Martin

Exa 2-03a

Watch this short video with your pupils (you may wish to avoid the final section from 2:28 onwards if your pupils are prone to excessive giggling!)
<http://bit.ly/MrtnBrwnFaceExp>

Suggest some other emotions to your pupils (or let them come up with their own) and ask them how they might draw the corresponding facial expression. How would they show a worried or suspicious face? You can ask volunteers to draw at the board or get pupils to work in groups or individually.

After this, ask pupils how else an illustrator could show how a person is feeling. If they suggest body language, they're absolutely right! Ask them to go through some Horrible Histories books and find some examples where Martin Brown has used a character's body language to show how they feel. They can share these with their group or the class.

After this, repeat the process you used for facial expressions: ask pupils to come up with some emotions and draw images of characters using body language which suggests these emotions.

Find out about the tools available to illustrators Exa

3-02a

Explain to pupils that illustrators have to choose the materials they want to use for each book. You can show them the following images by illustrators as examples:

- Have a look at three different illustrators using different materials in our Illustration Slam event: <http://bit.ly/IIIslam>
- Jill Calder primarily used pencil for the graphic novel *Walk the Walk*: <http://scottishbooktrust.com/walkthewalk>
- You can see Axel Scheffler using a fine fountain pen and watercolours to illustrate *A Squash and a Squeeze* in this video: <http://bit.ly/SchefflerSquash>

Tell your pupils that they are going to draw a subject of their choice (for this activity, it really doesn't matter what they choose as long as it isn't too complex, since they will be drawing it four times).

Ask them to divide an A3 piece of paper into quarters. In each section, pupils are going to depict their chosen subject. However, they will use different materials in each quarter. For example, they could use watercolours for their first image, oil pastels for their second, chalk for their third and acrylics for their fourth.

Afterwards, ask your pupils which materials they preferred and why.

Explore different illustrators' styles

Exa 4-02a

Introduce your pupils to the range of different illustrators' styles by showing them some images by various illustrators. Here are a few which may be helpful:

- Martin Brown: <http://horrible-histories.co.uk/wallpaper>
- Quentin Blake: <http://bit.ly/QBlakeGllry>
- Shaun Tan: <http://bit.ly/ShnTnGllry>
- Grahame Baker Smith (the illustrations from his book *FArTHER* are particularly detailed and have a dreamy quality: <http://bit.ly/GrBkSmthGllry>)

Ask them which images they prefer and what words they might use to describe each image. What kind of mood do they think each illustrator was trying to create?

Explain that illustrators can be asked to illustrate all different kinds of books with different moods. Show them the following two images:

- An image of a soldier during World War I by Martin Brown: <http://bit.ly/TrbleTrnchspic>
- An image of the same subject by Shaun Tan: <http://bit.ly/ShnTnSlrdpic>

Ask your pupils to imagine that they have been commissioned by a children's publisher to produce a cover image for a light hearted book about World War II. Ask them to produce an appropriate cover image, thinking closely about the purpose and audience for the image. How detailed should the image be? What kind of colours should be used? What kind of materials will best for the task?

Now, ask them to imagine that they have been asked to produce a cover image for a book for older children. This book is going to feature firsthand accounts from the war, and will be a much more serious and reflective text. Again, ask pupils to produce an appropriate cover image, thinking about the questions above.

An alternative way to approach this task would simply be to ask pupils to produce a cover image for a book they have read recently, making the same carefully justified decisions about colours, materials and composition.

Further resources

Scottish Book Trust has other great resources written by teachers which explore the world of children's illustration.

Check out these resources on using illustration as a stimulus for writing:
<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teaching-resources-cpd/second-level/using-illustration-as-a-stimulus-for-writing>

Nick Sharratt learning resources:

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teachers-librarians/teaching-resources-cpd/teaching-resources/second-level-upper-primary/nick-sharratt>

Korky Paul resources:

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teachers-librarians/teaching-resources-cpd/teaching-resources/first-level-lower-primary/winnie-the-witch>

If you loved Martin's illustrations and the Horrible Histories series

You and your pupils might enjoy this selection of non-fiction history books:
<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/9-non-fiction-books-about-history-8-11>

To explore the world of illustration further, why not check out this list of picture books for older readers, full of beautifully illustrated and thought provoking picture books: <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/reading/book-lists/10-picture-books-for-older-children-8-11>