

Surprising Sharks by Nicola Davies, illustrated by James Croft (Walker Books 1406366978)

This is an excellent introduction to sharks which will surprise children and ignite their interests in what lurks beneath the sea. The book itself is full of interesting facts about sharks that will challenge the reputation of the shark as a “giant man-eating killer”. The first shark the author introduces is a Dwarf Lantern Shark that is smaller than a chocolate bar. The author’s snippets of information fall into playful shapes and sizes of print which go beside bright and colourful illustrations. The author, zoologist Nicola Davies, proves that sharks come in various shapes and sizes by describing sharks such as the lantern shark which has “built in fairy lights” and the wobbegong that lies “on the sea floor like a scrap of old carpet”.

The book encourages children to think about the human impact on sharks by providing the startling statistic that “every year people kill 100 million sharks”. Children will learn lots of interesting facts about sharks but the biggest surprise of all may be the realisation that sharks should be more afraid of humans than we are of them.

As with other volumes in the Nature Storybook series, there are interesting gobbets of information aside from the central narrative in a different font and there’s an index to introduce children to this concept which is such an important feature of information books as they get more complex.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence

- To write for meaning and purpose in a variety of non -narrative forms
- To know where information can be found in non-fiction texts
- To know that information can be retrieved from a variety of sources
- To use talk to give explanations and opinions
- To listen to books attentively and respond to what they have heard
- To identify some of the features of non-fiction texts
- To talk to reflect on past experiences
- To sustain relevant listening, responding to what they have heard with relevant comments and questions
- To use vocabulary influenced by books
- To enjoy an increasing range of books

This teaching sequence is designed for a Nursery or Reception class

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 3 weeks long if spread out over a series of sessions. Many of the sessions can be taught in small groups as focus activities whilst other sessions would work effectively with larger groups, depending on the age and experience of your children. The book is an

informative and memorable read and children will enjoy sharing the book and talking about what you have read together. This non-fiction picturebook is a wonderful example of how engaging information texts can be, not only through its use of language and illustration but, notably, how Nicola Davies involves her young readers throughout and leading them to question and explore misconceptions about sharks so that they can use what they learn to inform or even persuade others. It is a well-crafted text, inviting teachers to read it aloud which allows aspiring writers to hear the voice and tunes of explanatory text. The illustrations inspire curiosity and work to both support and add meaning to the text. There is plenty of opportunity for children to conduct research into their chosen shark, as well as sharks more generally, which will culminate in producing a range of information texts.

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework covered by this sequence

Prime Area: Communication and Language

Listening and attention:

- Listen attentively in a range of situations
- Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions
- Give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity

Understanding:

- Follow instructions involving several ideas or actions
- Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events

Speaking:

- Express themselves effectively, showing awareness of listeners' needs
- Develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events
- Use talk to connect ideas, explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next, recall and relive past experiences
- Question why things happen and gives explanations. Ask e.g. who, what, when, how

Specific Area: Literacy

Reading:

- Read and understand simple sentences
- Use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately
- Read some common irregular words
- Demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read
- Use vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of books
- Know that information can be retrieved from books and computers

Writing:

- Use phonic knowledge to write words in ways which match their spoken sounds
- Write some irregular common words
- Write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others
- Spell some words correctly and make phonetically plausible attempts at others

Cross Curricular Links

Understanding the World:

- Look at homes and habitats – *why do different animals and creatures live where they do?* As well as researching sharks, you might extend this to broader scientific learning in which you could actively observe local and less deadly animals, such as common garden animals, bugs and birds.
- Create spotter kits with the children, which could include binoculars, digital cameras, field journals, writing and drawing materials and posters or fact files about common native animals.
- Create a nature area in the setting that encourages wildlife, with feeders, bird baths and natural materials. Make a regular time for children to talk to the class about anything that they have observed or discovered for themselves or to which they would like to draw other children's attention.
- Explore why predators are necessary and useful in different environments, including the natural space in the setting in which children are making observations. You can talk about what happens to predators like birds if we do or don't look after the slugs and birds in the garden.
- The book highlights the many different species of sharks. This could lead to conversations about different types of other animals observed in the local environment, such as different kinds of birds, moths or butterflies.
- The array of shark habitats across the world's oceans and marine environments creates the perfect opportunity to explore world maps with the children, mapping known habitats, talk about any patterns that emerge what these places have in common.
- You could use roamers, bee-bots or remote-controlled toys to follow routes and map journeys.
- You could also invite the children to reflect on what they would need to be **zoologists** themselves, creating a kit that they could use to study the animals in their outdoor area and around the school or homes. This could include equipment like: magnifying glasses, bug collectors, spotter sheets on clipboards, cameras, plain notebooks and drawing materials, etc.

Mathematics:

- Explore the size and scale of different sharks, using comparative language such as **larger / smaller than, longer/shorter than, wider/narrower than**. Children could create paper cut outs of various sharks with which to measure and compare or you might use chalk to mark out the lengths of sharks on the playground or in the hall. Use a metre stick or measuring wheel to demonstrate the size of the large sharks. Children might be fascinated by the Megalodon, providing opportunity to explore and compare size and scale. This [National Geographic film](#) introduces sharks and their features – common and unique.
- There is opportunity to learn and use mathematical language whilst observing, drawing, emulating and talking about sharks, such as: **curved, straight, line, circle, circular, triangle, triangular, pattern**, etc.
- Provide various size scoopers that could be used to emulate a shark's jaws and with which the children would scoop up the toy fish or other marine animals in the water tray or small world area. Model one-to-one correspondence and counting in sequence, laying them out in a line to count them one by one in order and agreeing the total number is the last one counted. *Can the children create and label a prey number track or line? Can they use it to help them calculate with*

numbers up to 20? Model mathematical language such as *more than, less than, fewer, more, full, empty.*

- You might teach the children to subitise by holding the number of animals counted on one side of a double page spread and counting on from there (rather than starting from one again) to find the total number of animals when the whole spread is revealed. The endpapers may present an extended challenge for more adept mathematicians to group sharks into 2s, 5s or 10s in order to find the total.

Physical Development:

- Use large and small equipment to explore travelling like a shark. Look at bringing to life prepositions from the text such as *over, under, across, above, below, around, through* and work out ways of interacting with equipment or around a space like the outdoor role-play area. Movement sessions focussed on the behaviours of the sharks could bring verbs such as *hunting, cruising, lurking, lunging*, etc. to life, deepening children's understanding of the meanings of these words.

PSED:

- The premise of the book is to inform us of the wide variety of sharks, the majority of which present no threat to humans but are in fact endangered by humans. Work with children to explore how other animals might also evoke similar reactions, such as spiders and various insects, and whether this is fair or not (depending on your location).
- This can be a stimulus to talk about, acknowledge and explore emotions like fear or anxiety, when and why we might experience them, how they can be useful, and how we can learn to manage them.

Art and Design

- Encourage children to create their own habitats, above ground and underwater, using empty boxes and a range of materials.
- You might explore the use of inks or watercolours to create specific effects when painting ocean and other marine scenes on a large or small scale.
- Children could draw a picture of their favourite type of shark, paying close attention to its special features.
- You might support the children to create masks, costumes or 3-D models of their favourite species of shark. These could be used as part of the role-play and performance related to stories featuring sharks.

Ideas for CLL Continuous Provision

Scientific Display and Observational Artwork

- Provide a display board for children to add their own work as they produce it. In the centre of the board, draw a large shark so that later the children will be able to draw additional details and label the special parts of a shark, such as: **fins (pelvic, dorsal, pectoral), gills, jaws, teeth, skeleton, tail.**
- Rather than labelling a commercially produced image, it is much more beneficial for children to carefully draw what they see from photographs and film clips (or even from observation if visiting a conservation centre or aquarium), reflecting on their observations and being supported to describe a shark's body features more precisely, such as: **scaly skin, dorsal fin, rows and rows of teeth.**
- Introducing scientific language as part of the observations and alongside the children's own descriptions will enable greater independence and understanding, leading to deeper learning.

Family Learning

- Somewhere in the classroom find space for a shark fact display. Provide some shark-shaped paper or Post-it notes so that children can write any shark facts that they find out at home or through further investigation.
- Encourage children to get their parents to write any facts on the board that they may know to add to the display as well as any questions that their research raises.

Book Corner

- Collect together some story books and information books about sharks and their habitats, such as those listed below, so that children can read them together and they can draw on during read aloud sessions.
- Ensure non-fiction books form part of the home-reading collections from which children and their parents can select as well as any scheme book sent home. Model to parents how you might read aloud and share such books with the children and the enriching experience it offers.
- Share links to suitable, age-appropriate website families might want to visit to find out about sharks. Invite families to share what kinds of texts they used to help them find out a fact so that you can build up a collection of real-world examples of non-fiction.

Collaborative Mark Making

- Encourage children to work together to create an underwater ocean scene on large pieces of paper. Invite children to draw pictures of things that they would expect to see there. Encourage children to talk about what they are drawing and use a variety of mark making equipment.
- Try playing music or underwater sound effects and ask the children to listen to the sounds as they make their marks.

Independent Bookmaking

- Encourage children to make their own fact books about sharks. Using [these bookmaking instructions](#), make zig-zag or origami books and leave them in the mark making area for children to use.
- Include interesting resources for the children such as shark-shaped note paper and a range of mark making materials.

Working Wall, Outdoor Role-Play and Small World Areas

- In collaboration with the children, create the Working Wall backdrop upon which the learning will be recorded and work displayed. You might also make a themed outdoor role-play area and a small world area or story box for children to play out shark stories and re-enact moments in *Surprising Sharks*.
- Draw on features of their natural underwater habitats which include: deep and shallow areas of seas and oceans, estuaries, coastlines and mangroves.
- You and the children can take inspiration from James Croft's illustrations as well as finding photographic images from information texts and suitable websites. Encourage children to discuss the choices they are making around materials and resources to create these scenes, reflecting on textures, colour and mark making they think effective.

Role-Play and Re-enactment

- Encourage the children to act out being a shark. *What are sharks like? How do they behave? How do they move? What might they be thinking?* Children might snap their arms together like jaws or prowl underwater - or close to the ground - or freeze as if waiting for prey. Model descriptive language as you and the children engage in role-play and re-enactment.

Teaching Approaches

- Response to illustration
- Reading Aloud
- Debate and Discussion
- Reading and Research
- Shared Reading
- Revisiting and Re-reading
- Shared and Modelled Writing
- Looking at Language
- Artwork and Annotation
- Role-Play and Drama
- Bookmaking and Publishing
- Word Collections
- Responding to Poetry
- Performing Poetry
- Book Talk

Writing Outcomes

- Annotations
- Questions and statements about sharks
- Descriptive labels for observational drawings
- Labelled shark diagram
- Lists related to continuous provision
- Explanation texts
- Statements and questions about sharks
- Fact files or information books
- Map labels or keys
- An appropriate choice of information or persuasive text for final presentation, exhibition or assembly

Links to other texts and resources:

Picturebooks

- *The Spots and the Dots*, Helen Baugh and Marion Deuchars (Andersen Press)
- *Momo and Snap are NOT Friends!*, Airlie Anderson (Child's Play)
- *Aaaarrgghh Spider!*, Lydia Monks (HarperCollins)
- *Tad*, Benji Davies (HarperCollins)
- *Afraid of the Dark*, Sarah Shaffi, Isabel Otter and Lucy Farfort (Little Tiger)
- *Boo! A Fishy Mystery*, Kate Read (Macmillan Children's Books)
- *Aqua Boy*, Ken Wilson-Max (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Steve, Terror of the Seas*, Megan Brewlis (Oxford University Press)
- *I Could be Eaten by a Shark*, Marcela Ferreira and Mark Chambers (Oxford University Press) - **publishing May 2025**
- *How to Walk a Whale*, Sam Wilde and Sarah Horne (Oxford University Press)
- *How to Be a Lion*, Ed Vere (Puffin)
- *Geoffrey Gets the Jitters*, Nadia Shireen (Puffin)
- *Things in the Sea are Touching Me!*, Linda Jane Keegan and Minky Stapleton (Scholastic)
- *Snap!*, Anna Walker (Scribble)
- *Anemone is Not the Enemy*, Anna McGregor (Scribble)
- *A Good Place*, Lucy Cousins (Walker Books)
- *Don't Worry, Little Crab*, Chris Haughton (Walker Books)
- *The Silver Shadow*, Mariesa Dulak (Walker Books) - **publishing May 2025**

Non-fiction:

- *I Am a Cat*, Galia Bernstein (Abrams)
- *I See the Sea*, Julia Groves (Child's Play)

- *The Sea Book*, Charlotte Milner (DK)
- *Swim, Shark, Swim!*, Dom Conlon and Anastasia Izlesou (Graffeg)
- *Into the Blue*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *Lifesize Ocean Animals*, Sophy Henn (HarperCollins)
- *Mad About Sharks*, Deborah Murrell and Sue Hendra (Ladybird Books)
- *Hidden World: Ocean*, Libby Walden and Stephanie Fizer Coleman (Little Tiger)
- *Sea*, Patricia Hegarty and Britta Teckentrup (Little Tiger)
- *How It Works: Shark*, Molly Littleboy and David Semple (Little Tiger)
- *The Shark Book*, Hannah Alice (Nosy Crow) - **publishing May 2025**
- *I'm Thinking of a Sea Creature*, Charlotte Guillain, Adam Guillain and Lucia Gaggiotti (Nosy Crow)
- *Exploring Sharks*, Jill McDonald (Penguin Random House)
- *Creature Features: Oceans*, Natasha Durley (Templar)
- *Little Explorers: Under the Sea*, Dynamo (Templar)
- *The Big Book of the Blue*, Yuval Zommer (Thames & Hudson)
- *Usborne Beginners: Sharks*, Catriona Clarke and Adam Relf (Usborne)
- *Usborne Beginners: Dangerous Animals*, Rebecca Gilpin and Patrizia Donaera (Usborne)
- *A First Book of Animals*, Nicola Davies and Petr Horáček (Walker Books)
- *A First Book of Nature*, Nicola Davies and Mark Hearld (Walker Books)
- *A First Book of the Sea*, Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton (Walker Books)
- *My First Book of Sea Creatures*, Zoë Ingram (Walker Books)
- *One Tiny Treefrog*, Tony Piedra and Mackenzie Joy (Walker Books)
- *Deadly! The Truth about the Most Dangerous Creatures on Earth*, Nicola Davies and Neal Layton (Walker)
- *The Small and Mighty Book of Sharks*, Ben Hoare (Welbeck)
- *The Small and Mighty Book of Oceans*, Tracey Turner and Kirsti Davidson (Welbeck)
- *The Small and Mighty Book of Deadly Creatures*, Orange Hippo (Welbeck)
- *The Sea Below My Toes*, Charlotte Guillain and Jo Empson (words & pictures)

A selection of other books written by Nicola Davies:

- *Blue Heart*, Nicola Davies (Graffeg)
- *Invertebrates are Cool!*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *Animal Surprises*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *The Word Bird*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *The Versatile Reptile*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *The Secret of the Egg*, Nicola Davies and Abbie Cameron (Graffeg)
- *The Variety of Life*, Nicola Davies and Lorna Scobie (Hachette Children's Books)
- *My Butterfly Bouquet*, Nicola Davies and Hannah Peck (Hachette Children's Books)
- *The Star Whale*, Nicola Davies and Petr Horáček (Otter-Barry Books)
- *Last*, Nicola Davies (Tiny Owl)
- *Tiny: The Invisible World of Microbes*, Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton (Walker Books)
- *Lots: The Diversity of Life on Earth*, Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton (Walker Books)
- *Green: The Story of Plant Life on Our Planet*, Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton (Walker Books)
- *Protecting the Planet: Emperor of the Ice*, Nicola Davies and Catherine Rayner (Walker Books)
- *Protecting the Planet: The Season of Giraffes*, Nicola Davies and Emily Sutton (Walker Books)

- *One World: 24 Hours on Planet Earth*, Nicola Davies and Jenni Desmond (Walker Books)
- *Big Blue Whale*, Nicola Davies and Nick Maland (Walker Books)
- *Hummingbird*, Nicola Davies and Jane Ray (Walker Books)
- *I (Don't) Like Snakes*, Nicola Davies and Luciano Luzano (Walker Books)
- *Just Ducks*, Nicola Davies and Salvatore Rubbino (Walker Books)
- *One Tiny Turtle*, Nicola Davies and Jane Chapman (Walker Books)
- *White Owl Barn Owl*, Nicola Davies and Michael Foreman (Walker Books)

Weblinks:

Please refer to the links embedded in the teaching sessions, created 26.01.2025. **It is important that teachers watch the whole of a film clip before deciding on its suitability for their own class.**

- [CLPE's teaching notes for the Nature Storybooks series by Walker](#)

Links to other resources on the Power of Reading Website:

- Find further details on [CLPE's Teaching Approaches](#).
- For recommended information books for young children, visit [CLPE's Core Book List](#):

Teaching Sessions

Before beginning this book:

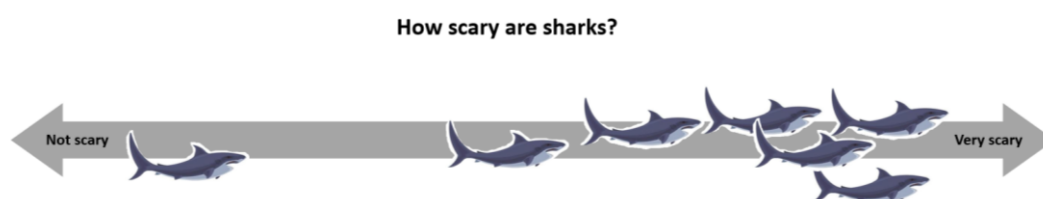
- This sequence will culminate in an exhibition or assembly in which children can share their learning with families and the wider school community – with an emphasis on saving the shark.
- Gather different kinds of information texts - such as, photographs, film clips, information books, posters and leaflets - that the children will be able to reference alongside reading this information book.
- There is also opportunity for the children to choose a specific type of shark to research throughout the teaching sequence; one which captures their imagination and on which they can develop some expertise to be shared with peers in a chosen form. See the recommended book lists and session weblinks for inspiration.
- **Teachers will need to watch all film clips for themselves to assess suitability for their own class.**
- Make a class reading journal, floor book or prepare an ocean themed Working Wall to capture the children's responses as they explore this book and engage in wider learning.
- The children could help you create the background to the display board which might begin to emulate the shark's habitat as illustrated by James Croft in broad brushstrokes and splashes of paint, enabling teachers to evoke and introduce vocabulary and develop motor skills.
- Source a globe and/or large world maps to display and use to support the children to grasp concepts beyond their personal and geographical experience, such as the fact that sharks can be found in every ocean and sea in the world.

Introducing the Book and Subject Matter – Responding to Illustration and Title

- Without revealing the book cover, show the children the image of the shark’s fin from the inner title page (taking care to conceal all text including the title).
- Invite the children to share their initial thoughts, taking care to value all responses. *What do you notice? What could this be? What does it make you think about?* Scribe the children’s ideas around a copy of the image, taking the opportunity to encourage children to clarify and extend their thinking and to recast and enrich their vocabulary.
- Now share the front cover, still without revealing the title or any other text. *Is this what you expected? Why? Why not? Do you know what kind of creature this is? How does it make you feel? Would you like to meet one? Why? Why not? What do you think might happen?*
- Ask the children to share what they notice about this image of the shark. *What does it look like? Where is it, and what is it doing? How is it moving and why? Where is it going?*
- Again, scribe children’s responses, this time around the front cover image. Take opportunity to clarify, recast and enrich children’s vocabulary around the theme, building on familiar language to introduce new concepts. This might include descriptions of the shark’s behaviour or features or the underwater setting, as well as the emotions it evokes.
- Now reveal and read the text. *What do you notice about the way the words work with the illustration? What does this tell us about sharks?* Draw attention to the way in which the author and illustrator names seem about to be crushed by the shark’s jaws.
- Flick back to the title page and revisit the illustration. *What does it say about this shark that its fin is taking up the whole book spread?* Discuss and scribe further ideas.
- Re-read the title. *Is this what you expected the book to be called? What could be surprising about sharks?* Share personal experiences to support understanding. *When have you been surprised? What happened?*
- Reveal the back cover and read the blurb. *What more does this tell us about sharks? What might be the ‘big surprise’?*
- Invite the children to share what they think they know or are learning about sharks, including their ideas about what might be surprising about them. *Have they read about them in books or seen them in films or television, or in real life, in museums, aquariums, or in the wild? What information is this book sharing with us about sharks from the cover and title pages?*
- Invite the class to go on to find out what could be surprising about sharks and if it confirms expectations or anything surprises them.
- To support children and to benefit from sustained shared thinking as a class, create a display of stories, poems and non-fiction titles about sharks that you can read aloud and share together, as well as sharing clips of films and television programmes featuring sharks, such as those listed above.
- Make notes of what the children are finding out that can be added around the illustration on the working wall or in the shared journal.
- Encourage families to engage in this investigation of sharks and what might be surprising about them. Encourage non-fiction books to be read aloud and shared at bedtime. Create an accessible area where children and parents can pin fascinating facts about sharks for others to read.

Reading Aloud and Debate and Discussion – Scale of Scariness

- Read aloud the title and title page – for now, not revealing the endpaper – and turn to the first spread, reading it aloud and modelling expression as guided by the font and layout of the text.
- Invite the children’s initial responses. *Do you agree with what they are saying? How would you feel if you were the person swimming by this shark? Why, what do you think could happen?*
- Add the words **nightmare**, **giant**, **man-eating** and **killer** to the cover or title page illustrations on the working wall, relating vocabulary meanings to familiar concepts and understanding.
- Ask the children to reflect on what they think or feel about sharks and engage in a simple debate and discussion, modelling sentence structure and justifying ideas with ‘because’. *Do you think sharks are scary? Why? Why not?*
- Ask the children to justify their ideas and how they think they know. They may be based on fact or fiction and the children may well not agree with each other. Children may also be bringing their experience of sharks from popular culture characters featured in television programmes, cartoons or films. Model polite exchange and valuing all ideas and the connections that are being made.
- Have a scale line on the working wall with an interactive question, e.g. **How Scary are sharks?**
- Ask children to pin a picture of a shark (labelled with their name) where they believe that it sits on the scale, e.g.



- Take the opportunity to invite children to share why they have placed their sharks where they have on the scale. *What do they think they know about sharks that helped them make a decision?*
- Clarify and recast ideas to support children to fully articulate their reasoning then scribe a few different ideas around the scale onto sentence strips.
- Model polite exchange again and an interest in how we can have different opinions or perspectives.
- You might want to provoke discussion by placing your shark on the ‘Not scary’ end of the scale and share a fact that you think you know about sharks – such as very few people are actually killed by sharks every year – to justify your decision.
- You could use this as a springboard for children to think about how they know if something is true and how they might check this fact with you, among other facts that have been shared.
- Return to the scale throughout the sequence regularly to see if anyone has changed their perception of sharks as the children find out more information.

Wider Reading, Research and Investigation - Sharks

- In preparation for sharing *Surprising Sharks* together and prior to this session, prepare a grid in which to record what the children already think they know, what they would like to find out or any questions they have, like the one below. The grid might be displayed prominently or in the

class journal; accessible for the children to revisit and record their developing ideas, perhaps even with their parents at transition times.

- Ask the children to think about what they know about sharks and their natural habitat, their physical characteristics, habits and behaviour. *What are they like? How do they behave? Is this what you would expect from a shark? Does everyone agree? Why? Why not?*
- Value all ideas, even those that may seem unfeasible, as they may be well-founded in fact or turn out to be true. There are a host of extraordinary facts about sharks that will be shared in *Surprising Sharks* that may prove to challenge our assumptions.
- Return to the first spread to make connections with children’s assertions, for example, **“Sharks live in the sea.”**
- Support the children in composing these statements and questions through modelled writing.

What we know about sharks	What we would like to know about sharks	What we have found out about sharks

- When you have begun collating the children’s ideas and questions, ask them where they think they will find answers to their questions and gather ideas, referring to areas of the classroom and home experiences and resources.
- Return to the book, *Surprising Sharks* and turn to page 29 in which we are introduced to sharks and the author and illustrator. Read aloud the ‘About Sharks’ section and talk together about what we have learned.
- Clarify and recast the facts children are recalling into whole ideas or sentences as you share write each one onto sentence strips, ready to pin them to the third column.
- Just before adding the first new fact like **‘Sharks have been on earth for 300 million years.’** to the third column, pause dramatically and question out loud how this can be true – “It is just *too* surprising!”
- Tell the children that you are going to check that the author knows what she is talking about first by reading about her.
- Chat to the children about what they think they know about Nicola and how she feels about sharks. *How does she want us to feel about sharks? Why?*
- Return to the first sentence and re-read this: ‘Nicola Davies is a zoologist with a special love of the sea.’
- You can explain what a **zoologist** is by connecting it to a figure like Jess who may be more familiar to the children or can be introduced here through [CBeebies’ Minibeast Adventure with Jess theme song](#). Talk about zoologists being scientists who study all kinds of animals - Jess studies minibeasts in this programme and other zoologists like Nicola Davies study animals that live in the sea, like sharks. They are experts in their animals so we can trust what they say.
- Pin the sentence strip facts onto the enquiry grid.

Wider Book Sharing and Research

- As you now begin to share *Surprising Sharks* along with other stories, poems, rhymes and songs featuring sharks, you can begin to record answers to questions which might – in turn – inspire further questions and wondering.
- Through exploring this book together and in smaller research groups, you can guide the children in modelling specific reading strategies and behaviours when using information books, such as reading with a question in mind, finding relevant pages from the index, retrieving meaning from text and image, including diagrams.
- Read aloud all kinds of information text to allow the children to hear the voices of non-fiction and more easily tune in to the rhythm.
- Provide a variety of resources nearby that children can use to draw or write about anything of interest they find out.
- Watch film clips or visit websites (**thoroughly checking they are age-appropriate throughout beforehand**) that provide further insight and information.
- Make a regular time for children to talk to the class about anything that they have discovered for themselves or to which they would like to draw other children's attention. This can be recorded on the class chart on the final column. Encourage the children to consider any questions that their investigations throw up and can be found out about.
- This research could culminate in group of children creating fact files about sharks presenting them in a format that the children think would be most engaging for their peers to read and enjoy.
- Provide a range of non-fiction texts, including digital formats, to which the children can refer and be inspired. Read aloud the text so that the children can hear the tunes of different text types and emulate the voice of the chosen form, such as explanatory, non-chronological, advisory, etc.
- Model writing in a chosen voice to support the children's independent writing and encourage them to read aloud their own compositions.

- You could also invite the children to experience what it is like to be a zoologist themselves, creating a kit that they could use to study and become experts in the animals in their outdoor area and around the school or homes. This could include equipment they saw in the CBeebies clip, such as magnifying glasses, bug collectors, spotter sheets on clipboards, cameras, plain notebooks and drawing materials, etc.
- Provide regular opportunities for children to share anything they are finding out that they find particularly interesting, showing them how they can record this so that other people can benefit from their knowledge.

Reading Aloud, Reader Response and Shared Writing – Shark fact sentences

- Re-read aloud the first spread, encouraging the children to join in with familiar words and phrases and enjoy the expressive shared reading opportunity as the drama builds to the final exclamation, 'SHaaaaRRRKK!'.
▪ Turn the page to look at and read aloud the next spread.

- Invite the children's immediate responses. *What does this make you feel or think about? Is this what you expected? What have we found out about sharks here? Does anything surprise you? Why? Why not?*
- Scribe responses around a copy of the illustration on the working wall or in the shared reading journal.
- Have a chocolate bar handy to be able to compare physically the length of the Dwarf Lantern Shark, repeating and reinforcing the comparative language in the book: '**smallest** kind of shark in the world'... '**just bigger than** a chocolate bar.'
- Model summarising what we know about the Dwarf Lantern Shark in a sentence which can be added to the class enquiry grid in the 'What we have learned.' column. *What would we tell someone else about this shark? What is surprising or interesting about it?*
- Take children's ideas and transcribe this through shared writing on sentence strips, for example:
 - 'The Dwarf Lantern Shark is the smallest shark in the world.'
 - 'The Dwarf Lantern Shark is just bigger than a chocolate bar.'
- You can also go on to think about and record what we have learned about sharks, as a whole, from this spread. The children may be surprised to learn that there were different kinds of sharks or that there were sharks like the Dwarf Lantern Shark, that were not giant, or man-eaters.
- Note any questions raised on to the enquiry grid to investigate together.

Response to Illustration and Looking at Language – Sorting and Classifying

- Begin the session by revisiting the book so far then revealing the endpaper illustrations at the front and back of the book.
- Before reading any names, invite the children to suggest what they think they are being shown. Read a few names to clarify that these are all sharks. *Is this a surprise? Why? why not?*
- Have prepared a set of these sharks – cut out and laminated - for the children to explore in small groups. Depending on the age and experience of the children, provide them with the whole set or with a smaller selection to examine together.
- Give the children plenty of time to look at the sharks in turn, reading aloud the shark names for them.
- Talk about why they might have been given these names supporting the children to connect their names with their appearance and modelling how to articulate this, for example:
 - 'The lemon shark has yellow skin like a lemon.'
 - 'The tiger shark is stripy like a tiger.'
- Have fun reflecting on the shark names. *Do the children agree with all the names? Why? why not? What other names could they give them?*
- You might also take the opportunity to blend and segment some of the names as well as the word **shark**, either orally or in the context of word reading and writing, e.g. **sh-ar-k, b-u-ll, s-w-e-ll, p-or-t, b-a-s-k-i-ng, th-r-e-sh-er**.
- You could explore the measurement provided for the length of the shark, inviting the children to use standard measuring equipment to find things around the setting that is the same length.

Book-Based Games

- You might give the children ample opportunity to engage in sorting games involving a set of sharks. Start by modelling how you might sort them into two different groups based on a secret criterion like **plain** or **patterned** and asking the children to guess your criteria. Invite the children to sort them according to a different criterion for others to guess.
- You might also reinforce subject knowledge and vocabulary by playing matching games with the sharks like Pelmanism or snap.

Close Reading of Illustration, Artwork and Annotation – Labelling with descriptive and scientific language

- Now invite the children to choose a shark that most captures their imagination, talking about their choices and how the sharks compare, again modelling this language as you choose your own shark.
- Provide children with art materials, such as paint or chalk pastels, that will help them to illustrate their chosen shark.
- Model, by thinking aloud, what you observe about your shark before and while you are creating your artwork, drawing attention to the physical features of your shark – size, colour, patterning, features – through your choice of descriptive language as well as the artistic techniques you use to capture this.
- Talk about how the endpapers demonstrate the differences in size of each of the sharks and to think about how we could do the same when painting our own collection. *Who will need to make a large shark? Whose will be tiny?*
- It would be beneficial to contextualise for the children how far the biggest sharks – Whale Sharks – reach in length (12 metres). Support them to measure accurately in metres using a range of equipment, such as with chalk on the playground and create paintings and drawings to scale, to represent the length.
- As you each paint or draw alongside each other, comment on what you notice is similar or unique about the collection of sharks, inviting children to do the same, for example, noting common features like **gills, eyes, fins, tail, skin** and differences in colour, patterning or size.
- Children could annotate their shark with descriptive observations. Model rich vocabulary and recast and extend descriptions for precision.
- Invite the children to copy their shark's name to display alongside their artwork on the working wall. Before displaying, check the children are happy with the scale of their shark – *is it large or small enough?* You might adjust this by colour photocopying their artwork before displaying, using the opportunity to draw attention to the concept of size and scale and use the associated language together.
- Give the children time and space to look at and talk about the class shark collection on display. Encourage them to share why they chose their shark – *what interested them about it? What did they notice when they were drawing and painting it that they didn't see before? What more did they learn about sharks? Does anything make them curious? What questions do they have about this shark? What would they like to find out?*
- Note these around the illustration and come back to them in future sessions if they can be answered or to see if more research needs to be done to answer them.

Shared Reading: Finding information using an index

- In preparation for this session, provide the children with experience of reading and writing lists in and across the play-based provision and related to areas of learning and interest.
- You can also reinforce the alphabet through singing and exploration of initial sounds, class registers, etc. Include upper- and lower-case letters in these activities.
- Similarly, you can play number games to reinforce the mathematical understanding needed to recognise and count numbers up to and beyond twenty.

- Return to the title *Surprising Sharks* and talk about anything of surprise that they have discovered already, just by looking at the end pages of this book. *What do they find most fascinating and why? What amazing shark fact can they already share with someone else?*
- Invite the children to become the experts in their own shark so that they can share information about it with other people, perhaps even finding out some surprising facts.
- They might create a grid like that used by the class to find out about sharks in general to organise their own research and knowledge gained around their chosen shark.
- Show the children how many information books help us to find out about a particular thing without having to read the whole book. Model this with *Surprising Sharks*. Flick to the back of the book and show them to **Index** on page 28.
- Draw attention to the way the text works in a list - like those that they may be familiar reading or creating in play-based provision or in the classroom to support organisation.
- Read aloud the text at the end: 'Look up the pages...to this kind.'
- Show the children how to do this, using an example that means you need to look down the list to locate it rather than the first entry 'Angel shark'. You could use a question the class would like answered or find the shark that you have chosen, for instance: '**Dogfish.....19**'
- Move your finger down the list and draw attention to the list being alphabetical which helps you to locate what you are looking for, noting each initial letter as a new one begins, for example: "A...B...C...D...Dogfish!" Then model directionality and how it changes, moving your finger along the dotted line to locate and read aloud the number, "19". Tell the children this is the page number if they haven't offered this suggestion.
- Model how to find the page number, flicking back to the front of the book and locating the page numbers at the bottom of the pages, before counting each page in turn until the given page, e.g. '19'. Depending on the age and experience of the children, you might flick first to a nearby page number and count forwards or backwards to the desired page.
- Remind the children that the author advised we read the large and the small writing to find out facts. Invite the children to help you scan the page for what they need. *Can you help me find the dogfish on this page?*
- Model how prior knowledge, the illustrations as well as the words can give them clues or confirm their choice, taking the opportunity to check through spelling and phonic knowledge by checking the initial letter and blending to read some or all of the word, if appropriate, e.g. "**D-O-G-F-I-SH**".
- Eventually, read aloud the text associated with this shark or particular topic and talk about what it means and what has been learned, modelling how to articulate this into a sentence fact to add to the enquiry grid through shared writing.

Wider Book Sharing and Research

- As well as making accessible books, stories and poems you might also make available and engage in age-appropriate, multi-media and digital texts as well as films, such as:
 - [All About Sharks for Kids \(Learn Bright\)](#)
 - [All About Sharks for Children: Animal Videos for Kids \(Free School\)](#)
 - [Cool Facts About Sharks. Things You Wanna Know \(Nat Geo Kids\)](#)
 - [Shark Dive. What Sam Sees \(Nat Geo Kids\)](#)
- They could then choose how they want to present the information they have found out later in the teaching sequence.
- By this point, you will have shared different ways in which information texts can be presented to a reader or audience, in books and real-world contexts, from which children can take inspiration and draw on as models.

Reading Aloud and Response to Illustration and Role Play – Predators and Prey

- Revisit and read aloud the main text of the book from cover to page 13, pausing to allow the children to comment on topics of interest; as well as what is particularly surprising or fascinating: such as finding out that certain sharks have **built-in fairy lights** or can **blow up like a party balloon, lie on the floor like a scrap of old carpet** or **look like tools from a monster's DIY kit**.
- Invite the children's response to the information they have heard you read. *What are they learning? Why do these sharks look the way they do? Why do they **come in all sorts of shapes and sizes**? How does it help them?*
- Take the opportunity to draw out any subject specific which may be unfamiliar to the children as well as introducing any that might support understanding – such as: **surface, predator, camouflage, skin, eyes, nostrils, scent, prey, vision, teeth**.
- Do this by connecting it with familiar vocabulary and relatable concepts as well as drawing on the supportive illustrations and the main body of text which Nicola Davies has written in accessible language, using comparisons to everyday objects. You might want to bring in a balloon, tools, fairy lights, etc. to support understanding. You can also use the children's shark artwork to consolidate names of body parts.
- Ask the children if they recognised their own shark and what they learned about it. *How do they know it is the same shark as theirs?*
- As well as comparing the physical features in the illustrations, model how to locate and read the emboldened names of the sharks featured on these two spreads and any accompanying information text, such as '**SWELL SHARKS** swallow water when they get scared and blow up to...'
- Talk about and record what has been learned about sharks on these spreads, drawing attention to the fact that sharks can be predators as well as being prey to other predators.
- To consolidate understanding, invite small groups of children to re-enact one of the scenes from pages 10-11 through role play, each taking on the role of either the shark or the other fish or crabs. You could read aloud while the children re-enacted the scene until children felt confident to add their own narration to their scene. Provide open-ended props and loose parts to support their role play.
- Invite the groups to perform their scene to the wider audience who could guess which shark they are re-enacting.

- Give the children opportunity to find out about and share what their chosen shark does to hunt its prey successfully or to avoid its own predators. *Does it change its appearance? Does it have any special features?*
- Model with your own shark how you can find out about its appearance and behaviour and create your own illustration which includes one or two explanatory sentences, drawing on the tunes of that heard in these spreads and the way in which they are presented alongside the illustration.
- You could collate these in a class book about shark predators or encourage children to make their own book in which this is a featured page. Instruction for bookmaking can be found [here](#).
- Children might like to read their page to friends or even use their knowledge to direct a group to act out their shark's behaviour.
- This session could lead to wider research on interesting ways in which other animals avoid predators or hunt prey successfully.

Revisiting, Reading Aloud, Shared and Independent Writing – Labelled Diagram of a Shark

- Place the children's shark drawings or paintings together and talk about how they compare, modelling language that will support this. *What is the same and what is different?* You can also revisit the endpapers to support discussion and language.
- Now turn the page to reveal the labelled diagrams of the inside and the outside of a shark (p-14-17). Read the titles: '**Outside**' and '**Inside**'.
- Invite the children's first impressions. *What do the children notice about these pages? How are they different from what we have seen so far in the book? Have you seen anything like this before?*
- Draw attention to the style of drawing and how it compares to other spreads and the children's shark artwork; an outline without any colouring in and with words as labels and some additional close-up drawings. Explain that this kind of drawing is called a **diagram**.
- Make accessible a variety of non-fiction texts that include diagrams to support the children to understand the concept of diagrams and why they can be useful, compared to – say – a richly detailed illustration or a photograph.
- Read the main body of text on page 14 (in navy blue) and talk about what the children think they know about what features their sharks share as well as what is different about them.
- Ask children to scan the diagram and refer to their own shark artwork to see if they can match anything to what they see in this diagram.
- Model this with your own shark drawing by finding the **tail**, for example, and then reading the word 'tail' before inviting children to find another body part, such as the two **fins**, **dorsal** and **pectoral**.
- Depending on the children's experience and stage in your systematic phonics programme, this could be an opportunity to use and apply phonic knowledge to blend and segment some of these words – orally or in reading and writing words, for example: **f-i-n...fin**, **t-ai-l...tail**.
- Read the name labels and any associated text that adds information for the children to comment on.
- Give out labels on card and ask children to read them together, or with adult support, and place them onto a large diagram. You might draw this in white pen, chalk or pencil on a large blue sheet of paper, as illustrated in the book.

- This labelling activity could be followed by a guided reading and writing activity in which children could explore the outer and inner features of the shark and transcribe these labels onto an outline diagram of their own kind of shark.
- Children could go on to label items in the setting, mark-making and spelling phonetically where suitable.
- Add labels to areas of learning, or read and create class name labels or badges and pin them to their friends with permission.

Revisiting and Re-reading, Shared Reading and Writing: Sustained shared enquiry, articulating and composing sentences

- Invite the children to revisit the diagrams of the shark, inside and out, that they have created and to share what they have learned about sharks that most interests them. *Have you learned anything that surprised you about sharks? Have you had any of your questions answered? Do you have any more questions?*
- Return to the enquiry grid and record the children’s contributions in the appropriate column. Model how to recast and compose these in statement or question sentences, e.g.:

What we know about sharks	What we would like to know about sharks	What we have found out about sharks
	Do sharks get toothache?	Sharks have bendy skeletons to stop them sinking.

- Now read the main body of text from pages 17-23, leaving the additional facts unread for the moment but pausing for children to comment on anything that interests them, in particular in the words or pictures.
- Talk about what more we have learned about sharks, modelling how to return to the page in which this information is revealed and re-reading or drawing on the language models in the text to support the conversation and clarify concepts.
- Model how to think out loud – to articulate wonder and questioning – so that you can support the children to connect new concepts to their prior knowledge of the world and reinforce meanings of new vocabulary through that which is familiar. For example, the spread on pages 21-22 explores how sharks use their **senses** that give them **clues** or **hints** that food is nearby. You will need to introduce or consolidate the concept of senses and how the children use them. You might do this practically or through anecdote in which children can relate personal narratives of smells they like or don’t like and those that are strong smells or **faint** smells; things they can see easily and those that are out of sight, in blind spots or too far away; sounds they can hear easily and those that are ‘too low for our ears to pick up.’

- Show the children how you might find more details or answers to questions by reading the factual information provided in the relevant spread. You might exclaim, “*I wonder how a shark can hear or see or smell or feel even the tiniest hint of food? How will I find out?*” Invite the children to share with you how you can find out, encouraging them to draw on their experience so far of this book and the way the information is presented - or their experience of other non-fiction texts used to support their wider research.
- The children may have spotted their chosen shark in the illustrations or additional facts and want you to read these to them for further discussion. *What makes their shark different or special?*
- Remind the children how we can continue to use the index to answer questions we have about sharks or any one shark in particular.
- Invite the children to share related facts about other sharks if they have discovered them over the course of their research, for example, how they behave as babies; what keeps them safe; how they show their ‘**sharkish**’ ways; etc.
- You might watch television programmes or clips to support topics and areas of interest introduced and read together in these book spreads. There are several age-appropriate programmes which feature in a search of ‘sharks’ on the BBC i-Player website, such as:
 - [CBeebies Octonauts The Lost Lemon Shark](#)
 - [CBeebies Sharky Showdown](#) rap with Andy – The Great White Shark
 - [CBBC Shark Bites](#) in which Steve Backshall introduces us to a different type of sharks in each episode.
- You might draw on specific clips from [BBC Blue Planet Revisited Series 1: 1. A Shark’s Tale](#) to support topics and areas of interest introduced and read together in these book spreads. The documentary is set in the Bahamas Shark Sanctuary and has an emphasis on conservation. **Please note, minutes 24:16-26:10 are inappropriate to share with young children as it involves sharks being killed and in distress. You will need to watch the whole film before showing it in class and ensure this section is not shown by anyone working with the children.**
- Clips that may be of particular interest for your own subject knowledge or to share with children:
 - (00:00-06:30) Introduction to sharks including the real statistics.
 - (09.15-13:04) The ‘Shark Dancer’ Scientist interactions with Caribbean Reef Sharks
 - (20.03-23:50) Baby Lemon sharks and their mangrove nursery (**Stop the film before 24:00 minutes – inappropriate and distressing content until 26:10 minutes**)
 - (39.07-42:53) Nurse Sharks and Great Hammerhead Sharks
- You can continue to scribe onto the grid or provide the children with sentence strips (A3 sheets of paper cut into narrow strips) so that they can write their chosen fact and add it to the grid themselves.

Shared and Independent Writing, Bookmaking and Publishing – Shark information texts

- Provide the time, resources and opportunity for children to begin to create an information text about sharks. This could be focussed on a topic of particular interest or a shark they have chosen to research.
- Give children plenty of time to talk to you and classmates about what they have found out and why they find it interesting. This will allow them to rehearse and refine ideas and to be supported to articulate orally what they might later share in writing.

- Tell the children that it would be a good idea for them to make their own information book about sharks to help others to learn these fascinating and, possibly, surprising shark facts.
- Build motivation by establishing an audience. Ask the children who they think would like to learn about sharks or should know more about them – maybe family members or children and teachers in other classes.
- Share with the children [how to make a simple origami book](#). The origami book has just two spreads to fill, as well as the front and back cover, which makes this an accessible kind of writing for young children.
- You can pre-make these for younger children or work alongside the children to demonstrate how to make these for themselves. This is a fantastic activity to develop concentration, listening stamina, comprehension and fine motor control, and gives children the skills to make a book for themselves to use for any kind of writing.
- When you have made your book, demonstrate how to use this to share shark facts through shared writing.
- You might begin with the title, copying ‘Surprising Sharks’ or choosing your own, for example: ‘Shark Facts’ or Terrific Tiger Sharks’, etc. adding it to the front cover and a title page. Then decide how to plan, write and illustrate each double-page spread with different facts or aspects of shark life.
- Model out loud how to come up with ideas for writing, vocalising your thought processes; how to take an incomplete idea and reframe it as a whole sentence, orally rehearsing this before transcribing it onto the page, drawing on phonic knowledge where appropriate to support segmentation for spelling.
- Reflect on the design you would like for the front and back cover, the title page and the endpapers, taking the children’s ideas for support.
- Children might go on to create their own shark books or work in small groups to create a spread each within a larger, collaborative book.
- When the books are complete, display these prominently in the book corner for children and adults to share together.

Word collecting, visualising through artwork, role play and dance: Shark behaviour

- Re-read the sentence that starts on page 17 and finishes on page 18: **‘But it isn’t the basic body plan that makes sharks sharks...it’s the sharkish way they behave!**
- Talk about what Nicola Davies means by this. *What do we think we know about sharks’ ‘sharkish ways’?* Scribe the children’s ideas.
- Now, play some footage of sharks in action, such as: [Thousands of Sharks Gathering | Blue Planet | BBC Earth](#) (Sharks enter at 2:16).
- Invite the children to share what they noticed about the way the sharks moved in the water and to emulate this through their own body movements, introducing language that helps you to describe what is observed in the sharks or the children’s movements, such as “gliding” or “circling”.
- Play the clip again and this time - as the children watch - ask them to sketch the sharks using charcoal, or chalk on blue paper. This medium will support the children to express and capture the

fluidity of the sharks' energy and movement without worrying about trying to draw the sharks themselves in detail.

- Play again, this time talking about words or phrases that come to mind to describe the sharks. This might include those you introduced earlier as well as familiar and other new vocabulary.
- Jot down the children's oral descriptions on strips of paper and share with the class, noting the onomatopoeic quality of lots of the words and how they enhance the meaning and imagery.
- Take the children into a large space, like the hall or outside and ask the children to co-ordinate themselves and move around the space and each other as if they were these sharks.
- Play a piece of music, such as [Camille Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals. Aquarium](#), and support the children in choreographing a group or class shark dance.
- As the groups to perform to the class, invite children to discuss anything they liked about the shark dances – what it makes them feel or think about sharks – before offering suggestions as to how they could be enhanced.
- Give the children time to rehearse and polish their dance for performance, perhaps helping them make simple props that signify aspects of their ocean habitat, like seaweed, or fellow sea creatures who may be their prey, like smaller fish, which could simply be created with juggling scarves or even paintings attached to hoops or sticks and incorporated into the choreography.

Responding to Poetry and Performance:

- Share the spread featuring Nicola Davies' poem, 'Sharks' from her book, *The First Book of the Sea*, illustrated by Emily Sutton (Walker):



- Begin with response to illustration, inviting the children's personal and immediate responses before asking them to read the illustration more closely for the details they notice; what they like or dislike about it and why it makes them feel this way; if it reminds them of anything; and if they have any questions.
- While you scribe the illustration with the children's responses and descriptions of what they see, take the opportunity to draw on their previous experiences, including their dance and anything

they have read or seen, to draw out vocabulary and ideas that are becoming familiar to the children and that will be encountered in the poem here; this might relate to the **slick, gliding** movement and **sleek shape** of each shark as it **slides through the shadows**, teeth bared as it **searches** for food.

- Now read aloud the poem to the children and encourage children to share their responses as they did the illustration. *What is the poem about? How does it make us feel about sharks? Why?*
- Read the poem again and ask the children to share which words and phrases they liked the sound of. Text mark these with a highlighter or felt-tip pen and read them aloud with the children's support. Emphasise the effect of the alliteration, assonance and repetition and the meaning it makes in your expressive reading.
- Reflect on the meaning and message in the poem. *Why does she say that we shiver when 'the slick shape of a shark slides through the shadows'? Why might she say that 'without that sleek shape the salt seas would be less – like the land without lions'?*
- Support the children to connect their growing knowledge of sharks with the message of the poem, for example that sharks are the top or **apex** predator, like lions or foxes or wolves, and that they help keep the numbers of fish balanced as well as eating up any dead fish which keeps the ocean clean and healthy. *What would happen if the top predator disappeared just because we were scared of them?*
- Support the children to work in small groups to work up a performance of this poem, deciding together which words and phrases, like those highlighted, they might emphasise through action, vocal or sound effects and even the use of percussion instruments. Encourage the children to work together to choreograph the performance so that they lift the language and meaning off the page, for example: they may read 'searching searching' as an echo but 'slides through the shadows' in menacing chorus; or they may gradually disappear as sharks and replace themselves as many more small fish, jostling for space in the absence of a predator.
- Invite the children to share performances with each other, talking about what they liked and what they think could make them even more effective, giving them time to polish their performance for a wider audience.

Re-reading and Revisiting, Looking at Language, Shared Writing, Performance and Publishing: Composing a shark poem

- Re-read Nicola Davies' poem 'Sharks' and revisit the children's responses and performances, relating them to their shark drawings, and the descriptions which you annotated onto strips of paper in the previous session. Read these aloud.
- Scribe any further descriptive language the children would like to add to the collection of strips. Ask the children to think of descriptions that they think might help people to like and admire sharks rather than be afraid of them. *What is special about sharks?*
- Demonstrate to the children how they can collect their descriptive words and phrases to create a collaborative free verse list poem. When you have a series of lines, look together at how these might be organised to flow best in a poem. Read the lines aloud to make decisions on how they could be organised and to see which lines work well together.

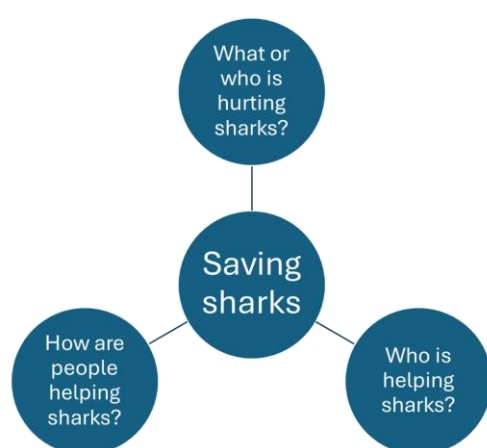
- You could add some poetic devices like alliteration or repetition for effect and re-read it to see which the children like best. *Which is most 'sharkish'?*
- Read the poem aloud, emphasising onomatopoeic words by modelling appropriate intonation. The children might join in if they recognise their contributions or remember specific phrases.
- Shared read the new poem together, encouraging the children to join in as they begin to learn the poem by heart.
- Children might want to work in groups to craft further shark poems, or one specific to their chosen shark, which they can polish to performance.
- Children can illustrate their new poems to be published in a class poetry anthology. This can be placed in the reading corner for the children to enjoy.
- Children can visit the reading corner or the library to browse the poetry books, looking for poems that they can add to a class anthology on a subject of interest to them.

Reading Aloud and Book Talk: Book recommendation

- Read aloud the whole book (main text only) from beginning to end on page 27.
- Reflect on how the book ends and the message it shares and invite initial responses. *Are you surprised by any of this? Why? why not?*
- Revisit and re-read the fact that '**every year people kill 100 million sharks.**' Before reading the labels on the spread which illustrate why and how this happens. *How does this make you feel and why?*
- Read the whole book again and invite the children's responses to the book as a whole through Book Talk:
Tell me :
 - *What did you like about this book? Why?*
 - *Is there anything you disliked? Why?*
 - *Do you still have questions? Does anything still puzzle you?*
 - *Does it remind you of any other books or anything else?*
- Scribe the children's responses in the class journal or on the working wall and begin to think about the form of the book and the way it is presented. You might compare it to other information texts on display and that the children used over the course of their research. *Do the children prefer illustration or photographs? What about films? Why? Why not?*
- You might talk about both the author's and illustrator's techniques for bringing facts to life through dramatic language, pictures and page turns as well as humour, in addition to being included as part of the book as a reader.
- Now think about Nicola Davies' reasons for writing this book about sharks and calling it 'Surprising Sharks'. *Why do you think she has written this book? What does she want us to learn about them? What do we know about sharks that we didn't know before? Have our feelings towards sharks changed since reading this book? How?*
- Children might write a short recommendation for the book to be displayed in the reading area or school library.

Shared and Independent Writing and Publishing: Raising awareness to save the shark

- Re-read the final two spreads in the book and talk about how sharks are threatened by people because they are misunderstood or because they are hunted. Invite the children to share any questions they have or anything they want to talk about. Add questions to the class enquiry grid to be researched together.
- You might draw on specific clips from [BBC Blue Planet Revisited Series 1: 1. A Shark's Tale](#) to support the children to grasp the concept of conservation, inspired by these final book spreads. The documentary is set in the Bahamas Shark Sanctuary and has an emphasis on conservation. **Please note, minutes 24:16-26:10 are inappropriate to share with young children as it involves sharks being killed and in distress. You will need to watch the whole film before showing it in class and ensure this section is not shown by anyone working with the children.**
- Clips that may be of particular interest for your own subject knowledge or to share with children:
 - (00:00-06:30) Introduction to sharks including the real statistics.
 - (26:13-30:42) Securing the future of sharks through shark tourism (featuring Tiger sharks)
 - (30:42-32:45) 'Sharks for Kids' conservation project
 - (42:53-46:46) Migration and the risk to sharks and the ecosystem by ocean warming (Black Tip Sharks)
 - (54:00-59:00) Summary – a message of hope and call to action to maintain a balanced food chain and ecosystem for all our sakes.
- As children watch a given clip, allow them to talk together about what interests them before sharing with the wider group. You might play it a few times if the children are interested, recording their observations and understanding of the dangers sharks face – and how and why people are trying to help sharks.
- You might use a visual organiser, like a mind-map, to help record what is being learned, for example:



- Have a letter arrive from a Pondicherry shark – one of the most endangered, potentially extinct sharks in the world – appealing to the children to help them by telling other people what they know about sharks and the danger that humans present to them.

- Reflect on everything that has been learned over the course of the sequence. *Do you think other people know what you know about sharks? What do we most need to tell them? How can we help them to admire sharks like we do? What kinds of facts should they know to help save them?*
- Agree with the children that we could share what we know to the school through an assembly or by creating an exhibition of our learning to which we could invite families and other classes. This could include a display of their information books, alongside other published books and information texts on sharks, as well as their poetry in print and as performance; their dances, diagrams and artwork.
- Gather the children's ideas about how they would like to present this and other aspects of their shark research for an audience. *What was fun or important about finding out about sharks? How can they make their presentation attractive, interactive and fun? How would they like to persuade others to attend their exhibition or assembly? How will they be surprised or amazed by sharks if they come along?*
- Organise the children into small groups with a similar interest and begin to think about what they would like to say, who they would like to tell and how best they could present their information.
- Allow children to express their ideas, reminding them of the purpose and their audience when helping them choose a suitable form, such as: a poster to persuade or explain; a food chain diagram with the shark as top predator; a model; a song or poem; a picturebook to create drama in the page turn; a lift the flap fact file to reveal hidden facts; a map on which children could mark shark habitats, using colour or images; a short film; or a book trailer to include voice recordings alongside image and text in the book; invitation to add names to the shark scale of scariness; a quiz to vote for a favourite shark.
- Through shared writing spend time guiding the children to create their chosen form, modelling oral and written composition and the use of images and illustration or presentation techniques, drawing on those observed and explored in this and other information texts.
- You can find examples of shark conservation texts and efforts to raise awareness through the following organisations:
 - [Save our sharks primary resource | National Geographic Kids](#)
 - [Oceanic 31](#) - raising awareness through art.
- When the children have completed their publication work, give them the opportunity to share their work with others in meaningful ways before bring it all together in a whole class presentation to a live audience. You might create shark-themed refreshments, such as [watermelon sharks](#).
- Children could use what they have learned about information texts to write about other subjects they are interested in using text and image in engaging ways.

Phonological Development

Early Phonological Awareness

There are opportunities to engage children in singing and joining in with counting and action rhymes and songs related to the theme of sharks, thereby developing awareness of rhyming patterns as well as having opportunity to gain a sense of rhythm and build body percussion skills:

- Children could sing [5 Little Sharks](#) (drawing on and to the tune of *Five Little Ducks*):

Five little sharks went swimming one day,
Over a wave and far away.
Mummy shark said,
“Chomp, chomp, chomp!”
But only four little sharks came back.

(Repeat until... ‘But none of her little sharks came back.’)

Sad mummy shark went swimming that day,
Over a wave and far away.
Mummy shark said,
“Chomp, chomp, chomp!”
And all of her little sharks came back!

- Children might enjoy joining in with and learning the action songs, [Sharky by Music Movement](#) or enjoy the shared experience of singing and dancing with peers to [Baby Shark \(Pinkfong\)](#)
- Children might enjoy the narrative in the song: [Scary Shark Song \(Mr Scullin’s Music Room\)](#)

Basic Code – Starter Sounds:

- fin, can, dog, big, pigs, man, not, at, get, lots, not, let, tip, kit, pit, mud, pop, rocks, pick, neck, box, six, bull, pull, gill, kill, fill, well, eggs
- habitat, goblin, pelvic

Basic Code – All Sounds:

- fish, shark, sharkish, sharp, dogfish, shellfish, shoot
- them, thin, thing, tooth
- long, along, thing, lung, killing,
- light, right, might
- tail, wait
- need, feed, feel, teeth, keep, see, seen, been, unseen, weeds
- tool, root, tooth, shoot, food, too
- look, book, blood
- turn, born, cork, air,
- killer, cutter, hammer, bigger, longer, shorter, monster, never, rubber, under, matter

Consonant Clusters:

- swell, spot, black, skin, scrap, from, grab, slit, plan, stuff, start, string, storm, sticks,
- hunt, sand, ends, and, fact, fast, help, just, held, bend, next, left, trail,
- shrimp, three, point, faint,
- front,
- basking, thresher, bendy, sharkskin

High frequency words:

- the, a, they, them, their, have, be, we, you, do, on, of, and, all, are, go, there, it, so, is, with, what, come, in, for, when, as, that, which

Subject Specific Vocabulary:

- tail, dorsal fin, pelvic fin, pectoral fin, gill slits, skin, teeth, jaws, skeleton, cartilage, nerve
- shape, size, length, measure, metre, centimetre, litre, temperature, small, smaller, smallest, long, longer, longest, large, larger, largest
- ocean, sea, tide, plankton, prey, predator