

WHAT'S NEW

# Harper DREW?



READING  
NOTES  
AND  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR KS2

KATHY WEEKS

*Illustrated by Aleksei Bitskoff*

# WHAT'S NEW Harper DREW?

## READING NOTES AND ACTIVITIES FOR KS2

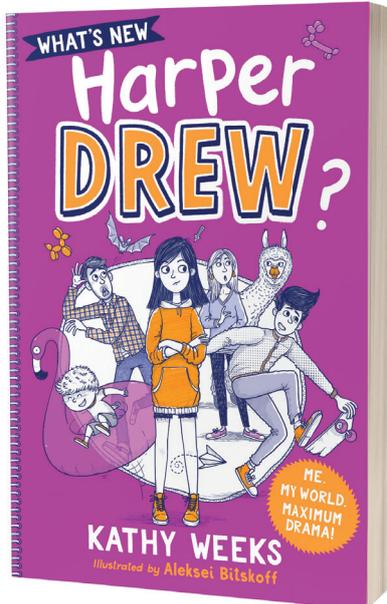
Suitable for: Ages 9+

**Includes:** Visual extracts from the book + corresponding reading questions and activities

**Themes Checklist:** ✓ Diary Writing ✓ Comedy Writing ✓ Funny Illustrations  
✓ Comedy Performances!

### About the book

Welcome to the hilarious WORLD of Harper Drew... there's a whole lot of DRAMA, but luckily she has tried and tested methods to deal with it! Perfect for fans of Dork Diaries.



My name is Harper Drew. I'm using my new journal to take note of all the totally ridiculous things that seem to go on around me with my family and friends. I seem to be the ONLY ONE who sees all of this for what it is. Completely BEYOND normal.

Recently I've been logging Drew Dial Ratings for all the mayhem. On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely is someone to SAY or DO something that would be less sensible than (for example) ... an out-of-control camel?

First up is the annual Drew trip to France ... and while there might not be camels, there are bats and llamas – and my brother Troy who is so obsessed with his hairstyle, he won't even go swimming ... that's a whole lot of ratings. I'm just hoping I land an invite to Maisie Felix's party when I'm back to distract me from the Drews ... for one whole evening!

The start of a relatable new illustrated series – all about embracing your family, and finding unique ways to deal with life's dramas.

# Resource Pack

## Objectives & Outcomes

### 1. Dear Diary Pages 20–22

**Reading Focus:** Understand how diaries are presented and sequenced; identify the purpose of diary writing.

**Outcome:** A creative journal to inspire future writing tasks.

### 2. Finding the Funny Pages 126–127

**Reading Focus:** Understand the importance of style, tone and language choices in writing; use comedic techniques to exaggerate a descriptive scene.

**Outcome:** A description of an everyday event to make it funny.

### 3. Comedy Club Part 1 Pages 211–216

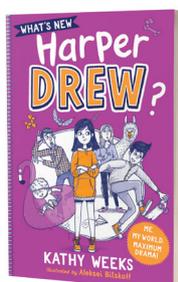
**Reading Focus:** Identify some of the features of comedy sketches and comedy writing.

**Outcome:** A script for a comedy sketch based on an event from the journals.

### 4. Comedy Club Part 2

**Reading Focus:** Perform a comedy sketch using some of the techniques used in the book.

**Outcomes:** A small group performance of a comedic scene; an evaluation of each other's work.



# Dear Diary

Read the following diary entry from *What's New, Harper Drew?*

27 July

## THE DOWNSTAIRS CARPET

12 p.m.

After the birthday nightmare I wasn't sure that I would write anything more in here.



But I have been thinking about it, and maybe Maisie does have a point with this journal. Because quite often . . . I **DO** . . . **HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON**. Like I am living in a world full of chaos and mayhem. Surrounded by people doing bizarre things that don't make **ANY** sense. **At all**. And I can't understand why I seem to be the **ONLY ONE** who sees all of this for what it is. Completely **BEYOND** normal.

So I am going to write some of this stuff down. **HERE**. As a record of all of the **mayhem** and **eye-rolls** and **head-screams** (you know, where you want to **SCREAM OUT LOUD**, but that will only  **make the chaos worse, so you SCREAM in your mind instead**).

Because I reckon that with a journal of these things that are happening all around me, I will be able to look back after I have stopped **head-screaming** (and my eyes have returned from my eyebrows) and **check whether . . . it really is just me?**

And if I ever need to, I can show this journal to someone else. For a second opinion. And then they can be the judge of whether they agree with my **DREW DIAL RATINGS** . . .

So I started with the birthday incident and thinking about it again did make me feel quite sorry for my dad. He has been pretty down the last few days and keeps apologising for ruining my birthday. He even spelt out the word  'sorry' using animal modelling balloons.

It took **25 balloons** which he says is the most he has ever used since he taught himself how to do them (when he recreated the whole of Noah's Ark in balloon animals

for Troy's first birthday). So Dad must be **REALLY** sorry. After all, he only borrowed the minibus for the Laser Force trip, and now he is down £652, which is how much it'll cost to fix the passenger window and replace the ticket barrier. Dad hoped it would be covered on the insurance . . . but it isn't. Apparently 'being a terrible driver' isn't something they'll pay for.

I don't I think I'll be going to Laser Force again any time soon . . . we are banned from the car park anyway.

And getting a new downstairs carpet is off.

- When was this diary entry written?
- Why do you think some words are written in bold or in different fonts?
- Is this piece of writing supposed to be formal or informal? Give examples of words or phrases which helped you decide.
- Give an example of where Harper has shared her feelings.

# Activity

Collect ideas, events, and feelings to write a diary entry of your own!  
To get started, find a plain notebook or fold plain paper in half to create one.

Write down any notable events or emotions that occur during the day – especially anything funny! It may be tricky at first but you'll soon get used to it.

It's a great way to become more confident as a writer.

Over the course of the next few days or week, add notes, doodles, and details to the following:

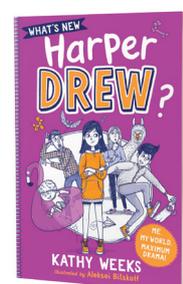
- An 'About Me' page
  - Jar of Laughs
- Daily journal pages

Fill out the All About Me circle with things about you!

Why not start with your name and age, then add some of your favourite things?

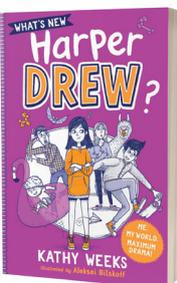


Ask an adult to help you cut around the above shape and stick it into your notebook! Alternatively, create your own 'All About Me' page in your own design directly in your notebook.



Fill out the Jar of Laughs with anything that has made you laugh! Think of funny things people have said or done and add them to your jar.

For example *'My sister sang a funny song!'*



# Daily Journal

Have a go at recording your day in a diary entry!  
You can use the below boxes as a guide.

## What I Did Today

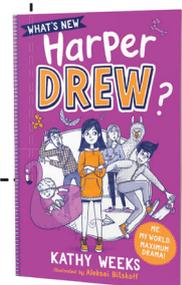
## Weather

## Cringe Rating

## Funny Rating

## Best of the Day

## Tomorrow I'm...



# Finding the Funny

Read the following diary entry from *What's New, Harper Drew?*

3.45 p.m.

Now we're back in the car, I thought I would explain . . . It all started when my dad ran to the lake with the lilo under his arm. He looked like he had been born ready for this moment.

My dad had made it to a kneel, like last year, but it looked as if he was much steadier this time. Yes, he was gearing up for the final manoeuvre up to his feet, smiling wildly, waving at my mum . . . and then the lilo **EXPLODED**. And my dad sank – straight down with the lilo folding around him

like a sandwich on both sides. It was like watching a giant sinking hotdog.



The lifeguard got very excited. I can only think that he hadn't had anything to do for a few days because he mounted a rescue mission that would have been more appropriate for a national emergency than a deflated lilo. **(DREW DIAL RATING 8.8/10)**

He ordered everyone out of the water with his (*very*) loudhailer. Then he put on a questionable swimming hat and dived in to rescue my dad with what looked very like a small inflatable lilo (*really?*).

By the time the lifeguard got to the middle of the lake, my dad had resurfaced and was happily treading water. But this lifeguard wasn't giving up. He got my dad in some kind of headlock and started towing him by the neck back to the bank of the lake.

Dad was **NOT** very happy about this.

'*WHAT EST LE PANIQUE?*' shouted my dad in some strange English/French mash-up. He was really annoyed. 'Je suis une **EXPERT** swimmer and je suis was just about to win the *Loaf de Lilo* competition!'

The attempt at French was getting more and more

- What everyday activity was Dad doing? What went wrong?
- Find the two similes used to describe what it looked like when Dad sank.
- How has the author exaggerated the response of the lifeguard to make it sound funnier? Identify three things. How is it different to how a lifeguard would usually respond?
- How does the illustration add to the humour of the scene?

# Activity

Pick a funny incident from the journal you've been keeping or use one of the Scenario Cards below. Add details to make your chosen scenario sound funnier. Here are some suggestions for how to do this:

- Make the person/people involved overreact to events
- Include some physical comedy (slapstick humour) for effect
  - Maybe something unexpected could happen?
- Include at least one funny simile to describe something
  - Add a funny illustration!

When you have finished writing, share what you've done with your class.  
Can your classmates spot where you've used the techniques suggested?

## Scenario 1

Someone attempts to dive into a swimming pool gracefully but belly flops.

## Scenario 2

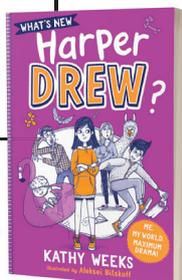
You're walking along the pavement when a car drives through a puddle and splashes you.

## Scenario 3

Someone's walking a dog when the dog spots a squirrel and chases after it.

## Scenario 4

You're in the school playground when a bird poos on one of your friends' heads.



# Comedy Club: Part One

Read the following diary entry from *What's New, Harper Drew?*

Maisie had been **so** annoying in the run-up to the festival. And she had **made** me and Priya clean the windows.



But now that the party was happening, it ~~was~~ pretty amazing.

Douglas Joiner said, 'The chocolate fountain, the hotdog van . . .' But didn't manage to get to a third before he ran off to be sick **again**. His career as a competitive eater was looking seriously doubtful.

The band were getting ready to play '**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**'. Priya was still inside helping Maisie's mum with the cake. I couldn't understand what was taking her so long. **Until I saw the cake. IT WAS HUGE.**

There were so many **candles, fireworks** and **sparklers** on the top of it that the display was likely

to be as **big** as the one from the London Eye on New Year's Eve.

**And this is where it all went wrong.**

The cake had its own special tepee. **Of course it did.** With fairy lights and swirling material down each side. And on top, at the pointy bit, was a huge gold M. If you looked quickly you might have mistaken it for the golden arches of a McDonald's. But I wasn't going to tell Maisie that.

Everyone crowded under the special cake tepee in front of Maisie to sing '**Happy Birthday**'. I was with Edward and Priya just to the side of Maisie with Uncle Paul, who said that this was the best angle to film from. Maisie's mum lit the candles. But I could see what was going to happen almost before it did.



The cake was fizzy and **pepping** with **sparks** flying everywhere. But one firework went **rogue**. Instead of staying fixed to the cake, it **SHOT** back over Maisie's shoulder and **landed** in the swirls of material covering the tepee pole. And it started to **catch fire**. And so did Maisie's **hair**, which after three hairstyle changes and several cans of hairspray was **SERIOUSLY** flammable.

'Oh my god!' I shouted to Edward and Priya. '**Maisie's hair is on FIRE!**'

Because everyone else was in front of Maisie, they couldn't see the disaster happening behind her. No one had noticed that anything was wrong. I needed to do something before we had a real problem. **NOW.**



And I was **quick**. I grabbed an ice bucket, which had been cooling cans of drinks by the hotdog van.

It was **really** heavy but I managed to **swing** it upwards and **throw** the cold water on to the fire. **AND** Maisie's head. **AND** all over the cake.



**AND** a lot on the AA, who were *(of course)* standing close to Maisie.

It wasn't the best aim, but I did stop the fire.

So I thought I would be the hero. I had just **saved** Maisie's life.

I was kind of expecting applause and maybe the prime spot in Maisie's tepee for the night. Next to Maisie.

But I was seriously **wrong** about that. Nobody else except Edward, Priya and Uncle Paul had seen the fire, so it basically looked *(to them)* as if I had chucked a bucket of cold water over Maisie and her cake for no reason.

And this seemed to prove that I was the fool Maisie had thought I was all along.

Maisie was **screaming** her head off. It was so loud and her head was **shaking** so much that I thought it might **actually** come off.

She was **DRENCHED**. Her hair was stuck to her forehead



and black eye make-up was running down her face, which was bright red from shouting. She would have looked great at a Halloween party. But now was probably not the right time to mention that.

The cake was **totally ruined** too. The water had made the burnt-out fireworks smudge a big charcoal mess over the picture of Maisie on top of the cake. It kind of looked like she had a hairy black beard round her face.

*'What on earth did you do that for, HARPER?'* she screeched. *'YOU HAVE RUINED EVERYTHING!'*

The AA looked furious. I could tell they were going on the counter-attack *(why was no one realising that I had saved Maisie's life?)* as Amelie or Amelia *(they were so drenched it was difficult to tell who was who)* launched a whole bottle of Coke towards me.

Thankfully Priya and Edward came to my rescue. They moved in front of me to make a kind of human shield and as the bottle came spinning towards my face, Edward punched it away. It landed *(then **EXPLODED**)*

- Where has the author included an unexpected turn of events?
- Give an example of where slapstick humour or physical comedy has been used?
- Which words have been used to exaggerate events? (screaming, drenched, exploded...)

# Activity

Watch some age-appropriate examples of slapstick humour and physical comedy e.g. The Chuckle Brothers or Mr Bean. Note some examples of how these techniques have been used, e.g. funny walks or getting hit over the head with a plank of wood! Did any misunderstandings occur? Were there any unexpected turns of events?

Read pages 211–216 of *What's New, Harper Drew?*. Note examples of the comedic techniques you have learned about today and in the previous session.

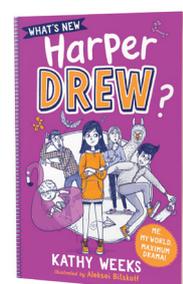
Working in pairs or threes, write a short comedy sketch based on an event from your journals. You may want one of your group members to be a narrator.

## Step-By-Step Guide to Creating a Comedy Sketch

- **Step one:** Choose an event.
- **Step two:** Who is going to be involved?
- **Step three:** How can this event be twisted, exaggerated, and added to, to make it even funnier?
- **Step four:** How are the techniques learned in the previous sessions going to be included (wordplay, misunderstandings, slapstick, physical comedy, unexpected events, overreactions etc.)?

### Have you included:

- Physical Comedy?
- Unexpected events?
- Wordplay or jokes?
- Overreaction?



# Comedy Club: Part Two

Time to rehearse and perform your comedy sketches! You could choose to host this as a live comedy event and invite another class to come and rate the performances in terms of comedic techniques employed and give a 'DREW DIAL RATING' out of ten. Scores could be combined to give an overall winner.

Technique	Tally	Total
Slapstick Humour		
Physical Comedy		
Unexpected Events		
Wordplay or Jokes		
Comedic Overreaction		
	<b>Overall Score:</b>	

