

James Foley: Oh No!

Join James Foley for an exciting adventure through writing and illustration! In this interactive presentation, he will share some of the books he made as a child, read from his latest story *Oh No!*, and invite students to join him for a creative challenge.

Together, you'll explore the world of strange and random sound effects known as onomatopoeia, which James will turn into a strange and random drawing. Expect laughter, creativity, and plenty of surprises along the way!

ONOMATOPOEIA

Oh No! plays with strange, surprising and hilarious sound effects. What is onomatopoeia? Why do words like CRASH, SPLAT, BOING and EEK feel so vivid on the page? How do sound words help readers imagine action and emotion?

As a warm-up, teachers should call out different actions (dropping a plate, a monster sneezing, shoes in mud, a balloon popping). Students brainstorm the funniest or most unexpected sound word they can for each. Then ask: Which sound feels most dramatic? Which feels funniest?

FROM SOUND TO DRAWING

James Foley turns random sounds into strange and surprising illustrations. How can a sound inspire a character, creature or scene? What shapes, expressions or movements might match a word like BLOPP or KAPOW?

Students should each choose or invent one unusual sound word and turn it into a quick sketch:

- What kind of creature or object makes that sound?
- What emotion does it have?
- Is it silly, scary, tiny or enormous?

Encourage imaginative risk-taking rather than "perfect" drawing.

THE POWER OF SURPRISE

The title *Oh No!* immediately creates suspense and humour. Why are surprise and anticipation so important in funny stories? What makes readers want to turn the page?

Ask students:

- What kinds of things make us say "oh no"?
- Are they always disasters?
- Can "oh no" moments sometimes become funny?

Students then write a three-sentence mini story:

1. Something seems normal
2. An "oh no!" moment happens
3. The surprise twist makes it funny

Share a few aloud to highlight pacing and comic timing.

EARLY CREATIVITY AND MAKING BOOKS

Creators are often keen to share the books they made as children, showing that writers and illustrators often begin by experimenting early. Why is it important to keep childhood creativity alive? How do rough ideas become polished books?

Students should create a quick folded mini-book page featuring a title, one illustration and one sentence of action. This reinforces the idea that anyone can begin making books with simple materials and bold ideas.

WORDS AND PICTURES WORKING TOGETHER

Picture books and graphic novels rely on collaboration between text and illustration. What can the pictures show that the words don't? How does humour grow when images add an extra layer of surprise?

Teachers can display a simple sentence such as:

"The room was very quiet."

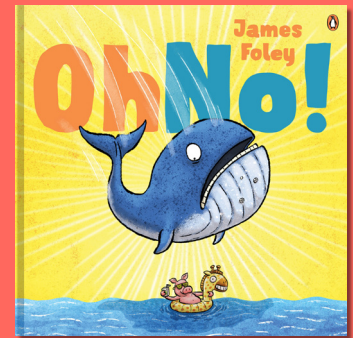
Students then suggest:

- an illustration that makes it funny
- a sound word that disrupts the quiet
- a visual surprise that changes the meaning

This helps students understand how illustrators extend narrative meaning.



James Foley



Oh No! is available at Readings.

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS (YEAR 3-6)

Learning areas: English, The Arts/Visual Arts

Capabilities: Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability

Foundational Skills: Literacy