

ABOUT ERIC CARLE



Eric Carle is the creator of brilliantly illustrated and innovatively designed picture books for very young children. His best-known work, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, has eaten its way into the hearts of literally millions of children all over the world and has been translated into more than 47 languages. Eric Carle has illustrated more than seventy books, most of which he also wrote.



CHILDHOOD

Eric Carle was born in Syracuse, New York, in 1929. From a very young age, he loved to draw and always dreamed of being an artist. "As far back as I can remember, he shares," I enjoyed drawing pictures and I knew then that I would always draw. When I had grown to the age when kids are asked what they'd do 'when they had grown up,' I always answered that I would draw pictures, be an artist, be a scribbler. It always felt good to work with pencil, paints, crayons and paper."

EDUCATION AND EARLY CAREER

When Eric Carle was six years old, he moved with his parents to Germany. He was educated there, and graduated from Akademie der bildenden Künste, the art school in Stuttgart.

In 1952, with a fine portfolio in hand and forty dollars in his pocket, he arrived in New York. Soon he found a job as a graphic designer in the promotion department of The New York Times. Later, he was the art director of an advertising agency for many years.

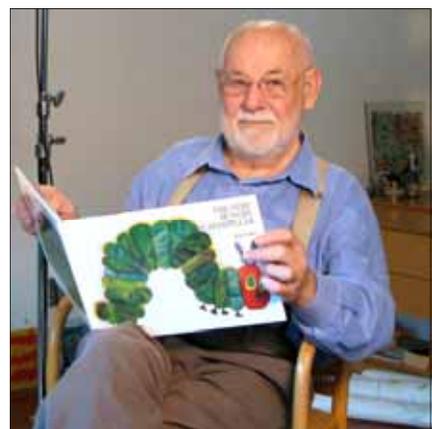
One day, respected educator and author, Bill Martin Jr., called and asked Carle to illustrate a story he had written. Martin's eye had been caught by a striking picture of a red lobster that Carle had created for an advertisement. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* was the result of their collaboration. This was the beginning of Eric Carle's true career.

COLLAGE STYLE

Eric Carle's art work is created in collage technique, using hand-painted papers, which he cuts and layers to form bright and cheerful images. Children often send him pictures they have made themselves which were inspired by Carle's illustrations. He receives hundreds of letters each week from his young admirers.

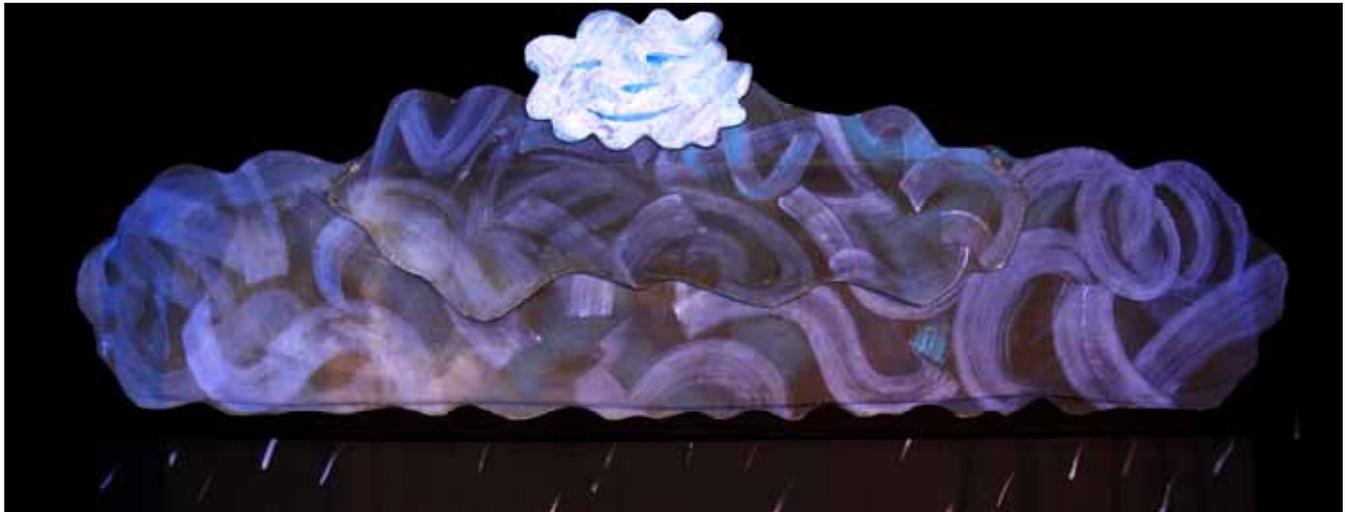
APPEAL TO CHILDREN

The secret of Carle's books' appeal lies in his intuitive understanding of and respect for children, who sense in him someone who shares their most cherished thoughts and emotions.



Eric Carle with one of his most popular books, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Images courtesy of eric-carle.com.

VOCABULARY



ART & THEATER TERMS

Black light:

invisible ultraviolet light or lamp that radiates black light. Switch one on and white clothes, teeth, and other brightly colored things glow in the dark, while the bulb itself only emits faint purple light.



Special black-light bulbs.
Image: thewitness23.blogspot.com



Collage: art where materials, such as papers, are pasted and layered onto a surface. Eric Carle's collages are made of painted papers.

Painted papers.
Image: lorrieabdo.blogspot.com

Puppetry: an art form in which objects, often with human or animal characteristics, are brought to life by puppeteers.



Puppeteer with the 'Caterpillar' puppet.
Image: elizabethkann.com

SHOW TERMS

Butterfly:

a type of insect that usually has a slender body, knobbed antennae, and four broad wings that are often colorful.



Image: minuet.dance.ohio-state.edu



A caterpillar spends most of its time eating so that it can grow.

Image: lynhoopes.com

chameleon:

a type of lizard characterized by its ability to change color.



A chameleon sitting on a branch.
Image: cites.org



Image: blog.cymtec.com

cloud: a visible body of very fine water droplets or ice particles suspended high in the air.

Cocoon:

a protective casing that a caterpillar encloses itself in while it transforms into a butterfly.



Stages of a cocoon or chrysalis.
Image: Imagine-change.com

Egg: tiny, round object that a female butterfly attaches to leaves or other objects near the caterpillar's food. It contains the baby caterpillar.



A Monarch egg.
Image: kidsbutterfly.org



Image: not-at-school.blogspot.com

metamorphosis:

a change of the form and physical appearance of an animal. Frogs and butterflies are metamorphic.

water cycle:

sequence in which water is recycled as it turns to water vapor, condenses into clouds, and then falls back to earth as rain, sleet, or snow.

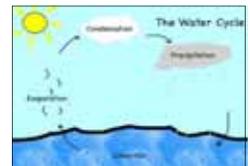


Image: heightstechnology.edublogs.org

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

1) CREATE A COLLAGE

Goal: To understand Eric Carle's illustration technique.

Explanation: In this activity, students will create an Eric Carle-style collage by painting papers, cutting shapes, and gluing.

Materials:

- Drawing paper
- Paint brushes
- Tempera paint in primary colors
- Tools to create texture, such as Legos, sponges, forks, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue

Preparation:

Have students watch a short video of Eric Carle painting papers and creating a collage. Examples may be found on Eric Carle's official website (eric-carle.com) or check your school library for the video [Eric Carle: Picture Writer](#).

Activity:

1. Have students begin by painting an entire sheet of drawing paper with water.
2. Next, have students paint the paper a primary color using long horizontal strokes. Students should paint quickly so that the papers stay wet.
3. Students may overlap another primary color on their paper to make secondary colors (purple, green, orange).
4. Students may add texture by using a tool to dab, scrape, etc.

5. Once the papers are completely dry, invite students to cut them into shapes.

6. Students then arrange shapes into a picture and glue them to a thicker sheet of paper.

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What colors were you able to create when you mixed different paints?
2. What sorts of textures do you see in Eric Carle's illustrations? What shapes?

Story Mural Extension:

Create a story mural as a class. Using one of Eric Carle's books as inspiration, decide on a story or pattern that you would like to use for your class story. (For instance, a *Very Hungry Caterpillar* story mural could have students create different foods for the caterpillar to eat in sequence.)

Before painting, decide as a class which food(s) each student will make, decide on the colors they will need, and talk about what shapes they will need to cut. Use Carle's illustrations as examples.



Eric Carle-inspired story mural created by students at Perkins Elementary during a residency with teaching artist Jan Louise Kusske.

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2



Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser.

2) FROM EGG TO BUTTERFLY

Goal: To understand the life cycle of a butterfly and practice sequencing.

When: Before the performance

Explanation: Students will learn about the life cycle of the butterfly, including the egg, caterpillar, cocoon, and butterfly stages .

Activity:

1. Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle aloud to the class.
2. Go through each of the stages of a butterfly's life cycle with the students:
 - 1) Egg
 - 2) Caterpillar (Larva)
 - 3) Cocoon (Pupa)
 - 4) Adult Butterfly
3. Ask the students to compare and contrast what they learn with what they read in the book.
4. Last, provide students with pictures of each of the stages of the butterfly's life. Ask them to write or give an explanation of what is happening in each picture and place the pictures in sequence

Follow-up Questions:

1. How is the life cycle of the butterfly the same as in Eric Carle's book? How is it different?
2. What do caterpillars really eat?

3) CHAMELEON CAMOUFLAGE

Goal: To explore the concept of camouflage for survival and protection.

When: Before the performance

Explanation: Students will learn about the concept of camouflage and why it is important for protection.

Activity:

1. Read *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* by Eric Carle aloud to the class.
2. Explain the concept of camouflage to your students and how different animals use camouflage to protect themselves from predators.
3. Make several transparent chameleon cutouts using a double sheet of contact paper or other appropriate material and hide them around the room for students to find.
4. Go a step further and provide students with paper cutouts of chameleons so they can create their own camouflage patterns using crayons, colored pencils, or paints.
5. Then ask the students to hide their chameleons around the room on various items and surfaces.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Were you able to spot the chameleons hiding around the room?
2. What challenges did you face in creating your chameleon? Would your chameleon have been protected from a predator?

POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT, pg. 2



2) ACTING OUT A STORY

Goal: To use drama and imagination to demonstrate comprehension of a story.

When: After the performance

Explanation: In this activity, students will use drama and their imaginations to re-tell an Eric Carle story.

Activity:

1. Read a book by Eric Carle aloud to the class.
2. As a class, brainstorm the characters in the story.
3. As a class, determine the plot or sequence of main events.
4. Break up the story into small segments and assign each segment to a group of 3-4 students.
5. Students then create tableau (frozen picture that tells a story) of their assigned moment in the story. Together, students may represent the characters, objects, or setting of their assigned moment.
6. All groups then show their tableau in front of the class in the order of the story.
7. Once a group is “frozen,” tap students on the shoulder one at a time. When a student has been tapped, they should “unfreeze” and briefly describe who they are and what they are doing in the scene.

Follow-up Questions:

1. How would you describe the character or object you played?
2. What happened at the beginning of the story? In the middle? At the end?
3. How did you feel when you were depicting your tableau for the class?

3) RE-TELL THE STORY WITH PUPPETS

Goal: To practice sequencing and story-telling.

When: After the performance

Explanation: Students will re-tell the story of *Little Cloud* using simple puppets.

Sequencing Activity:

1. Print copies of the characters on pages 15-16 onto blue cardstock with colored ink.
2. Carefully cut out the different characters. (You may wish to laminate.)
2. Attach a popsicle stick to the back of each figure to turn it into a simple rod puppet.
3. Invite students to manipulate the puppets as they re-tell the story of *Little Cloud*.
4. Next, invite the students to make up their own story using the cloud puppets and perform it for the class.

Follow-up Question:

1. How does using a puppet help you to use your imagination?
2. How was the story you re-told of *Little Cloud* like the performance you saw from Mermaid Theatre? How was it different?
3. What choices did you make with your puppets to create your own story? Why did you make those choices?
4. What other shapes/objects could you make to use as cloud puppets?

PUPPET REPRODUCIBLE (use with Assessment Activity 3, pg. 14)



PUPPET REPRODUCIBLE (use with Assessment Activity 3, pg. 14)



RESOURCES AND SOURCES

ERIC CARLE BOOKS

(Not a complete listing)

- *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do You See?*
- *1, 2, 3 to the Zoo*
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
- *Pancakes, Pancakes!*
- *The Tiny Seed*
- *Feathered Ones and Furry*
- *Do You Want to Be My Friend*
- *Rooster's Off to See the World*
- *Do Bears Have Mothers Too?*
- *Have You Seen My Cat?*
- *I See a Song*
- *Why Noah Chose the Dove*
- *The Mixed-Up Chameleon*
- *The Grouchy Ladybug*
- *The Honeybee and the Robber*
- *The Very Busy Spider*
- *The Foolish Tortoise*
- *The Greedy Python*
- *The Mountain that Loved a Bird*
- *All Around Us*
- *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*
- *A House for Hermit Crab*
- *Animals Animals*
- *The Very Quiet Cricket*
- *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?*
- *Dragons Dragons*
- *Draw Me a Star*
- *Today is Monday*
- *The Very Lonely Firefly*
- *Little Cloud*
- *From Head to Toe*
- *Hello, Red Fox*
- *The Very Clumsy Click Beetle*
- *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?*
- *Dream Snow*
- *"Slowly, Slowly, Slowly," said the Sloth*
- *Mister Seahorse*
- *The Artist who Painted a Blue Horse*

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Print Materials:

Carle, Eric. *The Art of Eric Carle*. Philomel: 1992. *Includes an autobiography, photographs, essays and critical appreciations of his work, and reproductions of many illustrations.*



Videos:

Eric Carle: Picture Writer. Produced by Searchlight Films, Director: Rawn Fulton. 1993.

Interview with Eric Carle; demonstration of paper painting and collage.

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar—Book Trailer." Scholastic Kids. *Carle discusses the inspiration for the story and shows how he makes a caterpillar collage.*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WELWxC0oQDY>

Websites:

The Caterpillar Exchange: <http://eric-carle.com/catexchange.html>
Bulletin board where teachers can exchange Eric Carle ideas.

The Children's Butterfly Site: <http://www.kidsbutterfly.org>
Student-friendly pictures and descriptions of the butterfly life cycle.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art: <http://www.carlemuseum.org/>

Eric Carle, Official Website: <http://www.eric-carle.com/>

Water Cycle Diagram:

<http://earthguide.ucsd.edu/earthguide/diagrams/watercycle/>

Life of a Monarch Butterfly:

<http://www.neok12.com/Metamorphosis.htm>

Time lapse video from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

The Children's Butterfly Site:
<http://www.kidsbutterfly.org>

Kids Entertainment, Official Website.
<http://kidsentertainment.net/>

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, Official Website.
<http://www.mermaidtheatre.ns.ca/repertory/treasures.shtml>

