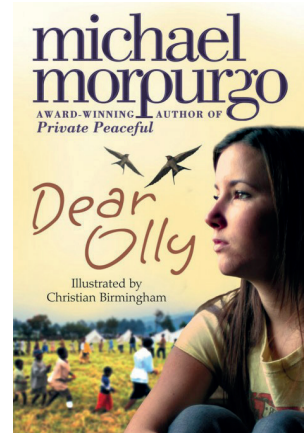


# Dear Olly

This is one of 16 activities to try during Michael Morpurgo Month, each of which explores an extract from a different book written by the world famous author. The books are grouped into four themes: natural world, animal adventures, tales retold, and times of war. All the activities can be used as either a quick starter or a longer lesson and provide a great opportunity to develop children's comprehension and vocabulary - not to mention a love of Michael Morpurgo's books.



## Dear Olly

Olly's brother Matt wants to go and work with children who have been made orphans, through war, in Africa. He wants to be a clown and make them laugh. His mother and sister want him to stay in England and go to university.

Hero, a swallow, has a journey to make too. He must fly to Africa for the winter to join all the other swallows. His journey is difficult and fraught with danger.

Three separate stories are woven into one powerful and moving novel whose central theme not only exposes the horrors of war and of landmines, but also the endurance of the human spirit.

## Using the resource

This resource shares a scene where Olly is worrying about the fate of a swallow chick who has been attacked by a cat.

After reading the text, there are suggested discussion activities considering:

- Reading a text closely and making inferences
- Making predictions based on the story
- Author's craft, focusing on small details to show how characters feel

Depending on time and the needs of your class, you may want to work through all of these interrelated activities or focus on just one.

There is also a sheet with a writing challenge based on the extract. For *Dear Olly* it focuses on narrative writing, showing a character's point of view. This could be used as a short classroom activity or as homework to consolidate the learning in the teaching session.

After reading and discussing the extract some children may be inspired to read the book itself. You could read it aloud as a class novel or direct children to where they can find a copy to read themselves: the book corner, school library, local library or a local bookshop.



## Teacher's notes for the PowerPoint

### Slide 2

- Share the front cover and blurb to introduce the book and give context.
- Ask children if anyone has read the book before. Does the blurb make them want to read on?

### Slide 3

- Tell the children that swallows have been nesting in Olly's garage and the young chicks are almost ready to fly away. Olly was watching them from a hide nearby. When she comes inside to have her supper, she accidentally leaves the ladder in place. A cat climbs it and attacks the last fledgling swallow. Olly rescues the bird, but fears it may be too late.
- Read aloud together (either with the teacher reading aloud and children following, children reading together as a class or children reading together in pairs).
- Ask the children why Olly can't sleep (she is worried about the swallow; she feels responsible).
- How does Olly's mother feel? (delighted – she is laughing with joy)
- Ask the children how they think Olly will feel now. Challenge them to reflect on different emotions such as joy, happiness and relief.
- Ask the children to predict what will happen to the swallow now. Will it stay with Olly and her family or join the other swallows flying south for the winter? Ask the children to justify their predictions.

### Slide 4

- Read these two sentences again and ask the children why these two small details might have been included in the text. If necessary, prompt them by asking:
  - Why might Olly have stroked the swallow?
  - What does it tell you about Olly as a character?
  - What does it tell you about how Olly was feeling at that moment?
  - What does it mean to 'take the stairs in threes'?
  - Why was Olly rushing? What did she suspect from her mother's words?

### Slide 5

- Return to the front cover and blurb.
- Ask the children if they would like to read *Dear Olly* having looked at this extract in detail and thought about Michael Morpurgo's skillful writing.
- Point children to where they can find a copy (either any copies you have in the classroom, the school library, or suggest the local library or a bookshop).

**Dear Olly**

Olly's brother Matt wants to go and work with children who have been made orphans, through war, in Africa. He wants to be a clown and make them laugh. His mother and sister want him to stay in England and go to university.

Here, a swallow, has a journey to make too. He must fly to Africa for the winter to join all the other swallows. His journey is difficult and fraught with danger.

Three separate stories are woven into a powerful and moving novel whose central theme not only exposes the horrors of war and of landmines, but also the endurance of the human spirit.

**Dear Olly**  
Michael Morpurgo

**Olly's Swallow**

She reached in and stroked his head with the back of her finger. Olly took the stairs in threes.

Q. Why have these two small details been included?

HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

*presents*

# Dear Olly

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Teaching Resources - PowerPoint Presentation

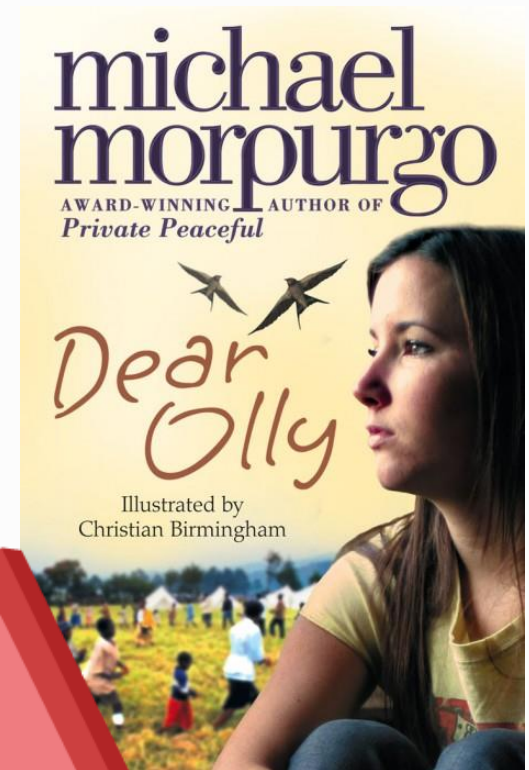


# Dear Olly

*Olly's brother Matt wants to go and work with children who have been made orphans, through war, in Africa. He wants to be a clown and make them laugh. His mother and sister want him to stay in England and go to university.*

Hero, a swallow, has a journey to make too. He must fly to Africa for the winter to join all the other swallows. His journey is difficult and fraught with danger.

Three separate stories are woven into one powerful and moving novel whose central theme not only exposes the horrors of war and of landmines, but also the endurance of the human spirit.



# Olly's Swallow

Quite unable to sleep, Olly crept downstairs in the still of the night. The swallow had not moved. She reached in and stroked his head with the back of her finger. 'Come on,' she whispered. 'Live. Please live.' Her mother found her by the box an hour later, fast asleep, and led her up to bed where she slept heavily for the rest of the night.

Olly was woken suddenly. 'Olly! Olly! Come quickly!' Olly took the stairs in threes. Her mother was standing by the stove. She had the swallow in her hands, and she was laughing out loud. 'Isn't it wonderful?' she cried. 'He's just raring to fly. You can feel the strength in him.'

Q. Why can't Olly sleep?

# Olly's Swallow

She reached in and stroked his head with the back of her finger.

Olly took the stairs in threes.

Q. Why have these two small details been included?



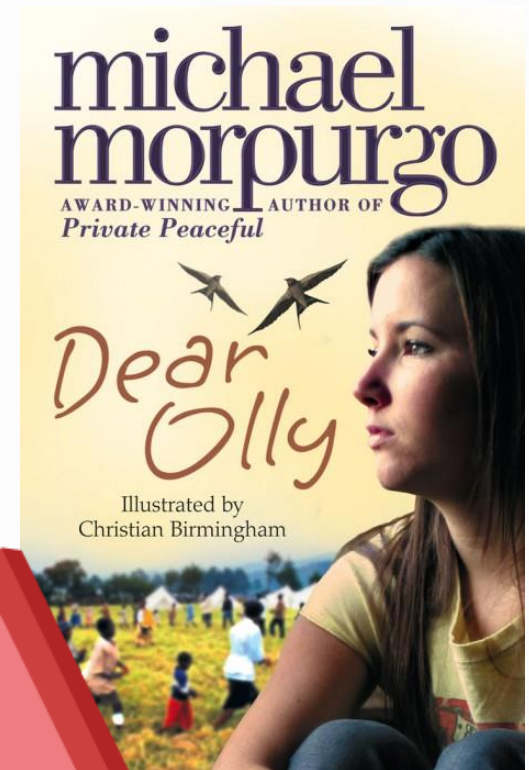


# Dear Olly

*Olly's brother Matt wants to go and work with children who have been made orphans, through war, in Africa. He wants to be a clown and make them laugh. His mother and sister want him to stay in England and go to university.*

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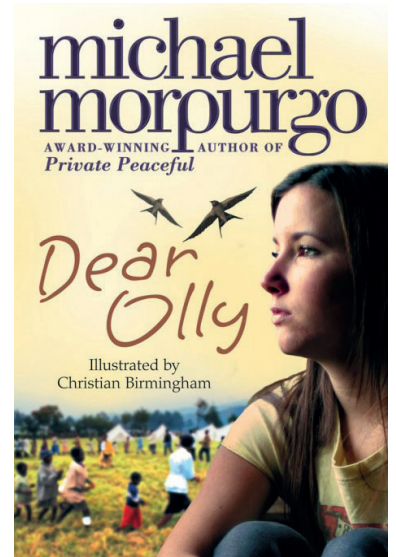
# Dear Olly

Swallows have been nesting in Olly's garage and the young chicks are almost ready to fly away. When she comes inside to have her supper, she accidentally leaves a ladder leading up to the nest. A cat climbs up and attacks the last fledgling swallow. Olly rescues the bird, bringing it inside where her mother, a vet, nurses the bird. But Olly fears it may be too late:

*Quite unable to sleep, Olly crept downstairs in the still of the night. The swallow had not moved. She reached in and stroked his head with the back of her finger. 'Come on,' she whispered. 'Live. Please live.' Her mother found her by the box an hour later, fast asleep, and led her up to bed where she slept heavily for the rest of the night.*

*Olly was woken suddenly. 'Olly! Olly! Come quickly!' Olly took the stairs in threes. Her mother was standing by the stove. She had the swallow in her hands, and she was laughing out loud. 'Isn't it wonderful?' she cried. 'He's just raring to fly. You can feel the strength in him.'*

Olly and her mother decide to call the swallow Hero.



## Writing challenge

Write the story of Hero's journey south to Africa with the other swallows. You could write it in the first person as Hero telling the story or in the third person, with a narrator telling the story.

### Morpurgo masterclass

Just like Michael Morpurgo, use small details to bring your writing to life or reveal something about your characters. In *Dear Olly*, Michael Morpurgo tells the story of Hero's journey. Once you've written your story, read it and compare your ideas.

### Stuck for ideas?

- Tell the reader about Hero by:
- showing him doing something brave
  - describing how he flies (slowly, tentatively, boldly, quickly)
  - sharing his conversations with other swallows
  - showing what he does when he arrives



