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TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

Hero of the Sea: Sir Peter Blake's Mighty Ocean Quests

A stunning biographical picture book for young readers about Sir Peter Blake, world-renowned New Zealand yachtsman, adventurer and environmentalist.

Sir Peter Blake's life was filled with amazing adventures. During his 30-year career on the ocean, he sailed around the globe, won the world's most famous races and broke records. Even his red socks became a national sensation. But no matter how many trophies Peter won, he always knew the survival of our planet was more important.

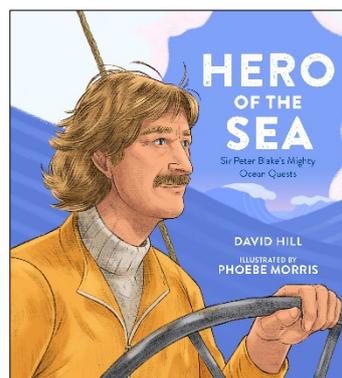
This illustrated picture book, by an acclaimed author and illustrator, tells the remarkable story of a true Kiwi hero. It is the fourth book in their bestselling series about famous New Zealanders.



David Hill is a prolific and highly regarded New Zealand writer, playwright, poet, columnist and critic. Best known for his very popular and award-winning body of work for young people, ranging from picture books to teenage fiction, his novels have been published all around the world and translated into several languages. Most recently, *Flight Path* (2017) was awarded the Storylines Notable Young Adults Book.



Freelance illustrator **Phoebe Morris** works from a small studio in Wellington. *Hero of the Sea* is her fourth collaboration with acclaimed author David Hill, and their award-winning picture book series of biographies of famous New Zealanders for Penguin Random House New Zealand has earned her unanimous praise. Find out more about Phoebe's work at phoebemorriscreative.com



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Readership: 6-8 years

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Teaching Notes: *Hero of the Sea: Sir Peter Blake's Mighty Ocean Quests* By David Hill and illustrated by Phoebe Morris

Synopsis:

Sir Peter Blake's life was filled with amazing adventures. During his 30-year career on the ocean, he sailed around the globe, won the world's most famous races and broke records. Even his red socks became a national sensation. But no matter how many trophies Peter won, he always knew the survival of our planet was more important.

This illustrated picture book, by an acclaimed author and illustrator, tells the remarkable story of a true Kiwi hero. It is the fourth book in their bestselling series about famous New Zealanders, including *First to the Top* (Puffin, 2015), *Speed King* (Puffin, 2016) and *Sky High* (Puffin, 2017).

The author:

David Hill is one of New Zealand's most highly regarded authors for children and young people. His books have been published in eight countries and his short stories and plays for young people have been broadcast here and overseas. David was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2004; he was awarded the Storylines Margaret Mahy Medal in 2005 for his significant contribution to children's literature; and with more than 40 published titles to his name he has won a variety of major national and international awards. Though perhaps best known for his junior fiction novels, David has also written acclaimed picture books, including *First to the Top* (Puffin, 2015), which was a Storylines Notable Picture Book.

The illustrator:

Phoebe Morris is a Wellington-based freelance illustrator and designer. Her first picture book was *First to the Top* with David Hill (Puffin, 2015). In a review for the *New Zealand Listener*, Ann Packer wrote, 'Wellingtonian Phoebe Morris makes a stunning debut as an illustrator . . . From the arresting cover, through cameos of his younger life to haunting, other-worldly mountainscapes, Morris's style gives the old story a cool new edge'. *Speed King* (Puffin, 2016) was Phoebe's second title with David Hill, and she is also the illustrator of the Frankie Potts junior fiction series by Juliet Jacka.

Before reading:

1. Before reading the book, look at the cover image and title. Discuss what you think the book might be about.
2. Discuss what the word 'quest' means.
3. Assess students' existing knowledge and impressions by brainstorming and discussing any facts and events relating to Sir Peter Blake and yachting.
4. Discuss what students know about biographies and how this book fits into that genre.
5. Read the author's and illustrator's dedications in the front of the book. Discuss what a dedication is. Ask the students: if they had written a book, who would they dedicate it to and what would the dedication say?

Themes:

This stunning picture book telling the true story of Sir Peter Blake's mighty ocean quests has several themes.

The themes of skill, determination and a spirit of adventure are evident. As a world-renowned yachtsman, Sir Peter Blake won numerous races and went on many mighty quests all around the globe.

A further theme of environmentalism is explored throughout the book. As Sir Peter Blake himself wrote, "Remember, this is the most beautiful world, and it's the only one we've got."

The themes of the importance of family, as well as national pride, are both illustrated as Sir Peter Blake's wife and children were integral in many of his journeys and adventures. Sir Peter Blake's memory lives on in New Zealand through his trust, as well as museum exhibitions.

Close reading questions:

1. How is Sir Peter Blake described physically on the first page of the book?
2. By what age was Peter racing?
3. What was the name of the yacht Peter built inside a shed on the lawn and who sailed it with him?
4. What did one of the crew sleep under on the first ever Whitbread Round the World Race and why?
5. How was the sailor who fell overboard found and what does this tell us about ocean life?
6. Who did Peter propose marriage to and where did this proposal take place?
7. With what word did Peter end his orders to his crew in the next Whitbread race and what did the crew think of this?
8. How big was the sunfish the *Lion* bumped into during a race?
9. Sometimes Peter and his crew did not put up the sails of *Steinlager 2* during the 1989 Whitbread race. Why?
10. What was Peter's secret weapon? Who gave it to him and when?
11. For how many years had the USA held the America's Cup yachting trophy by 1995?
12. Where were the fundraising red socks sold?
13. Where was Peter when he heard he was to become Sir Peter Blake?
14. Where were two of the places Peter was planning to sail the *Seamaster* to and what were they going to make about what they found there?
15. How long were the humpback whales which swam around them in Antarctica?
16. Why had enormous sections of the Amazon forest been felled?
17. How and where did Sir Peter Blake die?
18. Where is Sir Peter's yacht *Black Magic* found today?
19. What happened to Sir Peter's yacht *Bandit* in 2013?
20. What are Sir Peter's family members' current jobs?

Language and style:

1. There are many language features found in the book, including similes, adjectives, alliteration and rhetorical questions. Find the definition for each of these features and then match with one of the examples below, before either finding more examples from the book or thinking of some of your own.
 - a. 'Tall, blond young man'
 - b. 'Maybe it liked Peter's socks?'
 - c. 'It went like "a black torpedo"'
 - d. 'Flying fish flicked'Next time you create a piece of writing in class, focus on and/or include at least one of the language features mentioned above to help make your writing more exciting for the reader.
2. Question marks, speech marks, ellipses, full stops and commas are all types of punctuation found in the book. Find and list an example of each from the book and explain how you use these types of punctuation in your own writing. For example, you use a question mark at the end of a sentence when you are asking a question.
3. The author has chosen to use lots of exciting verbs to add colour to the text, such as '...where whales heaved up, flying fish flicked across the waves, albatross skimmed by.' Discuss the meaning of verbs and synonyms. Choose some standard verbs, such as walk, run, say, and create a synonym bank to help add exciting verbs to your writing.

4. Discuss when and why the italic font is used in texts, particularly in relation to names. In pairs, find all the italicised names of Sir Peter Blake's different yachts, such as *Black Magic*. Next on a device type out two of the yacht names and then try and use the device's tools to put these names in italics.
5. Think about the writing style and the genre of the book as a biography. As a class, discuss whether you believe the author has successfully managed to blend facts and an exciting story. If so, find examples from the book.
6. The narrative of the book is in the third person. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Is it effective? Choose a passage about one of the main events of the book. Rewrite the passage as a first person narrative, such as a monologue, diary entry or a letter to a loved one by a person featured in the book, for example one of Sir Peter Blake and Pippa's children about their trip to Antarctica where they watched 'great chunks of glaciers crashing into the sea'. Present your monologue, or read your diary entry or letter aloud, to your class.
7. Discuss what a glossary is and its use. Find some sailing-related words from the book that you think readers might not be familiar with, such as sails, skippers, crew, mast, etc, to create your own nautical glossary.
8. Some crew members teach Sir Peter Blake's children the New Zealand slang or colloquialism "chill out". What does this mean? Can you think of any other sayings that you think are particular to New Zealand?

Illustrations:

1. The illustrations are by Phoebe Morris. Examine them. How would you describe the style? What colours are used? What kinds of lines and textures are used? Design your own illustrations for the cover and/or one page of text.
2. Choose your favourite illustration from the book. In pairs, sit back-to-back and describe your chosen illustration to your partner. Look at the drawings you have created. How do your drawings compare to the drawings in the book? Consider points such as "Is the composition similar?" and "Is it as detailed?"
3. The book is about real people. Find a photograph of Sir Peter Blake and his wife Pippa and compare the photograph with the illustrations from the book. Then choose a photograph of another Kiwi legend, notable person, or of yourself, to create an illustration.
4. Find another book illustrated by Phoebe Morris, such as *First to the Top* (Puffin, 2015) or *Speed King* (Puffin, 2016). Compare and contrast the illustrations. Are there many similarities or differences?
5. Sir Peter Blake's secret weapon was a pair of red socks. Draw a picture of one of the descriptions of the socks, for example, hanging from a hot air balloon.

Research and creative responses:

1. Complete one of the following tasks inspired by the book:
 - a. On the first page of the book, David Hill describes Sir Peter Blake in three short paragraphs. Using this format, write three short paragraphs about yourself in first person. Accompany this description of yourself with an illustration in the style of Phoebe Morris.
 - b. Throughout his life, Sir Peter Blake sailed and travelled to many places around the world, many of which are mentioned in the book. In pairs, find and list all the place names found in the book and locate each of the destinations on a world map. Choose one of these places to research. Present at least two interesting facts about your chosen place to your class. Think about information such as population, weather, capital cities, food, etc.

- c. On his sailing adventures, Sir Peter Blake sees lots of sea animals, such as dolphins and whales, and different sea birds, like albatross. Choose one of the sea creatures mentioned in the book to research. Present your findings by drawing a picture of your chosen sea creature and writing two interesting facts about it to accompany your picture, for example its habitat or diet.
- d. Sir Peter Blake learned to navigate by looking at the stars reflected in a bucket of water. Find out about any sea-faring people who navigated by the stars, such as the Māori who sailed from Hawaiki to New Zealand using stars, constellations and star clusters, such as Matariki, to find their way. Write a description of such a trip from the point of view of one of the sailors.
- e. When he was young Sir Peter Blake built his first yacht in his backyard. In groups, as a challenge, using only cardboard, tape and paper, build your own yacht or ocean-voyaging vehicle. On completion give it a name. Present it to your class and describe to them the different aspects of your vehicle and why you chose the name.
- f. Sir Peter Blake and his crew won the 1989 Whitbread Round the World Race. Research this race and then, creating or using a newspaper front-page template, write an informative article about their victory. Think about a catchy title, use speech marks for direct quotes and include a photograph.
- g. Sir Peter Blake wrote “Remember, this is the most beautiful world, and it’s the only one we’ve got.” The plastic rubbish and oil slicks he saw in the sea, alongside environmental issues such as climate change, worried him. In small groups, choose one of these environmental issues and create a poster to display around your school to help draw attention to your chosen issue and what people can do to help.
- h. Sir Peter Blake’s wife, Pippa, helped plan some of their voyages. In pairs or small groups, plan a sailing trip. Think about where you would want to go, what your yacht would be called, who your crew would be, what you would want to see on your trip, how long you would be away from your homeland and what provisions you would need. Look to the book for inspiration, for example, when Sir Peter Blake and his family sailed up the planet’s biggest river, the Amazon.
- i. Sir Peter Blake’s wife, Pippa, was an expedition artist. Choose one of the animals they saw in the Amazon to research. Present your findings in the style of an entry in a children’s illustrated encyclopaedia. Compile, illustrate and bind your entries. Present your published encyclopaedia to a younger year group to study.
- j. As a class, visit the Sir Peter Blake Trust website and brainstorm some fundraising ideas to help the trust (<https://secure.sirpeterblaketrust.org/fundraise-for-us/>).
- k. Sir Peter Blake won many trophies. Design and make your own trophy out of recycled items.
- l. Sir Peter Blake hoped to make a TV documentary about what they found in the Amazon. In small groups, create mini-documentaries based on something they found. Write a script, create costumes and find locations in which to film around your school. If you have a device, film it and have a screening of your creations for your class, or act out your documentaries.
- m. Look at the illustrated timeline of Sir Peter Blake’s life at the back of the book. Create an illustrated timeline of your own life and achievements.
- n. As an Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) opportunity, find out if there is a maritime museum in your local area to visit, such as the Auckland Maritime Museum in which *Black Magic* is on display (<https://www.maritimemuseum.co.nz/>).

2. After reading the book, choose and discuss your favourite page/pages or moment/moments in the book. List five reasons for your choice.

3. As a class, during shared writing, write a letter inviting author David Hill to come and visit your school. Explain why he should come to your school and what you would like him to talk about relating to the book. Decide what your top five questions for him would be and include them in your letter. Use formal letter-writing elements, such as your address, the long date, 'Dear' and 'Yours sincerely'.

4. Write a review of the book for your favourite magazine or website. What did you like about the book? Why? What did you dislike about the book? Why? Give it a rating, such as stars or a number out of ten.

5. If you were to choose another significant New Zealander to write about, who would it be and why? Write a short piece of persuasive writing to the editors at Puffin Books and/or author David Hill and illustrator Phoebe Morris, convincing them why they should create a book about your chosen person.

Close reading answers:

1. Sir Peter Blake is described as being over 1.9 metres tall, with fair hair and a loud happy laugh.
2. Peter was racing by eight years of age.
3. The name of the yacht Peter built inside a shed on the lawn was *Bandit* and he sailed it with his younger brother Tony.
4. On the first ever Whitbread Round the World Race one of the crew slept under an umbrella because their yacht leaked.
5. The sailor who fell overboard was found because a flock of albatross circled him which tells us that ocean life is important in many ways.
6. Peter proposed to Pippa in a yacht harbour in England.
7. Peter ended his orders to his crew in the next Whitbread Race with the word "Please", which the crew liked.
8. The sunfish the *Lion* bumped into was 100 kilograms.
9. Peter and his crew sometimes didn't put up the sails of *Steinlager 2* during the 1989 Whitbread Race because the wind blew them along so hard.
10. Peter's secret weapon was his socks. They were given to him by Pippa before every big race.
11. In 1995 the USA had held the America's Cup yachting trophy for over 130 years.
12. The fundraising red socks were sold all across New Zealand.
13. Peter was in the bath when he heard he was to become Sir Peter Blake.
14. Two of the places Peter was planning to sail the *Seamaster* to were Antarctica and the Amazon River and they were going to make TV documentaries about what they found there. (This answer could also include: coral reefs and other places where water, trees and wildlife were in danger.)
15. The humpback whales which swam around them in Antarctica were as long as a cricket pitch.
16. Enormous sections of the Amazon forest had been felled to make new farms.
17. Sir Peter Blake died on his yacht, *Seamaster*, on the Amazon River after pirates rushed on board and shot him.
18. Sir Peter's yacht *Black Magic* is found today in the Auckland Maritime Museum.
19. In 2013 Sir Peter's yacht *Bandit* was found in a Northland shed and restored.
20. Sir Peter's family members' current jobs include an artist, an ocean adventurer and a film-maker.