



BAD HAIR DAY

By Catherine Doolan

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Finn really wants to be cool, but everything about him seems to be un-cool. His football boots are un-cool, his bike is mega un-cool and worst of all, he has 'monster' hair – it's really thick, and sticks out all over the place. So Finn decides to tackle his hair and mixes together a very special hair potion. Things go badly wrong when the hair potion doesn't have quite the desired result and Finn's hair looks even more of a mess. But Dad saves the day and Finn ends up the coolest guy in town.

LANGUAGE – ENGLISH

◆ **Prediction:** Before reading, discuss why the author might have chosen this title. What does 'bad hair day' usually mean? Look at the illustration on the front cover, ask children to predict what the story might be about.

◆ **Prediction:** Ask children to predict what they think will happen when Finn goes to school (p58). Can they think of names that Finn may be called? How will he react if his friends laugh at him? What should he do?

◆ **Vocabulary Extension:** Cool/ Uncool. Brainstorm, and build lists of opposites made by using the prefix 'un', eg, clear/unclear, do/undo, fit/unfit etc. The class might also examine other opposites, using adjectives to describe hair, eg, straight/curly, shiny/dull etc.

◆ **Vocabulary Extension:** 'Finn was thrilled' (p33). List other words to describe Finn's mood, eg, delighted, overjoyed, happy etc.

◆ **Vocabulary Extension:** Brainstorm words associated with hairdressers and/or barbers. Which group gets most/ most unusual words? Ask groups to think of words associated with the work, eg, wash, cut, trim, dry etc; with instruments or equipment used, eg, scissors, mirror, razor, shampoo etc.

◆ **Descriptive Language:** eg 'Yuck' (p14). Discuss exclamations, how and why they are used, and think of others, eg, Ow!, Oooh!, Ahhh!, Aha!, Ouch! etc.

◆ **Descriptive Language:** Discuss what is meant by phrases associated with hair, eg, 'to make your hair stand on end'/'as bald as an egg'/'to keep your hair on'/'a hair-raising experience'/'to let your hair down' etc.

◆ **Creative:** In groups construct a crossword puzzle or wordsearch on hair, write the clues and ask other groups to give the answers. Detailed instructions on how to compile a wordsearch are given in Discovery Challenge, Ed's Bed by Eoin Colfer.

◆ **Creative:** 'It's monster hair' (p12). Ask children to cut out faces, without the hair, from magazines or newspaper. Working in twos, children instruct each other what colour, length, style etc monster hair would

suit a given face. Follow the instructions as accurately as possible – does Child A's portrait resemble Child B's original vision? Now, together write a descriptive passage describing the finished monster hair.

◆ **Creative:** Ask children to write a short piece describing their dream hairstyles – 'If I could have any hairstyle in the world my hair would be...' Discuss beforehand the many variations in colour, eg, red, auburn, grey, strawberry blond(e); hair-type, eg, coarse, fine, wavy etc and style, eg, dreadlocks, ringlets etc. Ask children to guess who has wished for each different dream hairstyle.

◆ **Discussion:** 'Finn wasn't sure what cool was but he knew he wasn't it' (p 6). Discuss what is meant by the term 'cool', literal and other meaning of the word. What other words or expressions now mean much the same thing? Compile a list of 'cool' things.

◆ **Discussion:** Examine and discuss other stories that feature hair, eg, Rapunzel and Goldilocks. Does this story have anything in common with these well-known fairytales?

LANGUAGE – GAEILGE

◆ **Mé Féin:** Gruaig agus dathanna, m sh, gruaig fhionn/ rua/ dhubh/ dhonn; stíl, m sh, tá gruaig dhubh chatach orm; briathra, m sh, ag scuabadh/ ag cíoradh/ ag ní/ag gearradh srl.

◆ **Obair Bhreise:** féach ar Drochlá Gruaige, leabhar sa tsraith SOS 978-0-86278-866-7. An féidir leis na daltaí an leabhar a léamh, nó an féidir leo é a thuiscint nuair a léann an múinteoir os ard é??

SPHE

◆ **Myself:** Taking care of my body. Recognising and practising basic hygiene skills, discussing and exploring the effects of poor personal hygiene, understanding how to take care of hair, eg, brushing, combing and washing. Discuss head lice and how to deal with the problem.

◆ **Myself:** Safety Issues and Protection. Realising that many substances used at home (such as hair-colour) are dangerous and that permission should be sought before exploring the contents. Discuss substances that are

unsafe and make a class list of common but potentially dangerous household substances, eg, detergents, garden weedkillers and fertilisers, alcohol etc.

◆ **Myself and Other People:** Recognising and exploring bullying behaviour, knowing that bullying is always wrong and what should be done about it; knowing how to treat people with dignity and respect, calling people by their proper name. Finn's friends told him he was a 'nerd' and called him names like 'Freakhead', 'Mophead', 'Frizzball' and 'Steel Wool'. Discuss these names and the effects on different people: on Finn himself, on those doing the name-calling and on the onlookers. How important is it to be sensitive to the feelings of one's friends?

◆ **Myself and the Wider World:** Media education. Discussing and exploring advertising of hair products: are these aimed more at girls than at boys? Consider the hair products promoted by footballers and by other well-known personalities: do these ads influence particular groups and, if so, how? Make a list of favourite ads for hair products and say why each ad appeals.

VISUAL ARTS

◆ **Paint and Colour:** Exploration of cool colours by mixing and painting. Discuss with children the 'cool/cold' colours, perhaps sparked by a discussion about a cold winter's day? Encourage children to name some cool colours themselves, by asking the class to think of a wintry sky and its blues, greens and greys. Experiment with these colours, and ask children to paint a scene using some or all.

◆ **Drawing:** Hair portraits. Discuss how hairstyle helps a person to recognise us. Examine hairstyles in portraits in an art gallery, photographic studio or similar. Then, taking turns, children sit behind a partner and draw their partner's hair, focussing on line – straight, wavy, thin, thick. This activity might be done using soft pencils and/or charcoal.

◆ **Construction:** Make a simple wig using a net from an orange or onion bag as base and wool or fabric for strands of hair.