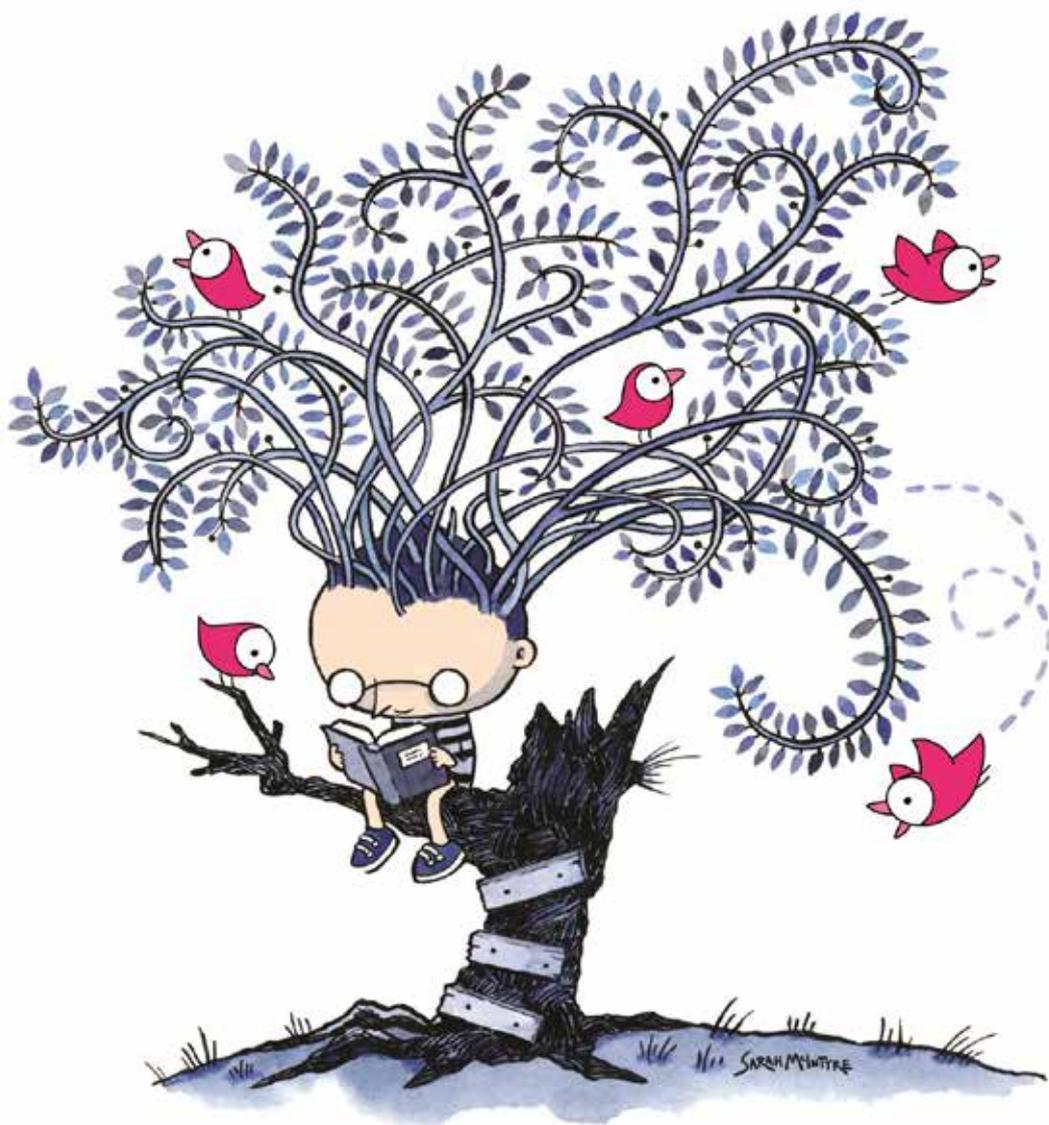


Just Imagine Book Guide

Zoo

Anthony Browne



Just Imagine...

About the Author



Anthony Browne

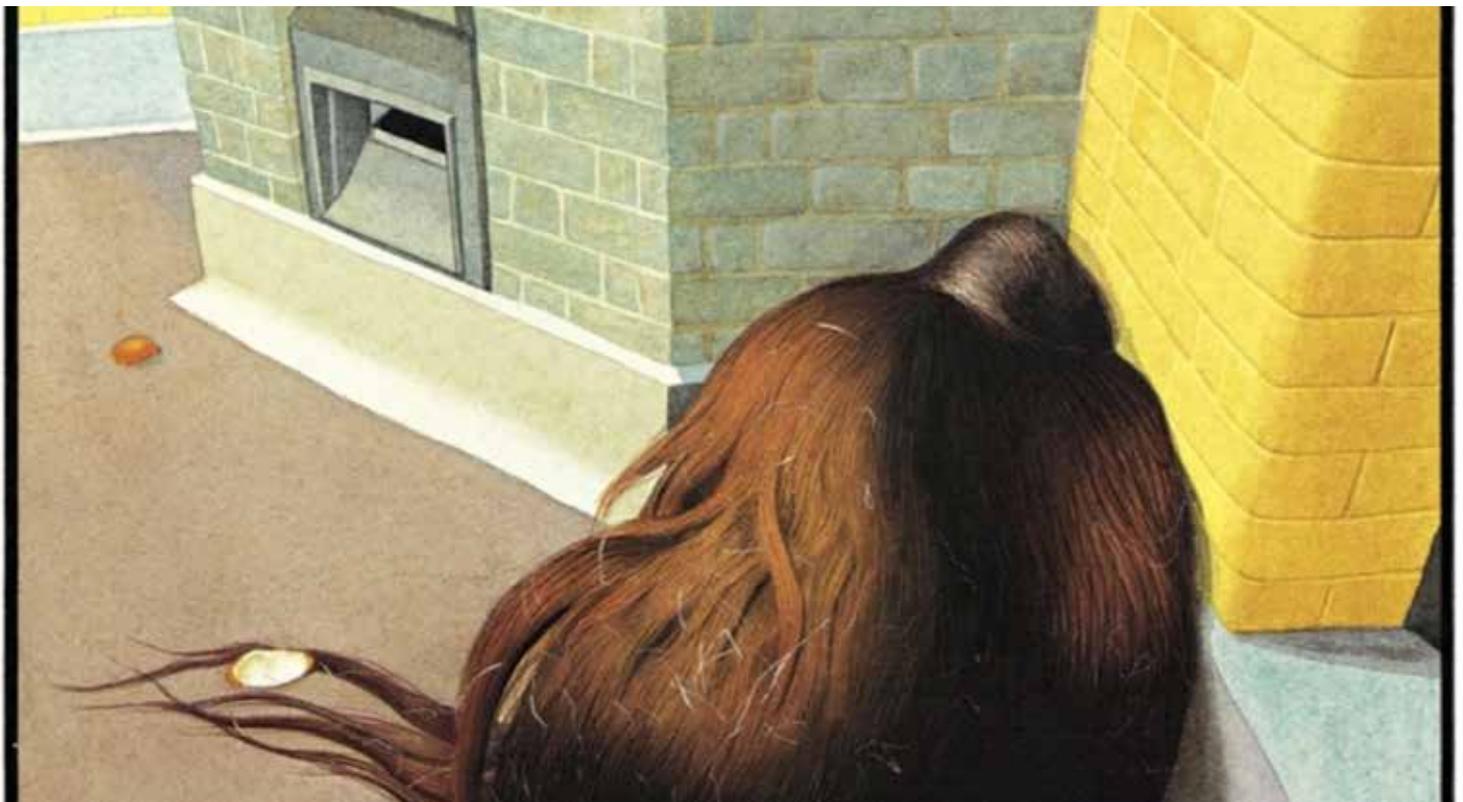
Anthony Browne grew up in Yorkshire, and wanted to be a journalist, a cartoonist, or a boxer. He is now the award-winning author/illustrator of over 30 books, and was Children's Laureate for 2009-2011. In 2000 Browne was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Medal, an international award given to an illustrator for their body of work. This prize is the highest honour a children's writer or illustrator can win and Browne was the first British illustrator to receive the award.

About the Book

Giant, boorish Dad and quiet, isolated Mum along with their two bored, squabbling sons spend a day at the zoo, looking at animals in their cages. Could the unhappy animals be watching them and who exactly is trapped: the animals or the humans?

This is a bitingly satirical book, based on Anthony Browne's childhood memories, which won the Kate Greenaway Award in 1993. *Zoo* remains a source of contemplation and debate for all ages. With a seemingly simple text, it allows readers to delve beyond the obvious and think about human behaviour, animal rights and the role of zoos in society. Indeed, Browne's illustrations, provide an ironic counterpoint to the seemingly objective text. *Zoo* provides a commentary on family, captivity and freedom, and of course specifically the relevance of zoos to contemporary society.

This is an important classroom resource and a classic which demonstrates the power and depth picture books can offer readers of all ages.



Before Reading



Anthony Browne

The children may already be familiar with Anthony Browne's books. Invite them to share what they already know about the author and his work.

Set up a display of Anthony Browne's books in the classroom. Justimaginstorycentre.co.uk has an author study set, if you need to supplement your collection.

Making connections

Have a preliminary discussion. Find out whether the children have ever visited a zoo.

- What do you know about zoos?
- Have you ever been to the zoo? What did you see?
- What was your favourite animal?
- Why do zoos exist? (Encourage a range of views and list them on the IWB).

During Reading

First encounters

Cover the title of the book. Ask the children what they think the title might be and why. Reveal the title.

What do they think the story will be about?

Allow some time for the children to explore the book up to the page where the family find the gorilla. You can use a paperclip to secure the pages so the children don't read past this page. If it is possible for the children to have their own copy, they can read at their own pace and write down their responses.

- Is there anything that puzzles them about the book?
- Do they have any questions?
- Is there an image they like or dislike?

Use the children's questions to initiate a discussion – they will be more engaged if it is something they are genuinely interested in. Some questions might be answered easily, whilst others may need to be explored at a later date or after further exploration of the book.

At all stages, invite the children to share their ideas and responses. Avoid asking too many leading or closed questions. The prompts below are merely intended to be used as supplementary questions. Please select or adapt the questions which you think are most appropriate for the children you are working with. They will ask and answer many of their own questions if they are encouraged to look closely at the pictures and discuss their ideas.

As this is a picture book where the images carry meaning, it is important to invite the children to examine them carefully. Encourage them to look for subtle details. You could even encourage the children to use a magnifying glass or photocopy.

Picture reveal

One approach to encourage the children to focus on details is to mask the picture, revealing a small but significant detail. Ask the children, 'What can you see?'. Working in pairs, ask them to think about what the rest of the picture might show. Share ideas with the class and then reveal the image. What purpose does the small detail serve in helping us to understand the complete picture?



If required you could look at several details before looking at the whole picture.

The language of pictures

During reading, encourage the children to pay attention to:

- Page layout (How are the double page spread's presented? What is positioned on the left and what is on the right? How do the text and images relate to each other?)
- How the illustrations are framed (line frames, no frame, bleed to the edge).
- The use of colour to depict the humans and animals, including the range and types of colours used (saturated or unsaturated colour, flat colour, tone etc).
- The facial expression and body language of the humans and animals
- Gaze (Where are the animals and humans looking? What meaning do you ascribe to this?)
- Composition (the focal point of the image, position, use of space).
- Scale of the images. Which things are large and which are small?

Speech and thought

- How is direct thought and speech presented?
- Try rewriting so that the speech is reported in the narrative. How does it affect the story?

Page 1: my family

Invite the children to share their responses to this page. The page is particularly interesting in terms of layout – the family are separate, sectioned off from one another, each with an ominous shadow looming behind them. Questions might include:

- Do you think this is a happy family?
- What do you notice about Dad?
- What do you notice about the colours used to depict Mum?
- Who do you think has most power in this family! Why do you think that?

Encourage the children to examine the simple, yet effective, language, especially the verbs used to describe Dad – roared, snarled, snorted etc. Make a list and add to them as you read the book.

Page 2: jam

This is a very busy, noisy page. Encourage the children to examine it carefully and discuss any of the details find interesting. They may notice the flying snail, the angry lorry driver, the banana motif or the man's face in the back of the car.

Questions might include:

- Have you ever been stuck in a traffic jam? What did you do? How did you feel?
- Where's Mum? Why is she hidden?
- What do you notice about the lorry driver?
- Dad makes a joke about 'jam'. How does this joke work? Introduce the term 'pun', if new to the children. Can you think of any other words (homonyms) that have more than one meaning?



Page 3: ticket booth

Is there anything strange or puzzling on this page? Children may notice the lizard feet or the man's beaked nose.

Questions might include:

What is the difference in meaning between, 'Dad had a row with the man in the ticket booth' and 'Dad **had** to have a row with the man in the ticket booth'? Make explicit the point that the inclusion of what may appear to be insignificant words can subtly affect interpretation.

- What do you notice about the man selling tickets?
- How do you know the boy is embarrassed?
- What does, 'He's five-and-a-half *actually*' imply about Dad and what the boy thinks of him?

Page 4 and 5: the elephant

Invite the children to share their thoughts about this spread. They may notice the strange appearance of the humans lining up at the bars of the cage (e.g the striped leggings, the fur coat, the leopard print jacket).

Use the 'Think-Pair-Share' approach to get children to discuss their ideas.

After discussing the children's initial ideas, follow-up prompts might include:

- What is Harry doing?
- How do Mum and Dad's responses differ?
- Why do you think the 'Come **DOWN** you little rat-bag!' speech bubble comes out of the frame?
- What do you notice about the boy and the father?

What do you notice about the elephant? Consider the colours used in this illustration. Why do you think Anthony Browne has chosen not to show the elephant's face?

Page 6 and 7: the giraffes

Dad looms particularly large in this spread, towering over us in anger. The giraffes seem to be hiding, camouflaged and irrelevant.

Questions might include:

What do you notice about Dad? How is he drawn? How is Dad framed? Why do you think he seems to be almost bursting out of the frame?

- Has an adult ever said to you, 'Because I say so'? How did you feel?
- What do you notice about the clouds?
- What does the verb 'whined' tell you about Harry's feelings?
- What do you notice about the colours used for the giraffes?
- What do you notice about the tree in the giraffe enclosure?



Pages 8 and 9: the tigers

Encourage the children to discuss what they see by making a frame with their hands and moving it over the images.

Questions might include:

- What do you notice about the body language of the boys and Dad?
- What does 'One of them was just walking along a wall of the cage, then turning round and walking all of the way back' suggest about how the tiger is feeling?
- How do Mum and Dad's responses to the tiger differ?
- How many tigers are there? Look carefully! (what does the shadow of the tiger suggest?)

Pages 10 and 11: the rhino

Have you ever had an argument with your brother or sister? Why? What happened?

The rhino image is particularly interesting in terms of how Anthony Browne has used line. The vertical lines suggest a lack of movement and accentuate the height of the enclosure. The boys, however, seem also to be caged in by a series of vertical lines behind them – are they inside or outside a cage? What could these lines represent?

Follow-prompts might include:

- Who do you think has started the fight?
- Why are the boys fighting?
- What is the different between Dad saying 'Get off!' and 'Off!'
- What colours are used to depict the rhino?
- Can you describe the rhino's enclosure? It is very barren and stark.

Pages 12 and 13: the penguins

Invite the children to discuss and share their ideas about this spread.

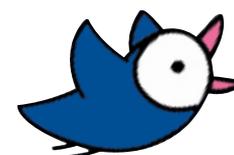
- Consider how Dad is portrayed.
- Is he funny or a figure to make fun of?
- Discuss Mum's response to Dad's joke.



It would be interesting here to compare David Hockney's depiction of water in 'A Bigger Splash' (1967) with Anthony Browne's portrayal of the water in the penguin enclosure. Put the two pieces side by side. What do the children notice? Hockney's water is bright, crisp, exciting and exotic but Browne's water is dark, thick, murky – almost as if something sinister is lurking beneath.

Follow-up prompts might include:

- How do you think the penguins are feeling? Why do you think that?
- Why do you think there are three penguins huddled in a corner?
- What can you see in the top right hand corner of the image?
- Why are none of the penguins swimming in the water?



Pages 14 and 15: the polar bear

Questions might include:

- Look at the boys' facial expressions. What do you notice?
- How has colour been used in this page? Look carefully at the background behind the two brothers.
- Why do you think Anthony Browne has given the boys monkey hats?

- What do you notice about the facial expression of the polar bear? How does it differ from the two boys?
- What do you notice about the water? Choose three adjectives to describe it.
- Does the polar bear's home look inviting and stimulating?
- Which other animal was walking 'up and down, up and down'? Why do you think animals do this?

Pages 16 and 17: the baboons

Invite the children to discuss anything they find amusing or interesting in this spread. These images are interesting in so much as we finally see Mum, close up. Why has Anthony Browne waited until now to do this? What do you think she is thinking and feeling? If each member of the family were one of the baboons, which one would Mum be and why? What about Dad?

Questions might include:

- Why do you think the boys are fighting now?
- What do you notice the two smaller baboons are doing as the larger one screams and bares its sharp teeth? Does this remind you of anything?
- What do you notice about the use of water colour underneath the baboons?

Pages 18 and 19: the orang-utan

Invite the children to look carefully at the humans, banging on the glass. This is an interesting set of images – are the humans outside the cage, or inside, desperately trying to get out?

Questions might include:

- What do you notice about the humans? What do you think Anthony Browne is trying to say about zoos?
- Why isn't Mum joining in?
- How might the orang-utan be feeling?
- Why can't we see the orang-utan's face?
- What clues are there about how well the orang-utan has been looked after? Look carefully at its fur.
- How does this enclosure differ from the others?

Pages 20 and 21: the gorilla

After the children have shared their initial ideas, supplementary prompts might include:

- How is this first image framed? How is the second image framed?
- How does the framing affect how you view the picture? What do you notice about the setting surrounding the family – the bars, the brick wall etc?
- Who is your eye drawn to in the first picture? How has Anthony Browne represented Dad? Look at his facial expression and bodily gestures-what do you notice?
- How do you think Mum is feeling?
- Why do you think 'Hey! Look at THAT one!' comes out of the frame? What effect does it have on the volume of what the boy is saying?
- Can the gorilla hear him?
- What do you think the gorilla is feeling and thinking? Why?
- What colours are used for the gorilla? How do they differ to the colours used for the family?
- What do you notice about how you look at the gorilla's face? What parts are you drawn to? (the eyes and mouth) Why do you think the gorilla is depicted as being so large?
- Do you think the family have learnt anything from their trip to the zoo? Use evidence from the text.

Pages 22 and 23: strange dream

Discuss the final two images.

- Is the boy at the zoo, sitting outside the cage, bored and waiting?
- Or is he in a cage?
- How is he feeling?
- What do you notice about the colour used for his clothes in this picture compared to the colour in other pictures?

After Reading

- Look at the inside cover again. Why do you think Anthony Browne has chosen to picture a hamster on this page? Hamsters are not usually associated with zoos.
- Reread the book – what do you notice about the boys? They seem to always be trying to break free – climbing over railings, bursting out of their frame, banging on cages. Who or what are they trying to escape?
- Explore Anthony Browne's question: Do you think animals have dreams? What might they dream of?
- How are Mum and the animals similar?
- What does Anthony Browne think of zoos?

Debating

Draw up a list of the positive and negative effects of zoos. Research the arguments that are given for and against zoos. Take part in a class debate entitled, 'Should zoos be banned?'

Explore animal stories

Encourage the children to read and explore a range of other animal themed books, such as *Ginger Finds a Home* by Charlotte Voake, *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry, *The Forgotten Rabbit* by Nancy Furstinger, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B White, *Ice Bear* by Nicola Davies, or a range of poems by Judith Nicholls. How do these authors deal with our treatment of animals and the earth?

Animal movement

In P.E, get the children thinking about animal movements and how they can use their own bodies, space, direction, dynamics, speed and different levels of height to compose a sequence of movements and dance to illustrate the way animals prowl, slither, climb and gallop.

Mapping the zoo

Give the children an A3 piece of squared paper. Ask them to work in groups to design a layout for a zoo, with a list of animals and the required size of their enclosures. See who can fit in the most animals while keeping a path for visitors. Challenge the children by encouraging them to use a variety of compound and irregular shapes, as well as rectangles and squares. Can they find the area and perimeter of each enclosure?

Price of admission

Look at a local zoo's website; look at the price of admission and the prices of food and drink being sold. Write some word problems about different people and families visiting the zoo e.g. How much does it cost for a family of two adults and two children to visit the zoo? How much change will they get from £100?

Pocket Zoo

This is an app which allows the children to explore a virtual zoo, as it links to live webcams from zoos around the world. The children can look at pictures, research facts about the animals, learn about their habitat and even watch the zookeepers feed, clean and interact with the animals.

Art

Introduce the children to the paintings, prints and sculptures by Josh Keyes. Josh Keyes is a contemporary artist concerned with how urban sprawl has damaged our natural surroundings and the negative repercussions it has had on the animals of the world, especially orcas. Have the children create their own artwork in the style of Keyes using mixed media and maybe even an ICT package to edit digital photography.

Writing

Write a discursive article about the positive and negative impacts of zoos on animals.

Write a persuasive leaflet, encouraging people to visit your local zoo.

Photocopy some of the images of the animals and add in thought bubbles to show how the animals are feeling about their life in the zoo.

Write a story about a dream an animal might have.

Write an exciting sci-fi story where humans are kept in cages by animals. How will it end?

If you enjoyed this story, you might like...

Anthony Browne *Piggy Book*

Anthony Browne *Voices in the Park*

Nicola Davies *King of the Sky*

Tom Clohosey Cole *The Wall*