

# Be inspired to illustrate with... ★ Nick Sharratt ★

Primary Times teams up with renowned illustrator, Nick Sharratt, to show the wonders of stretching a child's imagination through drawing

**Nick Sharratt** is the artist behind hundreds of beloved children's book characters created by authors including Jacqueline Wilson, Julia Donaldson, Jeremy Strong, as well as timeless fairy-tale characters and characters of his own creation – his personal favourites being Timothy Pope and his dad in 'Shark in the Park'.

As an advocate of creative expression, Nick has always had a passion for drawing.

"I've loved making pictures for as long as I can remember. It always felt incredibly natural and enjoyable for me. I was the artist of the class at school, and I was very happy with that role!"

Whether it was for school or a competition he'd found on a box of cereal, Nick took drawing seriously and encourages other children to do the same. "Young children are brilliant at picture making, but they can quickly become self-conscious about it. I think everyone has the potential to draw. It's

a brilliant activity to do; it involves all kinds of thought processes, and as with everything, you have to work at it if you want to improve. I used to be a perfectionist and start a drawing, do a few lines, then turn the page and start again. I'd go through a whole pad that way! But I taught myself to complete my pictures and even if the drawing was not quite what I'd expected, it gave me a sense of achievement."

Starting out as a magazine illustrator, Nick has now illustrated over a hundred books and written more than fifty of his own. But, how does he do it?

"By the time I've read the manuscript, I've got a clear idea of what the character will look like as it seeps into the story. When I'm working with Jacqueline (Wilson), I just try and create a visual interpretation from Jacky's description. There will always be mentions of the character's size, hair, dressing style etc within the story. I spend a lot of time thinking about hairstyles for my

characters, as hair can really reflect the character's nature."

Having achieved his childhood aspiration of becoming a professional artist, Nick encourages children to find joy in art too. "It's so important to find time for drawing and story-telling at a young age, as more than anything else it's fun! It's a fabulous way to stretch your imagination as a child."

"When I used to go into schools it was brilliant to see a classroom with art on the walls. I think it's good for children to be shown how to draw things by their parents or teachers or via YouTube."

There are lots of videos demonstrating how to draw a character sharing top tips such as starting with the shape of the face. Group drawing activities are also fantastic, where everyone contributes to a picture so it's a team effort."

Illustrations in books are a great way to grip the reader and create a memorable story. "When I think of the books I had as a child, the words are a bit hazy but the pictures come back sharply in my memory. Children interact with visual images in a really direct and intense way and it's amazing to think that my illustrations might be enjoyed like that."

Nick's top tip for aspiring artists is simple, keep drawing!

Discover more of Nick's tips and tricks from his YouTube films and book 'How to Draw the world of Jacqueline Wilson' (Random House Children's Books) and keep up to date with his latest books at [www.nicksharratt.com](http://www.nicksharratt.com)

