



# THE WILD RIDE

IN AND OUT OF YEARS  
AND OVER A CENTURY  
OF PICTUREBOOKS

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# WELCOME ABOARD.

Join us in this voyage through the fantastic world of picturebooks, a journey in which words and pictures sail together in perfect synchronicity.

Explore the ocean of possibilities ahead of you and dive deep into every page.

Be prepared, as you may encounter unexpected waves of emotion.

Imagination is your life vest. Use it. Enjoy it. Embrace it.

# WILD THINGS AWAIT YOU. LET THE RIDE BEGIN.



# THE WILD NATURE OF THE PICTUREBOOK

Some things cannot be caged into one definite form or definition.  
Such is the case of the picturebook, this wild thing.

If you look at it as two separate words, the picture book can be seen as an illustrated book for children or a story book with pictures or a book where pictures decorate, accompany or highlight certain parts of the text.

## BUT WHY SHOULD THE TEXT BE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PICTURES?

When words and images need each other to make meaning,  
then something wild happens: a picturebook is born,  
as a compound word and a complex format.

Picturebooks use the visual and verbal modes  
to create a whole, unified experience for the reader:  
one cannot live without the other.

Picturebook creators are wild creatures too,  
for it is through their words and images that we can  
embark on new adventures when we open a book.

We thank all of them for inventing this wild ride  
almost one hundred years ago,  
as we follow their brilliant innovations.

We thank you for coming along with us this time too.



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# THE ORIGINS OF THE PICTUREBOOK

Once upon a time, books were not actually created especially for children; children read adults' books they could access. But by the end of the 17th century the Puritans published educational books to teach their children their religious doctrine and values. They incorporated illustrations to make the texts more appealing to their young audience. Eventually, more illustrated books were created for children but always with an instructional purpose in mind, such as alphabet books. The evolution of mass printing allowed the appearance of chapbooks made with cheap paper that included woodcut illustrations but they still worked only as decorative devices.

In the mid 1800s colour was incorporated to the printing process, giving children's books a new boost. In this context Randolph Caldecott's illustrated books appear, "breaking new ground in expanding the role of the image in relation to the text", as Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles suggest. At this time, the classic illustrated children's book followed a very structured format where illustrations appeared on the right page of a double spread while the text was written on the left. Caldecott broke this structure not only visually, by combining words and pictures on the same page, but semantically, by playing with both elements so that the images would tell that which the words would not say, and vice versa. Thus, he is recognised by some as the forefather of the picturebook as we know it today.

Beatrix Potter, Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane are other important creators from this period. Even though their works do not focus on the interplay of word and image but rather depend on the verbal text using the visual to enhance the text, their influence on the size, shape and overall design of books contributes to the evolution of this form.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Cruikshank, George. *Puss in Boots*. London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1864.
2. Crane, Walter. *Baby's Bouquet; a fresh bunch of old rhymes & tunes*. London: G. Routledge, 1878.
3. Caldecott, Randolph. *The Queen of Hearts*. London: G. Routledge, 1881.
4. Greenaway, Kate. *Language of Flowers*. London: G. Routledge and sons, 1884.
5. Crane, Walter. *Red Riding Hood's Picture Book*. London: New York: John Lane, 1898.
6. Caldecott, Randolph. *The Great Panjandrum Himself*. London: F. Warne, 1900.
7. Bannerman, Helen. *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Chicago: Reilly, 1905.
8. Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Tom Kitten*. London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1907.
9. Newell, Peter. *The Hole Book*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1908.



# 1920s

The arrival of the 20th century brought with it several social changes and printing innovations that fueled the further evolution of the picturebook: the development of new printing technologies, different attitudes towards childhood including establishing children's departments within public libraries, and the beginning of children's book illustration as a career choice inspiring outstanding artists and illustrators. Such is the case of William Nicholson, a British artist and designer whose work in *Clever Bill* and the *Pirate Twins* provides the first examples of how words and images combine to express meaning, and how the "drama of the turning page" comes into action. His work is seminal in defining what the picturebook is and looks like: an integrated work of art where image and text need each other to make meaning and move the narrative forward. Interestingly, Nicholson leaves the sentences open at the end of each page so that the reader is forced to continue the sequence, both visually and verbally, by completing the idea at the turn of the page.

Nicholson's work influenced the publication of Wanda Gág's *Millions of Cats* in the United States which became another referent of the evolution of the form. She combined the use of a horizontal format enhancing the pastoral nature of the tale, creating more space to depict the landscapes, with a playful and innovative layout of the text, and winding the typography around the images to create a visual whole. She also utilized the double spread or page opening of two pages for single scenes.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Gruelle, Johnny. *Raggedy Ann Stories*. Chicago: New York: P.F. Volland Co., 1918.
2. Gruelle, Johnny. *Raggedy Andy Stories; introducing the little rag brother of Raggedy Ann*. Chicago: P.F. Volland Co., 1920.
3. Bianco, Margery Williams [auth.], Nicholson, William [illus.]. *The Velveteen Rabbit*. London: Heinemann, 1922.
4. Gág, Wanda. *Millions of Cats*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1928.
5. Nicholson, William. *The Pirate Twins*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1929.



# 1930s

During this decade, advances in technology continued to promote the evolution of the picturebook both visually and semantically, as artists refined their illustration techniques to suit better printing methods. The development of autolithography in Europe allowed creators to draw directly on printing plates, saving the publisher money and enhancing the quality and liveliness of images, even if this multiplied the illustrators' work. Nonetheless, most of the artwork at this time and until the 1940s consisted of black linear designs to which one or two flat colours could be added. This was due to the cost of colour printing.

In 1931, the publishing of *The Story of Babar* in France was a breakthrough. As Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles describe it “the books were like nothing seen before, with their large, colorful format and handwritten text rendered with a simple, childlike clarity”.

The influence of cinema and comics pervaded the world of the picturebook. Robert Lawson's illustrations for *Ferdinand*, written by Munro Leaf, give a more cinematic and “live-action” perspective of the little bull's adventures. As Kathryn Shoemaker notes, “the number of illustrations and the number of quick page turns creates a sense of movement and animation” across the pages of the book.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Piper, Watty [auth.], Hauman, Doris [illus.]. Hauman, George [illus.]. *The Little Engine That Could*. New York: Platt & Munk, 1930.
2. Gág, Wanda. *The ABC Bunny*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1933.
3. de Brunhoff, Jean [auth.], Milne, A.A. [trans.]. *The Story of Babar: the little elephant*. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas, 1934.
4. Leaf, Munro [auth.], Lawson, Robert [illus.]. *The Story of Ferdinand*. New York: Viking Press, 1936.
5. Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1939.





# 1940s

As the war and postwar recovery forced publishers in Europe and North America to cut costs, the number of pages in a picturebook started to decrease until it eventually reached today's typical format of 32 pages. Even if books such as Robert McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings* and *Blueberries for Sal* were published in long formats that exceeded this number, the general need to condense the content gave way to the more frequent use of panels, speech balloons and other comics conventions, as well as more cinematic references in illustrations.

*The Little Golden Books* are a product of these times. They sold for only 25 cents, compared to the \$2.50 or more that a regular book cost. They had hard covers, felt very sturdy and showcased great illustrations, so they quickly became popular and expanded into *Golden Books* of various sizes. *The Pokey Little Puppy* is one of its most popular original stories.

*Tiny Animal Stories* is a collection of tiny picturebooks about baby animals written by the author of *Pat the Bunny*, a 1946 *Golden Book* that is among one of the most popular children's books of all times with over six million copies sold to date. Although *Pat the Bunny* is not a picturebook, it is famous for its tactile flaps and items made of assorted textures for children to feel and identify with people and objects in their young lives.

During this period, Margaret Wise Brown (sometimes under the alias of Golden MacDonald) wrote her first picturebooks in the unique style that characterizes her: the combination of playful and poetic word games with an acute sense of a child's fresh, first time observation of reality.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Slobodkina, Esphyr. *Caps for Sale: A Tale of a Peddler, Some Monkeys and Their Monkey Business*. New York: W.R. Scott, 1940.
2. McCloskey, Robert. *Make Way for Ducklings*. New York: Viking Press, 1941.
3. Burton, Virginia Lee. *The Little House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942.
4. Brown, Margaret Wise [auth.], Hurd, Clement [illus.]. *The Runaway Bunny*. New York: Harper, 1942.
5. Lowrey, Janette Sebring [auth.], Tengren, Gustaf [illus.]. *The Poky Little Puppy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Little Golden Book, 1942.
6. Brown, Margaret Wise [auth.], Williams, Garth [illus.]. *Little Fur Family*. New York: Harper Collins, 1946.
7. Brown, Margaret Wise [auth.] (under the pseudonym Golden MacDonald), Weisgard, Leonard [illus.]. *The Little Island*. New York: Doubleday, 1946.
8. McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*. New York: Viking Press, 1948.
9. Brown, Margaret Wise [auth.], Weisgard, Leonard [illus.]. *The Important Book*. New York: Harper, 1949.
10. Kunhardt, Dorothy [auth.], Williams, Garth [illus.]. *Tiny Animal Stories*. New York: Simon and Schuster, A Tiny Golden Books, 1949..



# 1950s

During the postwar years, many artists from Europe moved to the United States, adding new and different sensibilities to the development of the picturebook as a form. Local and international designers and creators, many of whom came from the world of advertising, found in the picturebook the perfect medium to combine visual thinking, typography and their underlying deep design experience to bring their ideas to life. Such is the case of Paul and Ann Rand in *Sparkle and Spin*, and Leo Lionni's *Little Blue and Little Yellow*.

Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, published some of his most renowned works during this period. Although his first children's book appeared in 1937, he took a break during the war to create political cartoons and to write, direct and produce films. In the 1950s he returned to children's literature, creating many of the more than 60 books he published during his life.

Taro Yashima's work is known for his brilliant and lively illustrations. Following the great tradition of Japanese print-making, he was able to master the mechanical colour separating technique which often robbed works of a vital sense of life and movement, as each colour had to be assigned its own printing plate.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Ward, Lynd. *The Biggest Bear*. Boston: Houghton, 1952.
2. Perrault, Charles [auth.], Brown, Marcia [illus.]. *Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954.
3. François, André. *Crocodile Tears*. London: Faber & Faber, 1956. .
4. Rand, Ann [auth.], Rand, Paul [auth./illus.]. *Sparkle & Spin*. New York: Harcourt. 1957.
5. Seuss, Dr. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* New York: Random House, 1957.
6. Cooney, Barbara. *Chanticleer and the Fox*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1958.
7. Yashima, Taro. *Umbrella*. New York: The Viking Press, 1958.

Salisbury and Styles affirm that this decade “is perhaps where the unique nature of the picturebook as a medium really began to assert itself. Now, words became fewer as an understanding of the potential of the page as a multimodal visual stage grew.”



# 1960s

The picturebook grew and consolidated as an elaborate and sophisticated form since more artists found it to be a valuable medium to materialize their creative and expressive needs. Eric Carle developed a unique graphic style based on the use of collage and hand-coloured papers –now an internationally acclaimed trademark of his work. Ezra Jack Keats found a medium to address social issues by depicting the everyday lives and stories of multicultural characters in urban settings. Pat Hutchins' *Rosie's Walk* illustrates an incredible exercise in storytelling with words and pictures juxtaposed to create two opposing narrations in only 32 words.

Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* is, perhaps, the most outstanding product of these times, marking a before and after in the evolution of the form. As Salisbury and Styles recognize, he reinvented it by breaking “many of the rules that picturebooks had largely adhered to up to this point” and using “every element of his artistry to powerfully convey his beguiling story.”

At the same time, on the other side of the world, artists such as John Burningham (Great Britain) and Tomi Ungerer (France) also played with the possibilities of the format, both in form and content, creating challenging picturebooks.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Ungerer, Tomi. *The Three Robbers*. New York: Atheneum, 1962.
2. Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*. New York: Viking Press, 1962.
3. Lionni, Leo. *Swimmy*. New York : Pantheon, 1963
4. Ungerer, Tomi. *Moon Man*. New York: Atheneum, 1966.
5. Hutchins, Pat. *Rosie's Walk*. New York : Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1967.
6. Martin Jr., Bill [auth.], Carle, Eric [illus.]. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*. New York: Doubleday, 1967.
7. Lionni, Leo. *Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse*. New York : Pantheon, 1969.
8. Steig, William. *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*. New York: Windmill Books, 1969.
9. Keats, Ezra Jack. *Goggles!*. New York: Macmillan Inc., 1969.
10. Keeping, Charles. *Joseph's Yard*. London: Oxford, 1969.



# 1970s

Irony and humour also pervaded the picturebook as the form afforded its creators opportunities to express the postmodern playfulness of the time. William Steig's sarcastic yet naïve tone is undoubtedly the product of his many years of experience as a cartoonist and illustrator for the New Yorker. Although highly realistic, Mitsumasa Anno's wordless tour of Europe through different landscapes and eras in *Anno's Journey* also plays with the reader's perceptions by adding visual tricks and the presence of some very well-known children's books characters, ready to be found. Serious topics like death and solitude are also represented in works such as *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* by Jenny Wagner and Ron Brooks.

Since the depth and scope of the topics addressed in picturebooks is vast and diverse, the question of audience began to arise. In fact, many great children's book creators, notably Sendak, claimed to create for himself and not for children. While generally recognized as literary works for children, many argue that picturebooks are also for older readers and adults.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Steig, William. *Amos and Boris*. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971.
2. Viorst, Judith [auth.], Cruz, Ray [illus.]. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. New York: Atheneum, 1972.
3. Aardema, Verna [auth.], Dillon, Diane [illus.], Dillon, Leo [illus.]. *Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears*. New York : Dial Press, 1975.
4. Wagner, Jenny [auth.], Brooks, Ron [illus.]. *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*. Scarsdale, N.Y. : Bradbury Press, 1977.
5. Burningham, John. *Come Away from the Water, Shirley*. New York : Crowell, 1977.
6. Allard, Harry [auth.], Marshall, James [illus.]. *Miss Nelson is Missing*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1977.
7. Anno, Mitsumasa. *Anno's Journey*. Cleveland : Collins-World, 1978.
8. Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Garden of Abdul Gasazi*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1979.



# 1980s

As an increasingly complex form, authors and illustrators used the picturebook to explore ways of transforming the narrative conventions and experiences for their readers. They played with fairy and folktale adaptations, drawing on the content of the traditional tales and finding new ways of retelling them. In *Lon Po Po, a Red Riding Hood Story from China*, Ed Young shows how three siblings trick a wolf that is trying to eat them, while their mother is out visiting their *Po Po* or grandmother.

Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith reinvent a well-known tale in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. This picturebook showcases most of the features that make up the postmodern picturebook according to David Lewis: a playful desire to break the boundaries of the story itself, making the characters aware that they are part of a narrative (metafictive quality); exaggeration (excess); the use of irony and humour (parody); and a deliberate intention of making the reader participate or interact with the story (performance).

Anthony Browne and Chris Van Allsburg are recognized as masters of the picturebook form. Stories like Van Allsburg's *Jumanji* and *The Polar Bear Express* have been successfully adapted to other media, such as film. Both artists share a hyper-realistic illustration style that seems to surpass the limits of reality by creating fantastic worlds where they are least expected.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Van Allsburg, Chris. *Jumanji*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1981.
2. Williams, Vera B. *A Chair for My Mother*. New York : Greenwillow Books, 1982.
3. Steig, William. *Doctor De Soto*. New York: Scholastic, 1982.
4. Lee, Dennis [auth.], Gay, Marie-Louise [illus.]. *Lizzy's Lion*. Toronto: Stoddart, 1984.
5. Khalsa, Dayal Kaur. *Tales of a Gambling Grandma*. Montréal: Tundra Books, 1986.
6. Young, Ed. *Lon Po Po*. New York: Philomel Books, 1989.
7. Browne, Anthony. *The Tunnel*. London: Julia MacRae Books, 1989.
8. Scieszka, Jon [auth.], Smith, Lane [illus.]. *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*. New York: Viking Kestrel, 1989.
9. Rosen, Michael [auth.], Oxenbury, Helen [illus.]. *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1989.
10. Martin Jr., Bill [auth.], Archambault, John [auth.], Ehler, Lois [illus.]. *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.



# 1990s

Through the picturebook, many artists choose to explore complex and challenging topics, developing personal and unique forms of sequential visual narrative.

David Wiesner and Peter Sis are only two of today's masters of the postmodern picturebook, whose work gained relevance in the 1990s. Their books are not only memorable and easily recognizable due to their characteristic graphic style, but because of their innovative use of the format. David Wiesner uses hyper-realistic illustrations to play with perspective and force the reader to find new ways of seeing and understanding the world, while Peter Sis' characteristic maps offer a detailed description of events through the creation of miniature parallel stories.

Jan Brett also creates multiple narratives that occur at the same time through the complex design of her page spreads, which are usually framed. Janell Cannon in *Stellaluna*, shows another point of view—one not recognized in the text- in tiny panels at the top of each even page.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Wiesner, David. *Tuesday*. New York: Clarion Books, 1991.
2. Scieszka, Jon [auth.], Smith, Lane [illus.]. *The Stinky Cheese Man and other fairly stupid tales*. New York: Viking, 1992.
3. Say, Allen. *Grandfather's Journey*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.
4. Cannon, Janell. *Stellaluna*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993.
5. Brett, Jan. *The Hat*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1997.
6. Sis, Peter. *Tibet: through the red box*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998.
7. Browne, Anthony. *Voices in the Park*. New York: DK Pub., 1998.
8. Shannon, David. *A Bad Case of Stripes*. New York: Blue Sky Press, 1998.
9. Brown, Margaret Wise. *Another Important Book*. New York : HarperCollins, 1999.





# 2000s

Even if the picturebook has proved to be an ever-changing form, the interplay of word and image is always at its core.

Contemporary artists like Oliver Jeffers take it a step further by aiming to control the overall design of the page, as Salisbury and Styles assert. The inclusion of handwritten texts in all of his books serves this purpose, and it is now part of his trademark and distinctive graphic style.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Falconer, Ian. *Olivia*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2000.
2. Falconer, Ian. *Olivia Saves the Circus*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001.
3. Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2003.
4. Dewdney, Anna. *Llama Llama Red Pajama*. New York: Scholastic, 2005.
5. Campbell, Nicola I. [auth.], LaFave, Kim [illus.]. *Shi-shi-etko*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2005.
6. Jeffers, Oliver. *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. New York: Philomel Books, 2006.
7. Campbell, Nicola I. [auth.], LaFave, Kim [illus.]. *Shin-chi's Canoe*. Toronto : Groundwood Books, 2008.
8. Jeffers, Oliver. *The Heart and the Bottle*. New York: Philomel Books, 2010.

Ian Falconer demands more participation from the readers by inviting them to fill in the gaps in the narrative. His incorporation of renowned works of arts in *Olivia's* adventures is one of his signature traits, appealing both to the young readers' curiosity and to the knowledge and complicity of the adults who read to them.

Mo Willems and Anna Dewdney take advantage of the picturebook's playful nature to create whimsical tales that are full of humour and that make brilliant use of comics conventions, from speech balloons to exaggerated facial gestures to the cinematographic frame-by-frame depiction of characters.

*Shi-Shi-etko* and *Shin-chi's Canoe* are written by Nicola Campbell in a poetic text that is accompanied by Kim La Fave's warm illustrations, visually reinforcing the sense of belonging and communion with nature. Words and images interact to immerse the reader in an intimate and deeply emotional experience.

Perhaps following the tradition of comics too, several of these artists have created picturebook series with their beloved characters. This may be a sign of how, upon reaching the 21st Century, the picturebook has gained a place of its own in the literary world, allowing its creators to adapt and transform the medium according to their own expressive needs and thus embracing its multiple possibilities.



# 2010s

## IN THIS CASE

1. Marsden, John [auth.], Tan, Shaun [auth./illus.]. *Lost & Found*. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books, 2011.
2. Klassen, Jon. *This is Not My Hat*. Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick Press, 2012.
3. Britt, Fanny [auth.], Arsenault, Isabelle [illus.]. *Jane, the Fox, and Me*. Toronto : Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2013.
4. de la Peña, Matt [auth.], Robinson, Christian [illus.]. *Last Stop on Market Street*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2015.
5. Wenzel, Brendan. *They All Saw a Cat*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2016.
6. Alemagna, Beatrice. *On a Magical Do-nothing Day*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2017.
7. Morales, Yuyi. *Dreamers*. New York: Neal Porter Books, 2018.
8. Lin, Grace. *A Big Mooncake for Little Star*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2018.
9. Greder, Armin. *The Mediterranean*. Crows Nest, Aus: Allen & Unwin, 2018.
10. Robinson, Christian. *Another*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019.
11. Alexander, Kwame [auth.], Nelson, Kadir [illus.]. *The Undefeated*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019.

During the past decade, picturebook creators have continued to expand the limits of the form, addressing all kinds of topics – challenging, serious, humorous, playful, ground-breaking, poetic, personal, informative, fantastic, and so on - to all sorts of audiences: the child, the young, and the adult reader alike. The picturebook continues to surprise us all, as there is still room for fresh voices to rise next to those of the master storytellers that already dominate the form.

Australian Shaun Tan creates worlds of fantastical creatures usually situated in what seem to be normal, everyday life situations. Nonetheless, they foreshadow the complex and deep topics that underlie human interactions such as migration, identity and displacement. His work stands out because of its creative appeal and, as Salisbury and Styles suggest, because he has “taken the concept of pictorial text to a new level, exploring the ambiguity and potential for multiple meanings in visual sequence”.

Isabelle Arsenault, Beatrice Alemagna and Fanny Britt create powerful verbal and visual narratives that delve deep into the human soul with tenderness, humour and light-heartedness, all at the same time. Brendan Wenzel and Sydney Smith reinvent daily encounters through multiple perspectives, with humour and a sense of awe. Joanne Schwarz meditates about the inevitability of the passage of time through life’s everyday little details, uniting her voice to Sydney Smith’s tender illustrations in an overall poetic experience.

The picturebook’s constant transformation during the past 100 years is proof of its vitality, as it continues to grow as one of the most elaborate and sophisticated forms of visual sequential narrative of our times.





# BIOGRAPHICAL PICTUREBOOKS

The richness of the picturebook - its combination of visual, verbal and narrative elements, amongst others - affords it the possibility of communicating stories of different nature, both imaginary and real. In the non-fiction category, biographical picturebooks have the power of retelling the lives of people who have made history using both rationality and emotion, facts and feelings, to capture the reader. They also prove to be an excellent medium to appeal to younger audiences who may find its concise format more accessible and the abundance of visual detail a valuable source of information.

Jennifer Berne's biography of Albert Einstein shares with Linda Bailey's *Mary who wrote Frankenstein* the delicate skill of capturing the talent and soul of their protagonists, revisiting their lives with emotion and intimacy. And while *Henri's Scissors* shows us the world from the perspective of Matisse as a boy and an adult in love with colour, shapes, nature and paper, *Before she was Harriett* also depicts Harriett Tubman in all her facets, from a little girl to an old woman, to capture the relevance of all her voices before -and after- she became a hero. Playing with time and perspective are only some of the possibilities that the picturebook has to offer.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Winter, Jeanette. *Henri's Scissors*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.
2. Berne, Jennifer [auth.], Radunsky, Vladimir [illus.]. *On a Beam of Light: A Story of Albert Einstein*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2013.
3. Copeland, Misty [auth.], Myers, Christopher [illus.]. *Firebird*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2014.
4. Steptoe, Javaka. *Radiant Child: the story of young artist Jean-Michel Basquiat*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016.
5. Cline-Ransome, Lesa [auth.], Ransome, James E. [illus.]. *Before She was Harriet*. New York: Holiday House, 2017.
6. Bailey, Linda [auth.], Sardà, Júlia [illus.]. *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein*. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2018.



# MASTER BRITISH PICTUREBOOK CREATORS

The picturebook evolved in turbulent times, with influences that came from all around the world. Early British creators developed a style of their own that usually showcases irony, humour, and a very critical and politicized view of society. Most of their stories challenge the reader and play with the format.

*The General* is Michael Foreman's first picturebook. Published in 1961 to international acclaim, it expressed a strong anti-war sentiment at a time of great tension between the US and Russia during the cold war and arms race.

John Burningham's *Granpa* is a postmodern picturebook that plays with points of view. The author depicts moments in the lives of a little girl and her grandparent through their intimate and funny interactions and perspectives. Since there is no sequential or linear narration to follow, the readers must fill in the gaps to make sense of the independent texts, hence becoming accomplices of the narrative.

Anthony Browne's *Gorilla* is a critical yet tender view of the relationship between a father and a daughter. This thought-provoking story questions issues of parenting, the pressures of modern lifestyle, freedom and, ultimately who is more of an animal, a human or a gorilla.

Allan and Janet Ahlberg are known for their ability to play with words, rhymes and the physical qualities of the picturebook, inviting the reader to join their linguistic and semantic games.

In their different voices and graphic styles, all of these authors develop a shared vision of the picturebook's potential to tell compelling, creative and engaging stories for readers of all ages. This proves that the format is not only a literary product but a cultural one, as a reflection of the social times in which it exists. It also highlights the fact that the picturebook is a live form, changing and adapting to the context in which it is created.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Ardizzone, Edward. *Tim to the Rescue*. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.
2. Charters, Janet [auth.], Foreman, Michael [illus.]. *The General*. London: --- 1961.
3. Briggs, Raymond. *Father Christmas*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973.
4. Ahlberg, Janet [auth./illus], Ahlberg, Allan [auth./illus]. *Each Peach Pear Plum*. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1978.
5. Browne, Anthony. *Gorilla*. London: Julia MacRae Books, 1983.
6. Burningham, John. *Granpa*. New York: Crown, 1984.



# OUTSTANDING CANADIAN PICTUREBOOK AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

Gail Edwards and Judith Saltman's *Picturing Canada: A History of Canadian Children's Illustrated Books and Publishing* digs into the origins of the picturebook format in Canada as it evolved and grew apart from the illustrated book. Before the 20th Century, the authors recognize the development of a narrative of exploration and travel that depicted Canada as an exotic and faraway land. From the 1890s to the 1950s they acknowledge some publishers' intent to develop a Canadian literature, even if it proved more profitable to print works by US, British and other English-speaking authors.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Zion, Gene [auth.], Graham, Margaret Bloy [illus.]. *Harry the Dirty Dog*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1956.
2. Blades, Ann. *Mary of Mile 18*. Montreal: Tundra Books; Toronto: Collins Publishers, 1971.
3. Kurelek, William. *A Prairie Boy's Winter and Summer*. Montreal: Tundra Books, 1978.
4. Carrier, Roch [auth.], Cohen, Sheldon [illus.], Fischman, Sheila [trans.]. *The Hockey Sweater*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1979.
5. Cleaver, Elizabeth. *Petrouchka*. New York: Atheneum, 1980.
6. Munsch, Robert [auth.], Martchenko, Michael [illus.]. *The Paperbag Princess*. Toronto: Scholastic Canada, 1980.
7. Khalsa, Dayal Kaur. *I Want a Dog*. Montréal: Tundra Books, 1987.
8. Wallace, Ian. *Boy of the Deep*s. Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999.
9. Maclear, Kyo [auth.], Arsenault, Isabelle [illus.]. *Virginia Wolf*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2012.
10. Lawson, JonArno [auth.], Smith, Sydney [illus.]. *Sidewalk Flowers*. Toronto : Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2015.
11. Smith, Sydney. *Small in the City*. Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2019.

The question of identity, both in content and in graphic style, is very evident, as Edwards and Saltman note that Canadian illustrators and designers tended to apply “themes and motifs from nature and the handwork tradition (...) such as flattened ornamental surfaces and decorative borders”, in an attempt to reflect Canadian culture and way of being. The economic Depression and Post War period also marked a “context of scarcity and restraint (where) contemporary Canadian images of home, and the particular emotional and geographical space and place of the nation, developed slowly in trade publications”.

It was not until after the 1960s, and due to the creation of a Commission for the Arts, the National Library and certain grants to support Canadian cultural production, that the picturebook consolidated. In 1956, Canadian illustrator Margaret Bloy Graham worked with her husband Gene Zion in the collection of picturebooks about Harry, the Dirty Dog, published by a US imprint. William Toye, a self-taught designer, was “one of the first great Canadian editors to work with children's titles”, slowly building a Canadian collection. He was also influenced by Sheila Egoff, a librarian, educator and author who highlighted the importance of reading as part of education and the development of an identity. She suggested that “Aboriginal creation stories would make good texts for picturebooks”, an idea that was taken by Toye and developed with Elizabeth Cleaver to create the first true picturebook published in Canada: *How Summer came to Canada* (1969). Cultural appropriation of voice was not an issue at that time hence many Canadian authors chose to turn to Indigenous stories for inspiration.

The 1970s marked the development of a Children's Publishing Industry, in great part due to May Cutler's work. She founded Tundra Books, an imprint that still exists today, to publish “Canadian Children's Books as works of art”. Amongst her editions are William Kurelek's works. He is one of the most important authors of his time, with titles such as *A Prairie Boy's Winter*, which became an internationally recognized best-seller. In this decade, the foundation of the Canadian Children's Book Center was the result of the joint forces of educators, librarians, publishers and booksellers looking to prioritize the creation and production of local books. Academic recognition through journals and the establishment of the first course in Creative Writing for Children at UBC also signaled that the form was reaching maturity. The appearance of other independent publishing houses such as Groundwood also reflected this, as they showed their “commitment to quality, commercial viability and national identity”. Annick Press and Kids Can Press were also formed in this decade, along with two Aboriginal-owned publishing houses, Theytus Books and Pemmican Publications, with the purpose of telling stories all Canadian children could recognize themselves in. To this day, all of these publishing houses still exist and continue to create award-winning books, such as Sydney Smith's *Small in the City*.



# MAURICE SENDAK: THE MASTER

## IN THIS CASE

1. Kraus, Ruth [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.]. *A Hole is to Dig: a first book of first definitions*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952.
2. Sendak, Maurice. *Nutshell Library*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1962.
3. Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
4. Sendak, Maurice. *Hector Protector and As I Went Over the Water*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965.
5. Sendak, Maurice. *In the Night Kitchen*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
6. King, Carole [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.]. *Really Rosie*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
7. Sendak, Maurice. *Outside Over There*. Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1981.
8. Sendak, Maurice. *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers-Michael diCapua Books, 1993.

The publication of *Where the Wild Things Are* in 1963 changed the history of the picturebook format forever. Not only did Maurice Sendak depict a rebellious, angry and mischievous child, but he dared to represent his inner world, creating a defiant and playful narration of a boy's journey into his wild side which broke the stereotypical view of a child as an innocent -almost blank- being. His mastery resides both in the precise use of words as well as in the meticulously thought out use of pictures to convey meaning. All his decisions are intentional, taking advantage of every visual detail to express what he needs to communicate, from the colours to the characters to the settings to the framing of images and composition of each page. As Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles note, this book is "the very model of excellence in word-picture interaction. At the most powerful moment of action in the book, when fury and imagination merge, the words retreat so that three dynamic spreads are nothing but pictures", showcasing the "subtlety and vigor between word and image" that make it a work of genius.

Maurice Sendak's editor, Ursula Nordstrom, was a key figure in his life. She cultivated this genius to help him transform from an illustrator working on others' texts to an integrated, innovative and confident artist. As Sendak has expressed, his books were never aimed at children, he wrote for himself and for the joy of writing. Martin Salisbury affirms that he didn't even "acknowledge the notion of childhood as a separate state."

His books have been defined as controversial and aimed more at adults than children due to their dark topics and evocative - sometimes sinister - imagery, as in *Outside Over There*. Nonetheless, they have become literary classics in North American culture, redefining the concept of what a picturebook is and opening the way for the multiple innovations the form has been subject to afterwards.



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# THE ORIGINS OF THE PICTUREBOOK

Once upon a time, books were not actually created especially for children; children would read the adults' books they could access. But by the end of the 17th century the Puritans developed educational books intended to teach children about their religion and values, incorporating illustrations to make them more attractive. Eventually, more illustrated books were created for children but always with an instructional purpose in mind, such as alphabet books. The evolution of mass printing allowed the appearance of chapbooks made with cheap paper that included woodcut illustrations but they still worked only as decorative devices.

In the mid 1800s colour was incorporated to the printing process, giving children's books a new boost. Within this context Randolph Caldecott's illustrated books appear, "breaking new ground in expanding the role of the image in relation to the text", as Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles suggest. At this time, the classic illustrated children's book followed a very structured format where illustrations appeared on the right page of a double spread while the text was written on the left. Caldecott broke this convention not only visually, by combining words and pictures on the same page, but semantically, by playing with both elements so that the images tell that what the words do not, and vice versa. Thus, he is recognised by some as the forefather of the picturebook as we know it today.

Beatrix Potter, Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane are other important creators from this period. Even though their works do not focus on the interplay of word and image but rather center on the visual, their influence in the evolution of this form is still acknowledged.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Crane, Walter. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. London: Routledge, 1874.
2. Foster, Myles Birket [auth.], Greenaway, Kate [illus.]. *A Day in a Child's Life*. London: G. Routledge, 1880.
3. Greenaway, Kate. *Language of Flowers*. London: G. Routledge and sons, 1884.
4. Caldecott, Randolph. *The Hey Diddle Diddle: containing The Milkmaid, Hey Diddle Diddle, and Baby Bunting*. London: F. Warne, 1890.
5. Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. London: F. Warne, 1902.





# INNOVATIVE PICTUREBOOK FORMATS

## IN THIS CASE

1. Munari, Bruno. *In the Darkness of the Night*. Mantova: Corraini Edizioni, 1956.
2. Lionni, Leo. *Little Blue and Little Yellow*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.
3. Ahlberg, Janet [auth.], Ahlberg, Allan [illus.]. *The Jolly Postman*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1986.
4. Macaulay, David. *Black and White*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1990.
5. Wiesner, David. *The Three Pigs*. New York: Clarion Books, 2001.
6. Cottin, Menena [auth.], Faría, Rosana [illus.]. *The Black Book of Colors*. London: Walker Books, 2006.
7. Tullet, Hervé. *Mix it Up!* San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2006.
8. Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. London: Scholastic Ltd., 2008.
9. Tullet, Hervé. *Press Here*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2011.
10. Ellis, Carson. *Du Iz Tak?*. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick Press, 2016.
11. Agee, Jon. *The Wall in the Middle of the Book*. New York: Dial Books, 2018.

The picturebook is a live form. Artists continue to experiment with its shape, content and format to create unique stories and experiences for the reader, using the resources of each mode to extend the relationships between text and image in new unexpected ways. While some creators focus on the materiality of the book, developing tactile experiences that also affect its readings, others juxtapose time, space and narrative elements defining innovative internal dynamics. Whatever their style, they all share a common principle: their desire to play.

Italian Bruno Munari plays with combinations of papers in different shapes, sizes and colours to highlight parts of the narrative, surprising the reader with unexpected details -such as die-cuts- to reveal new layers of meaning.

Allan and Janet Ahlberg's *The Jolly Postman* plays with the physical form too but in a metafictional manner, as they retell some of the most known fairy tales by writing very personal letters directed to each of the characters. The books' pages are the envelopes that the reader has to open, becoming another active character in the story and transforming himself into a witness or another actor.

In *Black and White*, David Macaulay plays with multiple parallel narratives in a comic-like format, creating an open reading experience where the reader must fill in the gaps. Brian Selznick takes this idea even further, elaborating a dual structure where wordless images and imageless texts follow each other intermittently -and spontaneously- to complete the story whether in playing with the conventions of cinematic frames and the turning page dynamic of the picturebook, using wordless texts to convey the experience of hearing loss, or tell a story buried in the past.

Hervé Tullet's books are literally interactive, as they ask the reader to press, shake and move through the pages, playing with the limits of reality and fiction. In *Du Iz Tak?*, Carson Ellis plays with words, inventing a new language -a bug language- that the reader slowly learns to decode through the social interactions of its characters.

*The Black Book of Colours* by Menena Cottin is a semantic game where colours are explained through words in an all-black visual narrative that is also accompanied by text in Braille and embossed work on each page for fingers to explore. It is a tribute to the senses that plays with the notion of what it feels like to be visually impaired.



# THE PICTUREBOOK IS BORN

The arrival of the 20th century brought with it several social changes that affected the evolution of the picturebook: the development of better printing technologies, new attitudes towards childhood, and the appearance of an increasing number of outstanding artists and illustrators. Such is the case of William Nicholson, a British artist and designer whose work in *Clever Bill* and *The Pirate Twins* is one of the first examples of how words and images combine to express meaning, and how the “drama of the turning page” comes into action. His work is seminal in defining what the picturebook is and looks like: an integrated work of art where image and text need each other to make meaning and move the narrative forward. It is interesting to note how Nicholson leaves the sentences open at the end of each page so that the reader is forced to continue the sequence, both visually and verbally, by completing the idea at the turn of the page.

Nicholson’s work also influenced the publication of Wanda Gág’s *Millions of Cats* in the United States which became another referent of the evolution of the form. She combined the use of a horizontal format that enhanced the pastoral nature of the tale, creating more space to depict the landscapes, with a playful and innovative layout of the text, where the typography winds around the images so as to create a visual whole. She also utilized the double spread, or page opening of two pages for single scenes.

Marjorie Flack takes the most effective dynamics of oral storytelling -repetition, timing, contrast and surprise- and integrates them to her visual and verbal narrative. She creates stories that are meant to be read aloud, establishing oral patterns that are also reflected in the tension and anticipation she depicts through her design. As Barbara Bader suggests, she has “a feel for stories”, a “true picturebook sense”.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Nicholson, William. *Clever Bill*. 1926.
2. Gág, Wanda. *Millions of Cats*. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1928.
3. Flack, Marjorie. *Angus and the Ducks*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1930.





# POPULAR PICTUREBOOKS

## IN THIS CASE

1. Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline*. New York: Viking Press, 1939.
2. Rey, H.A. *Curious George*. Boston: Houghton, 1941.
3. Brown, Margaret Wise [auth.], Hurd, Clement [illus.]. *Goodnight Moon*. New York: Harper, 1947.
4. Seuss, Dr. *Horton Hears a Who!* New York: Random House, 1954.
5. Johnson, Crockett. *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. New York: Harper, 1955.
6. Lionni, Leo. *Frederick*. Köln: Middelhaue, 1967.
7. Freeman, Don. *Corduroy*. New York: Viking Press, 1968.
8. Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1969.
9. Silverstein, Shel. *The Missing Piece*. New York: Harper & Row, 1976.
10. Daywalt, Drew [auth.], Jeffers, Oliver [illus.]. *The Day the Crayons Quit*. New York: Philomel Books, 2013.

As books became more accessible, some of the stories and characters in them also became better known, turning into social referents of their times as well as commercial products. This is the case of *Curious George*, the beloved monkey character born in the 1940s who remains part of the collective culture of today's children. Besides being adapted to a popular animated TV series, his image is present in clothes, toys, puzzles, lunchboxes and many other artifacts.

*Corduroy* and *Madeline* are classic children's picturebooks that have also been adapted to films, while the works of contemporary creators turn into the new classics. Currently Oliver Jeffers is one of the most popular picturebook creators in the world. His best-selling books have a characteristic illustrative style that transcends the picturebook format as it is converted into stuffed characters, animated short-films, jewelry, posters and other memorabilia. Such is the case of *The Day the Crayons Quit*, written by Drew Daywalt. Eric Carle is another example of a picturebook artist whose unique style renders him a legend and whose following extends the life of his characters to clothes, crafts, decoration pieces and much more. The Eric Carle Museum in New York promotes the picturebook form displaying Carle's work and that of the best creators in the field.



# MAURICE SENDAK: THE MASTER

Maurice Sendak is one of the world's most popular children's books authors, especially in North America. His masterpiece, *Where The Wild Things Are*, has sold nearly 20 million copies worldwide, has many reprints and different editions since its original publication in 1963, and has also been adapted into the film and drama formats several times. Max and the Wild Things, its main characters, are now cultural icons; certain lines in the book, such as "Let the wild rumpus start!" are popular sayings that have escaped the flatness of the page to enter daily life frequently referenced in many media platforms.

Sendak's mastery resides both in the precise use of words as in the meticulous use of pictures to convey meaning. All his decisions are intentional, making use of particular visual details to express his narrative from the colours to the characters to the settings to the framing of images and composition of each page. As Martin Salisbury and Morag Styles note, this book is "the very model of excellence in word-picture interaction. At the most powerful moment of action in the book, when fury and imagination merge, the words retreat so that three dynamic spreads are nothing but pictures", showcasing the "subtlety and vigor between word and image" that make it a work of genius.

Maurice Sendak's genius is portrayed in the many works he created, both as an illustrator for others' texts and as a writer/illustrator of his own stories. Most of them challenge the traditional norms the picturebook follows, either by playing with the narrative structure, by using elements from other forms such as comics, or by depicting strange characters in dark scenarios to create unsettling stories, to name a few. Even today, his innovative work is still considered challenging and thought-provoking.

Notably it is during the sixties that the picturebook form is acknowledged as a literary art form. In good measure Sendak's work contributed to that realization. Sendak represented the great artists attracted to the picturebook form, not necessarily because they wanted to create stories for children but because they saw the form and its affordances as perfect for them in much the same way C.S. Lewis claimed that his *Narnia* series were written in a children's form because it was the best form for what he wanted to do.

## IN THIS CASE

1. Joslin, Sesyle [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.]. *What Do You Say, Dear?* New York: W.R. Scott, 1958.
2. Udry, Janice May [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.]. *The Moon Jumpers*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1959.
3. Minarik, Else Holmelund [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.]. *Little Bear's Visit*. New York: Harper & Row, An I Can Read Book, 1961.
4. Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
5. Sendak, Maurice. *Higglety Pigglety Pop! Or There Must Be More to Life*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967.
6. Sendak, Maurice. *In the Night Kitchen*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.
7. Grimm Brothers [auth.], Sendak, Maurice [illus.], Segal, Lore [trans.]. *The Juniper Tree and Other Tales from Grimm*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.
8. Lanes, Selma G. *The Art of Maurice Sendak*. New York: Abrams Inc., 1980.
9. Sendak, Maurice. *Outside Over There*. Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1981.
10. Sendak, Maurice. *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers-Michael diCapua Books, 1993.



# GROUND-BREAKING PICTUREBOOK TOPICS

## IN THIS CASE

1. Briggs, Raymond. *When the Wind Blows*. New York: Schocken Books, 1982.
2. Toshi, Maruki. *Hiroshima No Pika*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1982.
3. Innocenti, Roberto [auth./illus.], Gallaz, Christophe [auth.]. *Rose Blanche*. Mankato, MN: Creative Editions, 1985.
4. Richardson, Justin [auth.], Parnell, Peter [auth.], Cole, Henry [illus.]. *And Tango Makes Three*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005.
5. Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*. Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2006.
6. Greder, Armin. *The Island*. Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2008.
7. Erlbruch, Wolf. *Duck, Death and the Tulip*. Wellington, NZ: Gecko Press, 2011.
8. Poulin, Andrée [auth.], Malenfant, Isabelle [illus.]. *Pablo Finds a Treasure*. Toronto: Annick Press, 2016.
9. Dupuis, Jenny Kay [auth.], Kacer, Kathy [auth.], Newland, Gillian [illus.]. *I am Not a Number*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2016.
10. Love, Jessica. *Julián is a Mermaid*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2018.
11. Cherry, Matthew A. [auth.], Harrison, Vashti [illus.]. *Hair Love*. New York: Kokila, 2019.

Picturebook creators have defied its generational limits both in format and content by depicting topics that are often defined as serious, challenging and inappropriate for young readers. The question of who their intended audience is has been an issue for critics, academics, parents, librarians and teachers who want to organize picturebooks into fixed categories, but not necessarily for readers, who value and engage with such provocations. Many scholars have argued that the visual depiction of traumatic events is what creates such controversy around some of these picturebooks, as images can have a greater impact than words.

While Raymond Briggs makes a sarcastic yet somewhat naïve depiction of an atomic war in *When the Wind Blows*, Toshi Maruki's *Hiroshima No Pika* is a dramatic, real-life account of how she experienced and survived the atomic bomb at Hiroshima. Roberto Innocenti's *Rose Blanche* wraps the reader in the intimate story of a war victim during Nazi occupation, while Armin Greder's *The Island* and *Mediterranean* are dark and crude depictions of the dehumanization of refugees.

But not all such tales are obscure. Jessica Love's *Julián is a Mermaid* is a heartwarming story of how a little boy defines his own gender identity, while Matthew Cherry's *Hair Love* is a funny tale of family love, self-acceptance and hair.

War, death, poverty, mental health, gender and identity are some of the many issues picturebooks, both old and new, can showcase with precision and artistry, bringing together rationality and emotion into one reading.



# INDIGENOUS PICTUREBOOKS

## IN THIS CASE

1. Van Camp, Richard [auth.], Littlechild, George [illus.]. *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?.* San Francisco: Children's Book Press, 1998.
2. Einarson, Earl [auth.], Flett, Julie [illus.]. *The Moccasins.* Penticton: Theytus Books, 2004.
3. Yerxa, Leo. *Ancient Thunder.* Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2006.
4. Flett, Julie. *Owls See Clearly at Night.* Vancouver: Simply Read Books, 2010.
5. Van Camp, Richard [auth.], Flett, Julie [illus.]. *Little You.* Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 2013.
6. Jordan-Fenton, Christy [auth.], Grimard, Gabrielle [illus.]. *Not My Girl.* Toronto: Annick Press, 2014.
7. Kalluk, Celina [auth.], Neonakis, Alexandria [illus.]. *Sweetest Kulu.* Iqaluit, Nunavut: Inhabit Media Inc., 2014.
8. Flett, Julie. *We All Count: a book of Cree numbers.* Vancouver: Native Northwest, 2014.
9. Florence, Melanie [auth.], Thisdale, Francois [illus.]. *Missing Nimâmâ.* Richmond Hill: Clockwise Press, 2015.
10. Daniel, Danielle. *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox.* Toronto: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2015.
11. Van Camp, Richard [auth.], Flett, Julie [illus.]. *We Sang You Home.* Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 2016.
12. Robertson, David [auth.], Flett, Julie [illus.]. *When We Were Alone.* Winnipeg: HighWater Press, 2016.
13. Florence, Melanie [auth.], Grimard, Gabrielle [illus.]. *Stolen Words.* Toronto: Second Story Press, 2017.
14. Vermette, Katherena [auth.], Flett, Julie [illus.]. *The Girl and the Wolf.* Penticton: Theytus Books, 2019.
15. Koyczan, Shane. *Inconvenient Skin.* Penticton: Theytus Books, Indig Lits, 2019.

Picturebooks are social and cultural artifacts. As such, they reflect the dominant narratives of a certain moment in time, but they can also make visible those often kept invisible. Indigenous picturebooks are gaining a relevance of their own as representations of the cultural heritage of their communities, as expressive means to materialize both positive and traumatic experiences, and as examples of the immense talent and creativity of their writers and illustrators. These books tell compelling real-life stories through the eyes of magic, and make magic seem plausible and part of daily life.

Richard Van Camp is a member of the Dogrib (Tlicho) Nation from Fort Smith, North Western Territories. In *What's the Most Beautiful Thing About Horses?* he plays with perspectives and the notion of familiarity by trying to define what a horse is through his questions and other people's answers. The illustrations by Cree artist George Littlechild are as playful as the text, with its bright colours, lively line and juxtaposition of elements and details. Julie Flett, a Cree-Metis Canadian author and illustrator has collaborated with Van Camp and other writers, besides publishing her own works. Her well defined and contrasting images, full of details, render stories that express Indigenous values of land and family. Daniel Danielle's *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox* is a poetic tribute to the Anishinaabe tradition of totem animals acknowledging their different powers.

These are all examples of the potential of the picturebook to address issues of any nature, whether concrete, abstract, complex, simple, emotional, matter-of-fact, past or present, with a level of depth and artistry that the literary picturebook form affords.



# AWARD WINNING PICTUREBOOKS

## IN THIS CASE

1. Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline's Rescue*. New York, Viking Press, 1953. **Caldecott Medal**.
2. Udry, Janice May [auth.], Simont, Marc [illus.]. *A Tree is Nice*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1956. **Caldecott Medal**.
3. Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Polar Express*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985. **Caldecott Medal**.
4. Marcus, Leonard S. *A Caldecott Celebration: six artists and their paths to the Caldecott medal*. New York: Walker & Co., 1998.
5. Wiesner, David. *Flotsam*. New York: Clarion Books, 2006. **Caldecott Medal**.
6. Cole, Henry. *Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2012. **Caldecott Medal**.
7. Sanna, Francesca. *The Journey*. New York: Flying Eye Books, 2016. **Greenaway Medal**.
8. Cordell, Matthew. *Wolf in the Snow*. New York: Feiwel and Friends, 2017. **Caldecott Medal**.
9. Davies, Nicola [auth.], Cobb, Rebecca [illus.]. *The Day War Came*. Somerville, Mass: Candlewick Press, 2018. **Greenaway Medal**.
10. Macfarlane, Robert [auth.], Morris, Jackie [illus.]. *The Lost Words: a spell book*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2018. **Greenaway Medal**.
11. Flett, Julie. *Birdsong*. Vancouver: Greystone Kids, 2019. **GG Finalist**.
12. Alexander, Kwame [auth.], Nelson, Kadir [illus.]. *The Undefeated*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019. **Caldecott Medal**.

In its first one hundred years, the picturebook has gained recognition as a literary art form. As it evolved into an acknowledged serious art form it attracted artists and illustrators around the world. Its literary status followed the recognition of the artistry of the images. Initially scholars and critics made the argument that the best illustrations are art but then in recognition of the particular nature of the picturebook as a collaboration of words and pictures academics realized that illustrations in picturebooks cannot stand alone individually as they are conceived as sequential art. This sequential nature together with the collaboration of the verbal text and/or narrative, make the picturebook one of the most complex and most poetic contemporary art forms. Today, several international awards recognize the artistic, creative and informational qualities of these works. Three of the most important awards in the English-speaking world are the Caldecott Medal (US), the Kate Greenaway Medal (UK) and the Governor General's Literary Awards (Canada).

The Caldecott Medal is awarded each year to the illustrator of the most distinguished picturebook for children in the United States. It was created by the US Association for Library Service to Children after Randolph Caldecott, a writer and illustrator from the late 1800s who is considered to be a forefather of the picturebook form.

The Kate Greenaway Medal -in honour of the 19th-century English illustrator of children's books by the same name- also recognizes the work of a distinguished children's books illustrator. It is presented by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

The Canadian Council for the Arts also acknowledges picturebook creators and illustrators through the Governor General's Literary Awards in the Young People's Literature – Illustrated Books Category.

Most of the books selected for this exhibit have won one of these awards. The ones showcased here are exemplars from past to present times.



# PICTUREBOOK ANNOTATIONS





# A

Agee, Jon. *The Wall in the Middle of the Book*. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2018.

As the title suggests, there is a wall in the middle of the book that separates two places from each other. To the left is the safe place, as the main character and narrator, a tiny knight in armor, suggests. To the right is the unknown, risky, wild, and exotic world he has to be protected from. But suddenly, without even noticing it, his world becomes unsafe too, and he is saved from an unexpected helper, someone from the other side, who teaches him a lesson about the subjective nature of walls and their supposedly protecting powers. Agee's text is simple and short, and with this, he manages to convince the reader that what the character is saying is the truth, nothing but facts. It starts with the obvious: "there is a wall in the middle of the book," which there is: a traditional brick wall placed in the gutter. This position value gives the book a new topographical quality, as it literally turns into the wall, and is not only the container of the story or the visual representation of what is being narrated. The knight continues to explain that the wall is good, as it protects one side from the other. He is actually finishing the wall, placing the last brick, with the happy, confident expression of someone who thinks their job is well done. The reader can see what lies on the other side, although the main character cannot. Menacing wild beasts -a tiger, a rhinoceros, a gorilla, all with angry faces- are there, demonstrating that what is being said is true. But then, something starts to shift, and as the little knight focuses on the wall, he stops looking at his own reality, only to find that it becomes more menacing than the other, unknown world. The rhythm of the text flows naturally with the images, as water starts rising on the safe side, and a crocodile appears next to the knight, devouring a duck. On the wild side, the fierce creatures are scared by a little mouse, demonstrating how appearances are sometimes deceitful.

This extremely adventurous scenario, where dangers are present on both sides of the wall, is depicted in a subtle and playful manner, in a soothing light colour palette, with some translucent elements that give it more depth, such as the water over the ladder and the duck's body. Even the ogre, the main villain, has pale green skin, making him look less terrifying. The artist combines a humorous and comic-like style to depict the characters, who show their feelings through gestures and, mainly, through the eyes. All the elements are two dimensional, reinforcing the idea of the two-dimensional world they form part of, where things are either good or bad, created by the wall. Their contours are precise and defined, as if they were paper cut-outs, although the reader can distinguish brush strokes and colour nuances that make them feel less rigid and more painted. Yet, the use of one illustrative style to depict these two parallel stories confirms that both worlds are not as different as they seem.

The wall becomes a cohesive resource as it frames these two focal points where the actions take place, although the text only focuses on one, the side where the knight lives in. This is a fantastic visual metaphor of how subjectivity can rule our point of view and become a definition of reality, even if it is not truthful. When the reality changes and the knight crosses to the other side of the wall, saved by the ogre, the narrator also changes, as the ogre is given a voice. And this voice is funny and amicable, it is laughter. There is an interesting visual composition in the depiction of one fish eating others with its mouth wide open on the safe side, and the ogre laughing with its mouth wide open on the other side. The previous to last spread shows how life continues: the safe side is now invaded by a menacing aquatic animal with scary eyes. There is no space to breathe, as water covers everything. The other side is blank, open to all the possibilities. The next spread is the representation of freedom, a place where no walls exist, where everyone is happy and lives in harmony. Except for the mouse, the next victim, who appears in the back matter. This is a wonderful resource to inspire conversations on the pros and cons of building walls between people and nations.

# A

Ahlberg, Janet and Allan. *The Jolly Christmas Postman*. Little, Brown, 1991.

Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal, 1992.

This epistolary picturebook contains many interactive and innovative elements. Throughout the book, readers can pull out and read holiday letters and other ‘gifts’ for several famous fairy-tale characters, such as the Three Bears (who now have a new baby bear), Little Red Riding Hood, and Humpty Dumpty. Each letter may be removed from its envelope and read separately. The Jolly Christmas Postman is a sequel to *The Jolly Postman* (also created by the Ahlbergs) and offers a tactile and multisensory reading experience for children. First of all, children will read the story and enjoy pulling out each item from its envelope and noticing the humorous titles on each piece of mail, such as “Mr. H. Dumpty” or “Mister Wolf”. Then they can enjoy reading and playing with the contents of the envelopes: There is a card for Baby Bear, a game for Red Riding Hood and a get-well jigsaw for Humpty Dumpty. In addition to these interactive elements, the book is also a puzzle in itself. Hours can be spent looking at the illustrations and identifying famous characters from fairy tales and other children’s books such as the dish literally running away with the spoon or santa in his workshop. When inspected closely, one can find plenty of incongruous and ironically humorous situations, such as Mister Wolf playing with the three pigs and the little red hen, the jolly milkman delivering milk to a castle, or the Gingerbread Boy eating a cookie: “A book in a book!” says the Gingerbread Boy. / ‘What a simply delicious surprise.’ / (But if only he knew, he’s in one, too -- / That really would open his eyes.)” The text by Allan Ahlberg is written in alternating rhyming lines and cleverly pokes fun at fairy tale tropes while also breaking the fourth wall and providing a commentary on the book itself. Janet Ahlberg’s highly detailed illustrations entice the reader to inspect each page closely to look for whimsical moments such as teddy bears sliding down a slide from elf to elf in Santa’s toy shop or the tiny tin box home that Gingerbread Boy lives in, complete with chimney and front door. *The Jolly Christmas Postman* will appeal to adults and children alike with its clever allusions and intriguing illustrations.



# A

Ardizzone, Edward. *Tim to the Rescue*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1949.

*Tim to the Rescue* is the third book in a series of eleven books in the ‘Little Tim’ adventures by British writer and illustrator, Edward Ardizzone. This series captures the desire in all children to go live vicariously through a protagonist who is small yet determined; afraid yet courageous. In this story, Tim tests his mettle on the seas as second ship’s boy to Captain McFee and achieves self-actualization by using his own wits to help a fellow shipmate in need. In the same vein as other quintessential ‘English’ children’s books (*The Hobbit*, *Treasure Island*, *Alice and Wonderland*), *Tim to the Rescue* begins and ends with a scene of domesticity. Tim has the blessing of his parents since he “had been a good boy and had worked hard at his lessons” (4) so he is given permission to escape the doldrums of everyday life. In this way, children will feel safe reading a story about a boy who has a support network to return to and will relish imagining doing so themselves.

Ardizzone is particularly noted for his impressionist illustrations which appear to be rendered quickly and capture both the movement and whimsy of his characters. His use of pen-and-ink line drawings coloured with watercolour washes captures the essence of a scene through simple touches, such as the exaggerated features in the characters’ faces, gestures or clothing. For example, Tim has a small pointy nose and his small frame contrasts ironically with the long-limbed, mustached “Old Joe” for whom Tim is tasked with writing letters (11). Ardizzone employs the relatively new technique of speech bubbles, with dialogue written in his own hand to bring his characters to life. His casually written penmanship combined with a salty dialect -- “Blimey Mr Bosun, I just can’t, my thumb aches simply horrible” ( 19) -- create a sense of fun as they contrast with more conservative texts children might be required to read in school.

The text of the story is placed above or below illustrations and continue from one page to the next in the same style as a traditional chapter book; however the illustrations are sometimes placed on an angle to replicate the skewed movement of a ship at sea (22-23). Ardizzone uses a simple colour palette of grey, blue, and brown contrasted with pops of colour -- yellow and red -- to give the impression of the colours of sea and life on a ship. Yellow and red are the salient colours which draw the eye to Tim’s movements as he works on the ship, first the yellow of his hair, and the red of his shirt and then his yellow sou’wester hat and raincoat (29). Ardizzone’s carefree and confident style combined with his use of finely wrought cross-hatching continue to impress children’s book writers and illustrators today. In an attempt to explain the influence of Ardizzone’s work, Maurice Sendak commented in 1967, “[h]e works easy magic [here]...and these whirlwind-rendered watercolours – that look careless to the dull-minded – are some of his finest.”

# B

Bailey, Linda. *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein*. Illustrated by Julia Sarda. Tundra Books, 2018.

Some of the most inspirational stories can be found in real life. It is not surprising then, that the biography picturebook has become a publishing phenomenon. Authors of this genre treat their subjects as if they are still alive, making their life even more impactful through creative nonfiction storytelling. *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein* falls into this category of books which recounts the life of the subject, Mary, in an immersive way by weaving atmospheric illustrations with thoughtful descriptions of important moments to bring her story to life. Bailey emphasizes Mary's unique upbringing and her penchant for daydreaming and imagining and in the process, she describes how such a creative thinker and writer came to exist. A subject of controversy, some have pontified that *Frankenstein* was written by Mary's husband, Percy Shelley; however, Bailey makes a strong case for Mary having both the aptitude and predisposition for being a writer. In this way, *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein* is not only a celebration of how an idea for a book germinates, but also a celebration of a female writer who wrote one of the greatest horror novels and what has come to be recognized as the first works of science fiction.

Bailey establishes Mary's character by explaining early influences in her life which lead up to her imaginative nature: she learned to read by tracing the letters of her mother's gravestone and was saturated with daydreams which she kept note of in a journal. She met Percy Shelley as a young lady and was influenced by him and other writers such as Lord Byron (a well-known poet in that time) to write. In fact the impetus for the novel, *Frankenstein*, was a proposal made by Byron one evening for a group of friends to write a ghost story. Mary took this challenge and was inspired by both a dream and new findings on the science of electricity to create the story of *Frankenstein*. To match the unusual and intriguing moments in Mary's life, illustrator, Julia Sarda, uses a dark colour palette of black, greys and browns contrasted with rust and burnt orange to illustrate an exquisite array of gothic and ornate scenes. The cast of characters who influence Mary's life, introduced in the end papers, are given the same spooky eyes and pallid skin as the monster, *Frankenstein*. Sarda surrounds them with strange animals, a flock of crows, a peacock and a monkey to suggest their eccentricity. Sarda's watercolor and digital illustrations enhance Bailey's text which is delivered in a simple style with short sentences that children can easily understand. When Mary is introduced as a dreamer whose daydreams "are the most thrilling of all" (4-5), the two-page spread illustration that accompanies these words portrays a small British village whose skies are filled with streams of grey and black smoke that produce evocative shapes and moody opportunity. Mary as a small child looks up with wonder and imagination. Many of the details in these illustrations will fascinate children who also have a strong imagination: they will be enthralled with the 18th century gravestone designs (6-7) or the creepy-crawly two-eyed creatures that accompany a reading of the "Fantasmagoriana" (23-24). Both spine-tingling and cosy, Julia Sarda's illustrations will entice children and inspire them to write their own ghost stories. *Mary Who Wrote Frankenstein* includes an extensive Author's Note which includes more detailed notes on Mary Shelley's life, her inspiration as well as Linda Bailey's thoughts on the story behind the novel, *Frankenstein*. There is also a full-page portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and a list of sources. This well-informed and impactful biography picturebook successfully captures the life of an inspiring author and the inspiration behind a great work of fiction.

# B

Bang, Molly. *The Grey Lady and the Strawberry Snatcher*. Simon & Schuster, 1980

In this wordless picturebook, author-illustrator, Molly Bang challenges the conventions of the picturebook to create a story which is left to the reader to interpret and narrate. The unique quality of *The Grey Lady* is that she is wearing a grey cloak which allows her to blend into some of her surroundings. Using the concept of negative space, the Grey Lady stands out in a bustling city scene, but she blends into a matching grey street or a tree. Bang skillfully plays with this contrast between positive and negative space to create suspense: while the Strawberry Snatcher is chasing her, you can only identify her by her face and fingers which are a similar colour to the strawberries. In this way, readers need to work harder to follow the story and figure out where the movement is leading them. The swaths of grey in the book contrast dramatically with intricately detailed and colourful illustrations that make up the Grey Lady's surroundings. For example, the two-page spread which introduces the reader to the Strawberry Snatcher (2-3) is a feast of contrasting patterns and bright colours from the glossy grapes to the wood grain on the wall. With so much to look at, the Grey Lady stands out for her non-patterned and colourless hair and clothing. The startling array of colours and details may distract the reader from the sneaky Strawberry Snatcher who follows the Grey Lady down the street. The juxtaposition of this sequence of actions -- the Strawberry Snatcher is peeking out behind a wall (2) and then following the Grey Lady (3) -- creates suspense and paves the way for a cat-and-mouse chase that is made more compelling by the mysterious 'grey' which occupies more and more of the landscape. In the final scene, the Grey Lady is reunited with her family who also wear 'grey' garments. One wonders if the lack of colour in their clothing is a commentary on how powerful colour truly is.

Blades, Ann. *Mary of Mile 18*. Tundra Books, 1971.

British Columbia's maven of children's literature, Judith Saltman, has declared this book a 'breakthrough' for children's literature in BC. Set in a small settlement in northern British Columbia, *Mary of Mile 18* is loosely based on a real-life experience by author Ann Blades when she was a teacher there. The story describes the life of Mary, a young girl living a simple homesteading life where survival requires all members of the household to help with chores for subsistence on a farm. Mary finds a wolf-pup that she wishes to keep and therein lies the struggle as she opposes her father to achieve her desire. The topography of this picturebook is fairly straightforward -- text on the left side of the open book narrates the events and paintings illustrates them on the right. What is remarkable are the scenes chosen to be the focal point of the illustrations. Each is a jewel paying tribute to quiet moments in the north such as the brilliant yellow, orange and green crackle of the northern lights in the sky (3) or the log home surrounded by soft snow with a solitary channel of smoke coming out of its chimney (7). Each exquisite watercolour painting contains a world of its own and is a testament to the beauty and simplicity of life for early settlers in BC.

# B

Bemelmans, Ludwig. *Madeline*. New York: The Viking Press, 1939.

This timeless story remains a compelling tribute to bold individuality. Through a series of consecutive rhyming lines, Ludwig Bemelmans tells the story of Madeline, a young red-headed girl who alternately raises eyebrows for her naughty antics and engenders empathy for losing her appendix. Madeline is small but brave: “She was not afraid of mice -- / she loved winter, snow and ice. / To the tiger in the zoo / Madeline just said, ‘Pooh-pooh.’” Bemelmans narrates the story with rhyming couplets which accompany full page illustrations. The text is consistently two lines per page with the final page of the book inventively placed in smaller and smaller font to mirror Miss Clavel’s putting the girls to sleep by closing the door to their room. The phrase, “And that’s all there is / There isn’t anymore” lulls the reader to sleep as it concludes the story.

Bemelmans’ pen and ink drawings are iconic. He illustrates his characters in a cartoonish style with simple lines and squiggles. The figures are disproportionate, with the girls’ bodies appearing as rectangles or triangles adorned with heads and stick-figure legs; however, with simple strokes of the pen, Bemelmans’ conveys emotion on their faces which bring them to life. Madeline stands out from the other girls due to her red hair and the impish expression on her face. Miss Clavel, the mistress of the boarding school, looms above the girls in a dark cloak and habit. Her blue cloak has an imposing air of authority, but it is also suggestive of a bird’s wings, signifying her role as protector. Miss Clavel is never far from the girls and is typically portrayed as a silent sentinel at the back of her flock as they make their way through Paris. In one image (17), Madeline walks precariously along the ledge of a bridge precipice and Miss Clavel is depicted with her hand on her brow. The words, “and nobody knew so well / how to frighten Miss Clavel”, demonstrate the push - pull relationship of the story with Madeline getting into predicaments and Miss Clavel coming to her rescue. The simplicity of the line drawings give a naive, child-like charm to the book which draws the reader into a world of childhood. Part of the appeal of this picturebook is its impressionistic scenes of well-known Parisian locations such as Place Vendôme, the Opéra National de Paris, the Eiffel Tower and the Jardins de Luxembourg. These are painted in saturated colours of dark greens, browns and yellows in watercolour and gouache to demonstrate the importance of the setting in contributing to Madeline’s education. Scenes of the boarding house where the girls live are illustrated in thick, uneven black ink and coloured in yellow watercolour. The saturated yellow hues add a brightness to the pages which match the youthful exuberance of Madeline.

Bemelman wrote and illustrated six books about Madeline, one of them, *Madeline’s Rescue*, won the 1954 Caldecott prize.

Briggs, Raymond. *Father Christmas*. Penguin Books, 1973.

Inspired by his own father’s work as a milkman, Briggs brings Father Christmas to life as a whole person, one with a multi-faceted personality prone to bouts of grumpiness at the doldrums of his job. The ironic tone of this picturebook will appeal to children and adults since it takes a glorified folkloric hero and puts him in mundane settings. As with his other works, Raymond Briggs illustrates his scenes with an impressionistic, cartoon style of watercolour and ink. Father Christmas begs the reader to notice the small details, such as the thermos Father Christmas brings to work with him or the way he mutters, “GRRR” at the news that there will be more “[s]now, ice, frost...” to come. Children will delight in seeing their hero as a human with all the foibles that each of us struggles with everyday. Raymond Briggs has been considered to be revolutionary for his time by creating the first hybrid picturebook, books that use full colour comic paneling along with speech balloons and captions. His use of comic book conventions gently opened the door to school and public librarians acquiring first these hybrid books and then other graphic novels as they began to see the literary affordances of the form.

# B

Brown, Margaret Wise. *Goodnight Moon*. Harper & Row, 1947.

This iconic picturebook remains both popular and noteworthy after so many years due to its unique features and intriguing layers of meaning. *Goodnight Moon* may seem like a straightforward bedtime story at first, but the more one investigates its carefully planned text and visual features, the more there is to uncover. First of all, the story is soothing in its repetition of the word ‘goodnight’ and its rhythmic pattern of repeated rhyming couplets. The repetition and rhythm form a lullaby that moves from the concrete to the abstract as the final rhyming couplet crescendos with a nod to the unknown: “Goodnight stars / Goodnight air / Goodnight noises everywhere” (28-31). The somewhat hypnotic sounds of the text are countered by the multi-sensory information contained in the illustrations. The brilliant orange, green, blue, yellow and red colours are reminiscent of the circus and do not denote the peaceful ambiance needed to go to sleep. This contradiction reminds the reader of the perspective of a child whose mind wanders as it struggles with the transition to sleep. The unmoored state of falling asleep is replicated in the scattered movement of focus from one object to another in the room, from the “telephone / And a red balloon” (2-3) to “a picture of — / “The cow jumping over the moon” (2-4). There are several intertextual references to a nursery rhyme (Hey Diddle Diddle), a fairy tale (Goldilocks and the Three Bears), and another children’s book written by the same duo (Runaway Bunny). These references allude to the stories a child might hear before bed and remind the reader of a child’s imagination as it wanders around the room and transitions to sleep.

The progression of a child from an awake state to a sleepy one is mirrored in the movement of the moon from being low in the sky as it peeks through the window (7) to being fully visible and round (30) to suggest the advent of night. The colour palette also changes as the “great green room” is depicted with bright and vibrant colours to begin while those same colours slowly become more and more dark and muted by the end of the book. In the final pages, Hurd captures the magical state of night with small accents of light -- the bright yellow windows of the dollhouse, the pure white moon and stars at the window, and the flickering orange light of the fire. *Goodnight Moon* is a masterful picturebook which intricately interweaves story and visuals to subtly nudge the reader to a state of repose.

# B

Britt, Fanny. *Jane, the fox and me*. Illustrated by Isabelle Arsenault. Les Éditions de la Pastèque, 2012.

This Canadian tour de force is a co-production between Fanny Britt, a well-known playwright and Isabelle Arsenault, an illustrator who has primarily illustrated picturebooks to date. *Jane, the fox & me* is a graphic novel inspired by real-life experiences of Fanny Britt as a youth and is the first work by Fanny Britt to be translated from its original French language. While the story is set in Sherbrooke, Québec in the past and makes specific cultural references to the past -- Kate and Anna McGarrigle are playing on the record player (54) -- the themes and content of the story are timeless and will resonate strongly with readers today. The story relates how the protagonist of the story Hélène is bullied at school and how her previous friends no longer talk to her: “I’ve been riding the bus alone for sometime now. Since way before Hélène weighs 316” (15). The text is written in a hand-printed all caps font throughout but with certain phrases written in a sloppier printing to indicate the voice of Hélène’s bullies. The font captures the feel of a child’s writing to match the voice of the protagonist in her middle high school years. Arsenault uses rough, pencil-drawn black and white sketches to convey the invisibility that Hélène feels as she navigates the cold world of preadolescence. The graphic novel features in the novel are unique as Arsenault’s panels are borderless and delineated solely by their grey shading to reinforce the stark mood of the content. Many panels are depicted in moment-to-moment wordless sequence to give the reader an interpretive role. For example, the school is shown in a series of illustrations with youth clustered together looking out at the reader (11) to indicate how Hélène feels as though everyone is laughing at her and talking about her.

The monochromatic world of Hélène is contrasted with her escape into literature and her reading of the novel, *Jane Eyre* (16-17). These pages are depicted in colour, with red and oranges highlighting the pleasure that Hélène feels when she can live vicariously through a story. Arsenault uses symbolic imagery to convey deeper issues in the story. For example, *Jane Eyre* is portrayed initially with a bright white face, like a mask, to suggest that she too is an outsider. Another symbol is the fox which appears to Hélène in colour during her school camping trip, and whose kind eyes give her hope: “That same look in another human’s eyes, and my would would be theirs for sure” (78). When Hélène finally makes a friend, her blossoming happiness is indicated by petals springing out of her friend’s mouth and she starts to see these petals all around her as the world becomes multi-coloured (95-101). These stylized illustrations serve the same purpose as figurative language for the written word as they reveal the inner emotional journey of Hélène. Looking back on the story, discrepancies between the text and certain illustrations become apparent as Hélène believes herself to be fat but she is drawn as a child of normal weight. In fact, as Hélène is shown to be an unreliable narrator at times, readers may interpret her strong feelings of isolation to be partially self-inflicted. This moving graphic novel thoughtfully navigates the challenging territory of growing up.



# B

Browne, Anthony. *Voices in the Park*. D. K. Publishing, 2001.

*Voices in the Park* is a postmodern picturebook which employs such metafictional elements as polyphonic narrators, intertextual references and an indeterminate plot to construct a new way of looking at the world (McCallum, 1996). This picturebook describes a simple trip to the park but is told in four voices, and from four different perspectives. Each section of the book showcases one person's voice and their narration of the same visit to the park. Using subtle clues for each character, Browne conveys their tone of voice and shows at the same time how each character views the world differently depending on his or her own biases and status in the world. Giving equal weight to each narrator's perspective, "the voices represent a polyphonic narrative where no one perspective is privileged over another" (Serafini, 2005).

Browne uses all the key meaning making resource systems of the picturebook to express the four tales. Using distinct typographic fonts for each character Browne deftly sets the tone of voice. Registers of verbal narrative reflect four different voices in sounds, word choice, and rhythm. The first voice of the mother is portrayed as an upper class woman who is overprotective of her pedigreed dog Victoria, and her son Charles as they interact with others in the park. Her section is written in a classic font to reflect cultural refinement. The second voice of the father is written in bolded text with a less formal font which along with a looser sentence structure and imperfect grammar suggests that he is working class. The third voice is that of Charles, the son of the mother, whose section is written in a thin font to indicate his lack of autonomy and self-confidence against the influence of his mother. The fourth voice of Smudge, the daughter of the father (second voice) is portrayed with a more playful font to indicate her openness to the world. The voices are constructed separately, yet each voice subtly indicates attitudes towards class, prejudice and hope for friendship as they interact with one another. Browne demonstrates how each character prejudices one another; the mother disapproves of Charles playing with Smudge whom she calls a "very rough-looking child," Charles is wary of playing with Smudge since she is "a girl," Smudge thinks that Charles is a wimp and the father is too preoccupied with looking for work to notice the others.

In the visual system the park is rendered in four different colour palettes, with varying degrees of salience awarded to each voice. For example, the mother's section is depicted with a classic, artistic look as the greenery in the park provides a picturesque backdrop to showcase her perfect appearance: her clothing is brightly coloured and the red hat which she wears symbolizes her upper class status. The father's section, however, begins with him walking on the city sidewalk and is illustrated with darker tones of grey, brown and blue to convey his uninspired attitude and lack of hope. As typical of Browne's work, there are many intertextual references to other artists and texts which add quiet humour and added layers of meaning to the story. For example, Santa Claus, the Mona Lisa, the Queen of England and other unexpected images appear to add to the mood and emotions of each of the characters. A painting of the Mona Lisa is seen on the sidewalk as the father walks by and is shown to be crying, reflecting his sorrowful mood due to his lack of financial security. Finally, Browne chooses to portray his characters as gorillas to cause the reader to pay more attention to social cues other than appearance, such as voice, typography and visual cues. If these characters had been depicted as human, readers might have preconceived bias about race or socioeconomic class. This innovative picturebook cleverly weaves a tale of one small outing in the park that is multi-coloured by four views to portray an interesting message that we all have biases and prejudice.

# B

Burgess, Matthew. *Enormous SMALLNESS*. Illustrated by Kris Di Giacomo. Enchanted Lion Books, 2015.

This biographical picturebook captures the life of e.e. cummings in a befitting medley of creative wordplay and illustrations. Burgess writes the book in a way that pays homage to the creative genius of e.e. cummings as well as to the child reader who may be inspired to both use words imaginatively and dare to be unusual. The message in the book's epigraph is the essential takeaway of the book: "It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are." e. e. cummings certainly had to overcome adversity to change the way society viewed language and poetry in the 1900's to establish himself in the writing world. In this way, these lines of his poems serve as inspiration to all readers to say yes to being different and yes to accepting others: "yes is a world / & in this world of / yes lives / (skillfully curled) / all worlds" (50). Burgess integrates Cummings' poetry into the story in a way that gives the reader a sense of the music of his voice while explaining important stages of his life and creative journey. The lines of the book often blend e.e. Cummings' own words with rhyming lines about him: "But no matter what the world was giving or taking, / E. E. went right on dreaming and making" (40).

The title of the picturebook hints at the huge impact that a few small words (a poem) can make in the world. In addition, it refers to the creative way that e.e. composed his poems, by breaking the rules of rhythm and rhyme as well as the structure of how a poem appears on a page. Illustrator Di Giacomo visually represents this playfulness with text by incorporating typed letters into his illustrations. They appear in the clouds coming out of the elephant's trunk, as leaves on a tree, or floating out of his mouth as a part of his breath (27). The typography in the picturebook is also unique since words are given a certain font, angle and shape to represent the message. This is seen in the phrase, "dance across the page" (36) where the word dance is written in thick, flowing script evoking the feeling of the creative energy behind e.e.'s work. This picturebook will not only give the reader an appreciation for a great artist but more importantly, it will instill a love of language and a fearless desire to create.



# B

Burningham, John. *Granpa*. Random House Children's, 1985.

This postmodern picturebook is all about points of view. The author depicts moments in the lives of a little girl and her grandparent through their intimate and funny interactions and perspectives. Since there is no sequential or linear narration to follow, as readers, we must fill in the gaps to make sense of the independent texts, hence becoming accomplices, with points of view of our own regarding the story. Burningham gives us some hints as to how to approach the narration. The texts that belong to each character are differentiated by the use of italic and regular typographic styles; the first belonging to the little girl, the latter to Granpa. The images also guide our reading, in that they convey different meanings. On the right page we usually see full-colour depictions of scenes that happen in their real-life world, while on the left, there are black and white line illustrations that complement this scene telling us more details about what is not seen through the previous actions. They may be feelings, memories, or the product of their imagination. Only the two central double spreads break this pattern by presenting full-colour illustrations of scenes that have a very dramatic weight. The first one, the little girl's and Granpa's argument over something she has said. They are both facing opposite directions and almost on the edges of their respective pages, representing the emotional distance between them as well as the physical one. There is nothing else depicted, only them so that we concentrate on their gestures and emotions. Burningham manages to build tension by the use of the space between these two opposing forces: they are so far away from each other, we don't know if they will get closer again or farther apart. There is nothing there to connect them, only blankness. The text reads: "That was not a nice thing to say to Granpa." The following double spread is the resolution to this situation, depicting Granpa and the little girl again on the edges of each page, but now they are facing each other and are connected by the same experience, sharing ice cream and spending an afternoon playing in the garden. We now know that the distance between them was only momentary and that the love and friendship is as strong as ever, even more than before perhaps, as this is one of the only scenes where their text is actually correlated, and they are engaged in a dialogue. "This is lovely chocolate ice-cream", Granpa says, to what she replies "It's not chocolate. It's strawberry!".

This moving picturebook manages to evoke the strong and special relationship between Granpa and his granddaughter through the playful dialogue between images and very few, but precise, words. The hand-drawn, irregular images seem more personal and intimate, as so is the nature of narration, focused on the emotional bond between the two characters. The ending is abrupt: the seat where Granpa and the girl watched TV in the previous image appears in the last double spread, empty. The little girl is curled on her knees, looking directly at the empty space, as there is nothing else drawn, only the sofa and an empty table beside it. No words can describe the emptiness she feels either, upon his death. The last page shows a coloured scene of a sunny day, where a little girl pushes a stroller with a baby. Is it the little girl with a new baby brother? Or is it Granpa's sister pushing him when he was little? That's for the reader to decide, although we can know for sure that where one story ends, another also begins. This beautiful book can be used as inspiration to help children talk about their relationships with others, be it friends or family, and express their feelings. It is also a great example of how visual literacy can be constructed, by deconstruction its elements –colour, line, space, graphic style- and the meanings they convey.

# B

Burton, Virginia Lee. *Mike Mulligan and the Steam Shovel*. Broughton Mifflin Company, 1939.

This 48-page picturebook is unique for its graphite pencil drawings and creative text placement which combine to replicate the form and movement of the steam shovel. Graphite pencil is used for illustrations throughout the book and the shaded dark grey pencil resembles the billows of steam that come out of the steam shovel's engine. Another salient feature in the illustrations is the colour red which suggests the love and passion that Mike Mulligan has for his "beautiful red steam shovel" (3). The steam shovel's preeminent place in Mike's heart is indicated by her anthropomorphic treatment in the story. She is named Mary Anne and Mike loves her so much that he cannot bear to sell her for junk after new "Diesel motor shovels" (14) come along. The salient colour red is repeated in the illustration of the town hall where the fate of Mary Anne is deliberated as well as in the chimney which is built around Mary Anne to give her a new purpose as she "warm[s] up the meetings in the new town hall" (48). The replication of the colour red symbolizes the cyclical nature of life as old leads to new. This story can be viewed allegorically as the steam shovel is often taken to represent any form of technology that is obsolete: Burton admonishes society to not be so quick to abandon what is considered to be 'old' technology and to respect the work of our forefathers. The book was published during the Great Depression and is even more poignant when considered in this context. The new world order of Diesel trains and skyscrapers, representing industrial America is shown as the inevitable way forward as people struggle to make ends meet in traditional ways. Burton's attention to detail makes her depiction of the various faces of society ring true. With simple iconic postures, she makes the townspeople of Popperville come to life (17-19) while her variations in pencil shading (29-31) give the impression of movement. The tension in the illustrations is amplified by a text that increases in pacing due to its alliterative and rhythmic qualities: from "Bangerville and Bopperville" to "Kipperville and Kopperville." The plight of Mike Mulligan and his steam shovel capture readers' imaginations since its depiction of an underdog who flies in the face of failure has universal themes which continue to resonate. It is also an excellent example of innovative intratextuality, where written text and visual text intersect to immerse the reader in a story that can be felt on a visceral level.



Caldecott, Randolph. *Hey Diddle Diddle*. Frederick Warne and Company, 1901.

Randolph Caldecott could easily be considered the first true picturebook illustrator. Indeed the famous American Library prize for the best picturebook is named after him as the Caldecott Medal. This distinction honours Caldecott's unusual talent for rendering lively movement with spare evocative line work. His career as an illustrator occurs as innovations in reproduction technology allow for the direct printing of an illustrator's work without the translation of craftsmen-engravers. Furthermore he becomes one of the first true illustrators as illustration work becomes a career choice. Most of his work is for children, hence his close identification with the early evolution of the picturebook and beginnings of what became a golden age of illustration. In *Hey Diddle Diddle* there are many fine examples of his lively line work.

Campbell, Nicola. *Shi-shi-etko*. Illustrated by Kim LaFave. House of Anansi Press, 2005.

This important and touching story is surprisingly gentle in relating the challenges facing a family when a child is taken to residential school. Without being overtly incriminating, Campbell shows the impact to the child when she counts down her last few days with her mother and father and as they try to teach her the importance of her culture and identity. The story is accessible to younger children who will not be traumatized by the harsher realities of residential schools; however, Campbell subtly conveys the true loss Shi-shi-etko faces. She is warned by her parents not to forget her language, her memories and the land: "I want you to remember the ways of our people. I want you to remember our songs and our dances, our laughter and our joy, and I want you to remember our land"(5). Shi-shi-etko is both a celebration and a tale of mourning. Shi-shi-etko embraces the world around her knowing that it will soon be gone. The mantra, "Shi-shi-etko could not help herself. She looked at everything" is repeated to highlight the wondrous joy she feels in her surroundings and simultaneously her frantic desire not to forget it. The rule of three is used in a subversive way as Shi-shi-etko counts down the days until she has to leave, providing a sense of foreboding. As the "cattle truck that gathered children" (28) comes to take her away, Shi-shi-etko does not complain but her pain is expressed in the details that she tries to hold onto: "each shiny rock" (30) is precious. Campbell's rich use of sensory descriptions and cadenced phrases in her text create a poetic, lyrical mood to the story. In effect, Shi-shi-etko is in some ways an elegy to Shi-shi-etko's childhood before residential school.

The illustrations by Kim LaFave match the rhapsodic tone set by the text. His warm colour palette of reds, oranges and browns underline the deep connection of Shi-shi-etko's family to the land. There are several double-page spreads which celebrate the beauty of the natural world, such as the image of Shi-shi-etko's feet with ripples of water around her as she wades in a shallow river (6-7) or the scene of Shi-shi-etko and her father carrying a canoe into the lake, surrounded by maple trees turning colour. LaFave uses digital illustration which offers a muted, impressionistic portrayal of the scenes and provides a timeless feel to the story. All in all, Shi-shi-etko resonates due to its subtle and intricately woven message of appreciation for one's roots.

# C

Carle, Eric. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. World Publishing Company, 1969.

This multimodal story paved the way for picturebooks to include varied page sizes and die cuts within the book adding interesting tactile layers to the content. The story, which depicts the life of a caterpillar that transforms into a butterfly has holes in its paper to represent the caterpillar eating its way through various food items, such as an apple, two pears, three plums and so on. Apparently, Carle was inspired to write the book by a hole punch, since he was reminded of a bookworm eating its way through a book. Several pages in the book (7-15) are also sized according to the items eaten by the caterpillar: one apple is illustrated on a page of smaller width than two plums and so on. This physical representation of the objects eaten by the caterpillar creates an interactive experience for readers. They can physically touch the holes which are missing in the food and see the caterpillar coming out on the other side (8). This idea of being able to see both sides of an object is inventive and creates a sense of wonder.

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* uses simple illustrations made of collages of acrylic painted tissue papers. This unique mixed-media style combined with the bright primary colours and broad brushstrokes create a 'home-made' effect and cause the images to burst from the pages. Carle plays with size by making the caterpillar take up an entire page (19) to demonstrate the physical changes it goes through as it becomes ready to form a cocoon (20). Finally, it reappears as a vivid butterfly (21-22) in a two page spread of rich colours of purple, blue, red, green and yellow to demonstrate its glorious transformation. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* is well-regarded not only for its innovative visual and tactile features but also for its educational content. While the caterpillar's diet is fictional rather than scientifically accurate, it introduces the life cycle of a caterpillar, experiencing metamorphosis to change from caterpillar to butterfly. It also allows readers to practice counting, the days of the week, food names, and to be introduced to scientific investigation. Eric Carle takes these concepts and presents them in a way that young children can understand.

Carrier, Roch. *The Hockey Sweater*. Illustrated by Sheldon Cohen, Tundra Books. 1984.

This iconic Canadian picturebook was initially written as an autobiographical short story in French called “Une abominable feuille d’érable sur la glace” (An abominable maple leaf on the ice). It was translated into English by Sheila Fischmann and then adapted into an NFB animated film in 1980 with illustrations by Sheldon Cohen. This film, voiced by author Roch Carrier, was enormously successful throughout Canada and is still used in English and French classrooms today as a reflection on Québécois and Canadian culture.

After the success of the animated film, Cohen approached Tundra Books to publish the story as a picturebook and his made-for-animation simplistic paintings of rural Québec life translate very well to this format. Cohen’s whimsical style captures the setting of Roch Carrier’s story: he uses impressionistic, rough brush strokes to portray the village, the church and the skating pond against a backdrop of muted blue-grey shadows on white snow. Upon these stark winter scenes, the brilliant red, white and blue colours of the canadiens de Montréal jerseys stand out, highlighting their primordial importance in dispelling the gloom of long snowbound winters for a child. His renderings of small-town St. Justine, Québec are quaint as he includes the tattooed arm of a postal worker at Canada Poste Royale, the newspaper clippings of Maurice Richard (collected in a scrapbook), or the meticulous cursive writing of the protagonist’s mother as she writes, “Cher Monsieur Eaton.” These details help readers identify with life in rural Québec and sympathize with the protagonist’s perspective as he is forced to wear a Toronto Maple Leafs’ jersey in a sea of Montréal Canadian supporters.

*The Hockey Sweater* is an important work due to its message of acceptance of difference as well as tolerance of others. The story was written at a time of political unrest since the Québec separatist movement was in full force. Roch Carrier’s story hints at the challenges between French-speaking Québécois with the anglophone majority throughout Canada by gently portraying both sides as having a reasonable perspective. The ‘tea-drinking’ Monsieur Eaton is not to blame for sending the Maple Leafs jersey. After all, he has a right to love his local hockey team. In this way, Carrier allegorically points out that Canadians have more in common than not. All children can relate to the passion for “the greatest game on earth” and the protagonist’s fervour for his icon, Maurice Richard. The singsong voice of Carrier stands out as he uses repetition and simple sentence structure to convey a nostalgic view of his childhood: “We laced our skates like Maurice Richard, we taped our sticks like Maurice Richard...” This picturebook continues to touch hearts for its wonderful portrayal of Canadian life and a sport which brings Canadians together.

Crane, Walter. *Jack and the Beanstalk*. London: Routledge, 1874.

As a classic English fairy tale, Jack and the Beanstalk is a familiar story for many. Jack and the Beanstalk is a story about the adventures of a boy named Jack who accidentally trades a cow for magical beans. Luckily, the beans are really magical, but Jack must first encounter the world above the giant beanstalk that grows before discovering some of that magic. Walter Crane’s illustrations are full of bright and rich colors. The page design is exquisite and brings the magical story to life. Walter Crane’s influence on the modern picturebook book design continues today.

# D

De Brunhoff, Jean. *Babar the King*. Random House, 1933.

Jean De Brunhoff was an artist who came to write picturebooks to entertain his family. He wrote and illustrated *L'histoire de Babar* or *The Story of Babar* after a tale that his wife invented as a bedtime story for their children. De Brunhoff's early sketches of Babar and his story were initially elaborate and painterly, but he worked hard to simplify the images, inspired by the impressionist movement in France and the iconic images of children's books characters of the era. In the same way that *Peter Rabbit* and *Tim at Sea* became iconic characters that children longed to read more about, the Babar stories became serialized; the first three books about Babar were written by Jean De Brunhoff, but later his son Laurent continued the stories of Babar, authoring over sixty books.

*Babar the King* is illustrated with pen-and-ink line drawings and coloured in watercolour. *The Story of Babar* was printed with handwritten text but his later books were printed in typewritten text. In *Babar the King*, the character of Babar predominantly stands out against the colourful backgrounds of the African jungle, a plain image contrasting with lush greenery, red flowers and yellow grass. Babar and the other elephants are a monochrome grey and they are drawn simplistically. Babar has small dots for eyes and his face rarely changes expression: his grief at his mother's death (7) is indicated by small dotted lines coming out of his eyes. In the simple style of De Brunhoff, Babar is an iconic, cartoonish character. *Babar the King* has several two-page spreads which entice readers to search for charming details such as the monkeys sitting on the elephants backs or the ball games they play (4-5). Even the text invites the reader to investigate: "See him digging in the sand with his shell" (4-5). Both *The Story of Babar* and *Babar the King* have been criticized for representing colonial thinking since Babar goes to the city to adopt western clothing and western ways and returns to his homeland to be crowned king: in this way, the colonial culture and ways are depicted as better than the African native culture, represented by Babar and his elephant family. On the other hand, the stories of Babar are not unlike other anthropomorphic tales in children's literature which highlight the irony and charm that children find in imagining animals in a human context. In any case, *The Story of Babar* and *Babar the King* are important works which continue to influence picturebook authors today.



# E

Ellis, Carson. *Du Iz Tak?* Candlewick Press, 2016.

A green plant shoot inspires wonder in two insects as they try to imagine, *Du iz tak?*, or ‘what is that?’ This illustrated story written in an invented language stimulates readers’ imaginations as they make up their own version of what is happening. The almost wordless book relates a story that is open to interpretation and intended to be the source of creative play. In the story, a small green shoot grows in size and is visited by various insects such as, a ladybug, grasshoppers, an army of ants, and a bee who eventually build a fort in it as it grows and blooms into a flower. Danger appears in the form of a spider who lays her web on the shoot and is then eaten by a bird. All of this unfolds while a caterpillar is suggestively cocooned beside the shoot, implying the hidden mystery lying at every corner. The log that the cocoon is attached to contains a hidden home for a pudgy bug with a bowler hat. A child reader will marvel at the hidden world found on the forest floor.

Ellis showcases the extravagant details of nature. She outfits the insects with hats, glasses, scarves, cloaks and shoes, giving them a timeless quality full of whimsy and absurd humour. Each two-page spread contains a different view of the same scene, revealing tiny changes as the plant grows, blooms and eventually sends out new shoots. The cream background provides a neutral backdrop for a flurry of activity and emphasizes the fragility and busyness of these creatures as they meander to and fro. The bold colour scheme of rich red, green and brown suggests growth and contrasts with the later winter scenes, evoking a sense of seasonality and evolution. Through her magical portrayal of the world of small creatures, Ellis implies that humans are ignorant of the wonders that lay at their feet. *Du Iz Tak?* Is the recipient of a 2017 Caldecott Honor for its illustrations.

# F

Flack, Marjorie. *Angus and the Ducks*. Doubleday, 1930.

In this early picturebook Marjorie Flack writes and sequentially illustrates a lively narrative using the horizontal format that Nicholson and Gág pioneered. As Bader noted in her book on the American picturebook, Flack had a particularly good sense of telling stories in a picturebook format. She understood the orality of it in the way that text is broken down into sound bites to go with the illustrations and how the sequence of words needs to have a rhythmic flow that appeals to the ears of small children. Her stories employed the kind of repetition and combinations of sound and image that appealed to a young audience. This is expressed in the onomatopoeia of the animals’ sounds and the repeated words to indicate their movement: “There, directly in front of him / were two white DUCKS. They were marching forward, one-foot-up and one-foot-down. Quack! Quack! Quackety! Quack!!” (12-13). The character of Angus, a small Highland Terrier has the spirit of a four year old in his visual behaviours and he is easy for young children to identify with. The story is innovatively written from the third person point-of-view but with the perspective of Angus. This perspective is indicated by words written in upper case to show Angus’ limited knowledge of the world: adults are known as “SOMEBODY ELSE” and the “OTHER SIDE” is literally the other side of the hedge. Flack also conveys the perspective of Angus in contrast to that of the ducks: in a series of images, Angus appears on the left while the ducks are on the right (12-27). The reader sympathizes with Angus as he attempts to scare the ducks and they become irritated and chase him until he is only partially on the page (26). The growing power of the ducks is indicated by the relatively large size that they take up on both pages of the two-page spread (26-27) as well as their long necks and pointed beaks. In addition to this tension between Angus and the ducks, children are attracted to the bright colours in the book. With a few contrasting colours, Flack is able to create a cheery tone as blue, yellow and green predominate the page. Lastly, the simple drawings in the book allow young readers to focus on the antics of Angus. Inspired by the real life occurrences in the life of her dog, Flack conveys the playfulness of a terrier and makes him come to life as an engaging protagonist.





Gág, Wanda. *Millions of Cats*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928.  
Winner of the Newbery Honor Award, 1929

This modest line-drawn picturebook is pivotal due to its innovative format: Gág adopts the same horizontal frame introduced by author William Nicholson in *Clever Bill*; however, her great innovation is to spread her illustrations across two pages of a double spread to create a single scene. This is distinct from Nicholson's work which introduced the picturebook topography of spreading written text sentences across pages. Gág's innovation is important in showing the possibility of the double spread as a whole scene, thus creating a storytelling format composed of two opened pages.

*Millions of Cats* is a fantastical story with charmingly drawn stylized drawings with folkloric motifs. It is a simple tale about a husband and wife who are lonely, inciting the husband to go off in search of a cat. The fantastical nature of the story resulting in millions of cats coming home with the husband reminds the reader of other folk tales, such as the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* or *The Fisherman and His Wife*; however, this tale has a straightforward, happy ending. Wanda Gág uses hand-printed lettering and finely etched illustrations with simple, iconic shapes to enhance the folkloric feel of the story. Gág's background as a graphic designer shows in the composition of image and text since they are stylized drawings with simple patterns and shapes that draw the eye forward. The hand lettering and folksy style of the drawing around the text give the book a handmade accessible feel, similar to the work of her predecessor, William Nicholson. While the story could technically stand on its own because it is a variation of a folktale, it is the graphic design of the book, the way Gág weaves the illustrations and printed words around each other and truly uses the 'turning page' to keep the drama of the tale moving forward which is its great contribution to the evolution of the picturebook form.

Greenaway, Kate. *Language of Flowers*. London: G. Routledge and sons, 1884.

*Language of Flowers* by Kate Greenaway weaves intricate and detailed floral illustrations with a floral dictionary of sorts. Following the Victorian trend of floral fascination and an interest in the interpretation of flowers, Greenway created this book as a way to create deeper meaning of florals through a juxtaposition of words and flowers. *Language of Flowers* also contains musical scores with playful images of children among floral elements. The pocket-sized book is charming and even over a century later can delight a reader. Kate Greenaway was one of the most influential figures in the emergence of the modern children book and is the namesake of the Kate Greenaway medal, an award that is given to illustrators of children's books in the UK.

Greder, Armin. *The Island*. Allen & Unwin, 2002.

*The Island* by Armin Greder is a well-crafted picture book whose desolate depiction of exclusion and isolation is expressed through a marriage of storytelling elements, including the topography, typography and visual resource systems in the book. To begin with, the physical size of the book is tall which strengthens the foreboding mood created by the cover illustration of a fortress-like wall. The wall is viewed from the perspective of one looking up at it and the white sky above makes it appear particularly ominous as it fills most of the visual field. The fortress with its dark tones of grey, green, black contrast strongly with the pure white background and evoke a place of unwelcome and impenetrability. The title, *The Island*, is written in bold capital letters using plain, dark red font, imitating the tall structure of the fortress wall. *The Island* recounts the tale of a community visited by an uninvited guest, a refugee from afar who arrives on a raft and whose mere presence causes unrest and irrational fear. Greder's allegorical story highlights the dangers of xenophobia and the inhumanity of a society which closes its doors to people in need. Greder accomplishes this through his clever use of visuals -- his evocative colour palette, the use of repetition, objects and symbols -- as well as his creative text placement (typography) and the way these two resource systems work together. In a series of four panels (pp 15-16) Greder shows how the man begins to haunt the minds of the townspeople. He is locked up and guarded but even so, he "haunt[s] their days and often their dreams" (15). The hysteria of the villagers is expressed in their exaggerated facial expressions until the man becomes a monster in the minds of the people on the island. His face is reflected in a child's soup bowl (17) and he is imagined to be a murderer brandishing a knife (18). These false images are contradicted by the reality that the man is locked up in a goat pen. Greder uses exaggeration here to allegorically demonstrate the unfounded fear of outsiders (refugees or immigrants) in his own society. The final symbols of inhumanity are represented in the "great wall" which is built to prevent others from coming to their shores (pp 27-28) as well as the burning of the fisherman's boat (pp 29-30). By destroying the livelihood of the fisherman, who symbolizes mercy, the townspeople can remove any reminder of their conscience. In this complex children's book, Greder gets to the heart of xenophobia. Through the repeated use of visual imagery (the sea, the weapons, the fearful faces), a gloomy colour palette and a masterful narrative, Greder portrays a society's inability to assist a stranger in need to be grotesque and cruel. Strangely, the townspeople become the monster that they are afraid of. In this time of global migration, one can only hope that readers young and old will take Greder's underlying message of respect for all humanity to heart.

Greder, Armin, et al. *The Mediterranean*. Allen & Unwin, 2018.  
Shortlisted Picture Book of the Year, CBCA Awards 2019 AU.

*The Mediterranean* is a mostly wordless illustrated picture book whose story can be considered both a narrative fiction and an information text. The lack of specificity of the time, place and subject causes the reader to imagine the story to be about any and all refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean. The short text at the start, “after he had finished drowning, his body sank slowly to the bottom, where the fish were waiting” sets a somber tone for the reader and links the man drowning in the sea to the title: it implies that the Mediterranean is not a beautiful place of beauty and enjoyment, but, in essence, a mass grave for all the lives lost when crossing it. Humans are equated with algae as the man sinks to the ocean floor and fish come to feast on him (4-5). Subsequent pages reveal the fish being treated as a commodity, caught and sold on the dock. In this way, humans and fish are not very different: their lives are undervalued and they are easily passed along to be eaten (symbolizing the way refugees are neglected and unprotected and seen by some as a commodity). Greder, author and illustrator, connects the refugee crisis to both political unrest and the economy. He shows a white man opening a box of rifles alongside a black man in uniform, presumably for the black man to use in his military. The reader interprets the unspoken message that the political unrest (21-24) causes the refugees to flee, attempting to escape to a better place by crossing the Mediterranean Sea. The irony is apparent when humans are transported over the very sea which brought the weapons that destroyed their homes and villages. The helpless refugees are mere pawns in a war based on economics, part of a food chain where they will be eaten by sharks. In his afterword, Alessandro Leogrande raised the question “what is the relationship between Europe and the dictatorships from which people are fleeing en masse?” (37-38). In other words, Greder holds everyone responsible for the lives lost while fleeing persecution. This book is extremely interpretive and will require young readers to discuss their thoughts with an adult. However, the medium used -- wordless and devastating imagery -- can be understood by everyone. This is a sad portrayal of a reality most choose to ignore.

In his illustrations, Greder uses a dark colour palette of black, dark green, grey-blue shades contrasted with white to create an otherworldly feel -- he suggests that this story is not particular to any one person but it is about all of us and we are a part of it. The dark colour palette accentuates the gloomy subject matter of death, political strife and rapacity. The illustrations in *The Mediterranean* hold more information than can be acquired in a single reading. The pages need to be turned back and forth, read again and compared to one another. On the two page spread where the drowning man falls to the ocean floor (5-6), for example, the fish are swarming the body, but in a gentle way and upon second glance, seem to be lifting him up, his white body shining against a field of grey-green: in this way, we see the body as an angel, rising up to heaven. The white colour symbolizes his innocence. The predominant starkness of the work is broken up with accents which pop. The yellow of the black man’s uniform (11) signifies him to be an important person and provide salience, allowing him to be recognized where other men have no signifying element. The brighter blue of the soldiers’ guns (21-22) is ironic and shows that they are all the same, following orders relentlessly. Lastly, the orange and red of the fire (23-24) stand out and signify the death and destruction which greed has caused. The smoke of the fire turns into the cloud which follows the refugees fleeing their home, and is repeated on the following pages (25-39) until the final page shows the ship carrying a bellyful of humans on its side - indicating the death of all. Greder uses sweeping brush strokes, depicting humans as grotesque figures with grimaces and scowls in the case of the men loading guns, or as anxious victims without any remarkable features in the case of the refugees. In both cases, the reader equates the humans with himself, good and evil. In *The Mediterranean*, Greder demonstrates the disaster of the refugee crisis in a poignant, expressively illustrated tour de force.

# H

Hutchins, Pat. *Rosie's Walk*. Simon & Schuster, 1968.

This book with its spare text of thirty-two words is a slapstick comedy for little ones. The spare, ironic text simply presents Rosie's walk across the barnyard with one simple sentence which spans across eight pages. The comedian, a hapless fox is never mentioned but is pictured in pursuit of Rosie who thanks to dumb luck is safe from the fox who experiences one mishap after another. The dramatic irony of the fox's presence behind Rosie builds in suspense with each turn that Rosie makes. *Rosie's Walk* comes close to being a wordless book and can be read and enjoyed by young children without the need to rely on the text for meaning. *Rosie's Walk* is a good example of the shrinking of the verbal text in many picturebooks as well as a foreshadowing of a proliferation of wordless books that emerge in the 1970's. The clear logical visual sequencing of the story is easily followed by all readers but particularly very young ones. A number of Pat Hutchins' later books are wordless narratives.

*Rosie's Walk* is illustrated with three predominant colours and is inspired by folk art and design. The orchard displays pear and apple trees in stylized lines, lending a patchwork quilt quality to the scenery. The fox's fur is rendered with simple black triangles and straight neat lines making him less terrifying than if he were realistically portrayed. While Rosie's face is calm and unchanging throughout the book, emotion is conveyed in the fox's face as he contrastingly changes dramatically from sly relish (2) to surprise (8) to dismay (12) and finally to fear (18). Children will enjoy noticing these ironic changes as well as the details of a dainty butterfly (8) or frogs cheering Rosie on as she walks by. This subverted nursery tale is deceptively simple as it pulls the reader into the story with effortless charm.



Jeffers, Oliver. *The Heart and the Bottle*. Harper Collins, 2010.

This skillfully crafted picturebook showcases Jeffers' graphic sophistication in a story whose audience spans multiple generations as it deals with the process of death and grieving. Jeffers' work is meticulous from start to finish as even the end papers and clever double-jacket cover capture the mood and emotion of the story. The end papers contain blue pencil sketches of important male figures in one's life (front of book) as well as the anatomy of a heart (back of book) to provide a symbolic message to value those men who play an important role in our lives. *The Heart and the Bottle* treats one girl's experience as she goes from being exuberant and curious to sullen and sad after the loss of a loved one. The illustrations are spare, yet full of emotion, energy, colour and quirky details. Jeffers leaves open space on the page to allow the reader to investigate the quaint scenes on the beach or the various images in the girl's head as she explores the world of the sea and the stars and the wonders of the world. The brightly coloured scenes at the start of the book are subdued when the red chair is empty, conveying the loss of a male figure: "She took delight in finding new things. / Until the day she found an empty chair." It is here that the image of the girl locking her heart into a bottle is introduced as a way to forget her pain. It is not surprising that she discovers that locking away the pain also prevents her from experiencing love and aliveness. The simplistic drawings are contrasted with the heavy subject matter and as a young version of the protagonist helps her find her heart again, one realizes that the message of the story is ageless, everyone needs to face their grief and let themselves feel emotions to be truly alive.

Jeffers is also notable in having created one of the best picturebook apps in the early days of that technology. In his app for *The Heart and the Bottle*, Jeffers offers extended interactive story elements which serve to extend the narrative. Interestingly the excitement about picturebook apps fizzled out for a number of serious production issues such as the life of the product on various platforms and the fact that maintaining its digital access entailed crippling expenses compared to keeping picturebooks in print. Furthermore the picturebook is a highly interactive form even in print so adding a few more tapping interactions in most cases did very little to improve or extend the book with the exception of Jeffers' *The Heart and the Bottle*.



Johnson, Crockett. *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Harper & Brothers, 1955.

This ground-breaking picture book offers children a sense of empowerment as they follow the protagonist's example of using his imagination to self-actualize. Rather than relying on an adult to enable him, Harold employs his magic purple crayon to embark on a variety of adventures. He first decides to go for "a walk in the moonlight" and draws a moon as well as a path to follow. This leads him from one wish to another (an apple orchard with a dragon to defend it) that he fulfills with his own hand by drawing his way forward. The purple crayon is unpredictable and leads Harold to predicaments. For example, when the dragon frightens Harold, "[h]is hand holding the purple crayon [shakes]" creating an ocean which engulfs him. Harold's quick wits lead him to draw a boat to rescue himself. The unexpected nature of the purple crayon's movements creates suspense in the reader. Additionally, implicit in this book is the absurdity of a child being able to draw anywhere without restriction. The end papers are full of Harold's scribbles, embracing the importance of children having freedom to both draw and imagine.

The format of *Harold and the Purple Crayon* is very minimalistic with the purple crayon lines and Harold being the only illustrations throughout the book. On each page there is a line of simple text appearing below. The simplicity of the visual format allows the reader to focus on the movement of the purple crayon and to follow Harold as he conceives each idea. Harold's body is drawn with a thin line, his hands and head have a skin tone pigment, and his body is dressed in white. Harold's simplistic cartoon figure creates an impression of animation as he moves from one idea to the next. The purple crayon is drawn in a thicker line, with rough edges suggestive of the uneven lines of a crayon, perfectly designed to stand out on the white background of the book. Another salient feature is the moon which appears on every page and creates a sense of comfort as it allows Harold to find his way home: he remembers that his window is "always right around the moon" so he draws himself back into familiar surroundings. In sum, this breakthrough picturebook utilises a concept which paves the way for authors to play with the concept of reality in a book. Johnson provides a sense of metafictional fun by allowing the protagonist to literally draw or write his own story.

# K

Klassen, Jon. *I Want My Hat Back*. Candlewick Press, 2011.

Winner of the Caldecott Honor Medal and the Kate Greenaway Medal, 2012

This is the first picturebook written and illustrated by Jon Klassen yet it has the assurance and clear voice of an experienced master. The main character of the story is a bear whose unruffled calm as he searches for his hat creates a sense of building suspense that explodes when he realizes that he has been misled. Klassen uses subtle clues to fill in the gaps between the simple text and the illustrations to signal the solution to the mystery. First of all, the use of colour is an indicator of difference or emotion. The bear and forest animals are illustrated in muted brown tones but the mysterious red hat which appears on the rabbit's head (unnoticed by the bear) is combined with red text on its opposing page (8-9) to signal that there is more to the story. The words of the rabbit (in red font) indicate an unreliable narrator perspective since he is clearly lying when he says, "No... I haven't seen any hats anywhere. I would not steal a hat. Don't ask me any more questions." The colour red is repeated when the bear realizes that he "[HAS] SEEN [HIS] HAT" (20) to demonstrate his flash of anger at being duped by the rabbit. Klassen's digitally manipulated ink paintings provide continuity and his use of a somber colour scheme causes the full page of red to stand out dramatically. Another way in which the subtext of the story is indicated is through the slight changes to the eyes of each character and the animal's stance. For example, the bear's eyes are neutral until the page when he literally sees red and they widen in shock (19). When he confronts the rabbit (25-26), his eyes are shaped in a semicircle and the pupils are on an angle, suggesting an accusatory tone. In the same way, the rabbit's eyes are round and looking upwards to imply sheepishness. In these subtle strokes, Klassen creates a world of tension. A final clue to the drama of the story is the messed up leaves and branches lying on the ground after the bear confronts the rabbit (27). The reader has to piece together the visual evidence to come to the conclusion that the bear has eaten the rabbit. The dichotomy of the words which state the opposite to be true ("I haven't seen any rabbits anywhere" (29) and the evidence in the illustrations create a strong sense of irony. Given Klassen's background in animation, it is not surprising to see cinematic elements in his work, such as the pregnant pause when the bear confronts the rabbit or the use of perspective. Painted with Chinese ink and digital art, this subversive picturebook masterfully blends text with illustrations to tell a story.



# K

Keats, Ezra Jack. *The Snowy Day*. The Viking Press, 1962.

Winner of the Caldecott Award (1963)

*The Snowy Day* is a groundbreaking picturebook due to its introduction of multiculturalism to mainstream children's literature as well as for its innovative collage illustrations. Unlike other picturebooks being written at the time, *The Snowy Day* tells the story of an African American protagonist, Peter, and describes his adventures in an urban landscape playing in the snow. Keats explains his desire to write a picturebook where a minority figures prominently: "My book would have him there simply because he should have been there all along." In the same vein, Keats demonstrates that children who live in the city and walk along sidewalks with streetlights (11) can still enjoy the magical beauty of a snowy day. Keats' illustrations are remarkable for their use of solid blocks of primary colours against a backdrop of white. Using beautiful layers of collage illustrations (one of the first to do so), Keats captures the varying textures of snow, and contrasts them with the patterns of fabric or wallpaper (6-7). Peter stands out as the salient feature in the story in his red snowsuit, reminiscent of *Little Red Riding Hood* on her way to see her grandmother. Peter does not encounter danger on his outing, however, and contrary to fairy tale tropes, he finds happiness in the simplicity of going out in the snow with "his friend from across the hall" (32). In this way, Keats highlights the magical enjoyment that anyone can experience, even those in non-traditional homes in an urban setting.



Leaf, Munro. *The Story of Ferdinand*. Illustrated by Robert Lawson. New York: The Viking Press, 1936.

The *Story of Ferdinand* is an influential picturebook filled with inventive touches and a strong rhythm that allow the text and image to carry equal importance. While this 72-page story utilises a traditional text pattern of text on one page and an illustration on the other, it demonstrates the interdependence of text and illustration that categorizes a picturebook. The text begins to narrate the story, but the illustrations complete that story, adding many interesting layers of meaning. For example, the simple line “there was a little bull and his name was Ferdinand” (2) introduces the protagonist, but the illustration that follows (3) adds depth to the story. The bull is shown with ears splayed in trepidation as he sniffs a flower with a butterfly perched on it. This image highlights Ferdinand’s youthful innocence and curiosity of the world, immediately connecting the reader to him. Lawson adds emotion to his illustrations through details in the characters’ facial expressions and movements. When Ferdinand’s mother worries that he is not like “the other little bulls” (17), her eyes are full and round, with eyebrows raised in concern, whereas when Ferdinand convinces her “that he [is] not lonesome” (19), she walks away with her tail swishing jauntily, her feet crossed elegantly, her head raised and eyes closed to indicate confident resolution. In this illustration, the black shadow under Ferdinand’s tree is matched by the mother’s shadow, providing symmetry to suggest their mutual satisfaction.

Lawson’s illustrations also add a sense of whimsy and symbolic depth to the story, making the reader eager to notice small details. The mother’s collar and bell (19) engraved with the word “MOTHER” ironically point out her generic status but also her importance to Ferdinand. The vulture which towers above Ferdinand as a grown bull (21) suggests his eventual fate and mortality. Vultures appear throughout the story (23, 41, 43) to playfully mimic the role of humans who use animals for their own pleasure and entertainment. Other details that add humour to the story include the ‘wine bottle’ corks on the cork tree (13), the turtle facing off with a bull (5), the sleeping cart driver (28), or the long mustaches of the Picadore (55). These details are often symbolic: the flowers which Ferdinand enjoys to smell (9) indicate his peaceful nature while the exaggerated style of hats worn by the men looking for “a bull for the bull fights in Madrid” (24-25) implies their ignorant perspective as they look upon bulls as a source of entertainment. Thus, text and illustration work in tandem to convey the themes of the story.

Lawson’s black and white etchings maintain a consistency to the story. Simple line drawings are used to provide a framework (horizon line or mountain shapes) while more detailed fine lines and cross hatching bring depth and emphasis to the actions of the story. In a nod to his cinematic and comic influences, Lawson varies between wide angle perspectives and close up views to bring the reader into the moment of a scene. The close up of Ferdinand’s bottom as he is about to sit on a bumble bee (31) draws attention to the irony of the scene where such a tiny creature can have such great impact. The bee is given a sneaky cartoonish eye to suggest intentionality while Ferdinand’s cartoon-like reaction of surprise (depicted by an enlarged eye, single dot for a pupil and mouth agape) in the subsequent illustration (33) humorously reveals the consequence. As in comic illustrations, Ferdinand’s body is simply drawn with small details used to reveal his personality.

*Ferdinand* has been extremely successful, selling 3000 copies per week in its first few years of production and it has never gone out of print. One reason for its success can be attributed to the fact that its meaning can be interpreted in many ways. It was viewed by some as having a political message since it was released at the same time as the Spanish Civil War. In this context, many readers interpreted *Ferdinand* as having a pacifist message and it was actually banned by Hitler who viewed it as an anti-fascist text. In spite of this, Leaf denies having any specific political motive for writing the story. Animals are often used to provide messages about human behaviour and to help children make sense of their world. In this story, a bull becomes a symbol for acceptance. The cover image captures the absurdity Leaf’s premise: by juxtaposing a strong, muscular bull (often represented as the strongest animal) in the act of smelling flowers, he suggests the concept of non-conformity and explores the message that it is alright to be different from others. *The Story of Ferdinand* has persisted over the years because it offers readers the space to go back into it again and again to find something new each time.



Lionni, Leo. *Let's Make Rabbits*. Pantheon Books, 1982.

Leo Lionni's picturebook is a surprising fable about storytelling and imagination, and not only about rabbits. With a simple plot and simple words, he tells the story of two rabbits, one created by a pencil and the other by scissors, from collage, and how they come to life. The metafictional nature of the tale is suggested from the endsheets, since they display the same pattern as the sheets the scissor uses to create the rabbit. The surreal and creative nature of the text, where a pair of scissors talks to a pencil, is engaging and appealing to audiences of different ages. As the story unfolds, its inclination towards the development of imagination does so too, as it further pushes the limits of what book characters can do, by making the rabbits come alive, be friends and become conscious of their own nature. Of course, in this surreal and fantastic world, there is always space for logic: if the rabbits are hungry, the same pencil and scissors can make carrots for them. But this is also when the text becomes more surprising, breaking the boundaries of the book itself and the expectations of the reader, as the bunnies find a real carrot, as in one that lives in the reader's world and not the margins of the page. How do they know? Because, using logic again, this carrot has a shadow, proof of its existence. Here, the text completely turns outwards, into the reader's life, depicting two bunnies with shadows who hop away from the book and into the real world. The book is an example of the dynamic and interdependent relation between words and images that picturebooks possess. Its simplicity and humorous nature make it a fun reading and can inspire several creative and literary projects, from recreating the bunnies in a personal style, to changing the end, to writing new dialogues between pencil and scissors, to analysing their metafictional features in order to recreate them in other works. Leo Lionni's picturebook is a surprising fable about storytelling and imagination, and not only about rabbits. With a simple plot and simple words, he tells the story of two rabbits, one created by a pencil and the other by scissors, from collage, and how they come to life. The meta-fictional nature of the tale is suggested from the endsheets since they display the same pattern as the sheets the scissor uses to create the rabbit. The surreal and creative nature of the text, where a pair of scissors talks to a pencil, is engaging and appealing to audiences of different ages. As the story unfolds, its inclination towards the development of imagination does so too, as it further pushes the limits of what book characters can do, by making the rabbits come alive, be friends and become conscious of their own nature. Of course, in this surreal and fantastic world, there is always space for logic: if the rabbits are hungry, the same pencil and scissors can make carrots for them. But this is also when the text becomes more surprising, breaking the boundaries of the book itself and the expectations of the reader, as the bunnies find a real carrot, one that lives in the reader's world and not the margins of the page. How do they know? Because, using logic again, this carrot has a shadow, proof of its existence. Here, the text completely turns outwards, into the reader's life, depicting two bunnies with shadows who hop away from the book and into the real world. The book is an example of the dynamic and interdependent relationship between words and images that picturebooks possess. Its simplicity and humorous nature make it a fun reading and can inspire several creative and literary projects.

Marsden, John. *The Rabbits*. Illustrated by Shaun Tan. Lothian Books, 1998

In a narration reminiscent of medieval chronicles of conquest, this compelling picturebook is a metaphor about the clash of different cultures and their struggle for power. The depicted scenario is not a promising one: devastation, death, and hopelessness are the results of the encounter between two worlds, that of the local inhabitants, the colonized, and the invading foreigners. The text can be read as an analogy to the colonization of Australia, comparing the foreigners to a species similar to one's own, but not quite the same, just like kangaroos relate to rabbits: both have big legs for jumping, and prominent ears, but are completely different in nature. But the rabbit can also be taken as a symbol of any race or culture with the desire to dominate others, as this tale is a representation of the history of mankind, constantly repeating itself, reproducing endlessly, like rabbits. Like a folk tale, the text evokes the wisdom passed through generations of ancestors, and their warnings. There are not many details, just simple facts that reveal a lot about the differences between both species: "They didn't live in the trees, as we did."; "We couldn't understand what they talked."; "They brought new food, and they brought other animals."; "But some of the food made us sick, and some of the animals scared us". From this point onwards, the fairly neutral point of view of the unknown narrator starts to change, to show us the unstoppable desire of the rabbits. The plain nature of these texts gains a new level of depth and meaning through the overly detailed, somewhat surreal illustrations by Shaun Tan. The first images show a landscape dominated by nature, with a close-up of a lizard or snake next to a prominent cliff, and a vast plain. On the lower right corner, lost amidst this imposing scenery, a minuscule fuming tower can be seen; the arrival of the foreigners is not yet a threat. Upon the first encounter, they are both equal, confronted on a flat horizontal line, still in equilibrium. The power of nature still dominates the scene. But, as the story unfolds, the imagery Tan uses also changes. Everything becomes more complex and surreal, as the situation itself. The arrival of the conquerors is depicted as a scene from a war movie, where the figures and vessel are exaggerated to reinforce their power. In general, Tan's visual narrative is cinematographic, depicting movement and action through the still image. Each double spread is a masterpiece, demanding a very close look and attention to detail. Tan plays with all the resources he can have access to as an artist: colour, line, shape, perspective, symbolism, realism and so on, to create new worlds within this new world that has been discovered. As we approach the end, the images become more dark and somber, as is the future of civilization. The final double spread shows the two species, framed and cornered in their own cell, facing each other but separated by an enormous blackness. From facts, the text changes to questions, as we reach the final one: Who will save us from the rabbits? The Rabbit and the local species both look into what seems to be a dark hole, reflecting the sky. Will they jump? Will they be sucked by it into a greater darkness? Will that whole be all that is left of them? For the first time, the text is outside the image, as it could be applied to any story, not only this one. This crossover picturebook can be read in more than one sense; from a pictorial, political, historical and narrative perspective, to say the least. It can be the starting point for interesting discussions on these topics, as well as an invitation to think about history from other areas of study, such as the picturebook, and rethink the possibilities of the picturebook.

# M

Maruki, Toshi. *Hiroshima No Pika*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1980.

Toshi Maruki's words and pictures are more than dramatic; they express the angst and pain of those who have to run for their lives, without knowing that death is still upon them. Her simple and straightforward language helps to bring light to a very personal story, the account of a survivor's and her family's experience during Hiroshima's atomic bomb. Although we may know the ending to the story –how violence reached a point of no return and how the atomic threat has become our present's most terrifying menace- we can only guess this family's final moments: the death of the father due to the bomb's after effects, the abnormal growth of the child, the resignation of the mother as life continues, even if things will never be the same. By the end of the book, we learn that this story is a retelling of a survivor's experience and that it also includes elements from various other accounts. This non-fiction book is a tough read, due to the explicit nature of the drawings and text, yet very inspiring and inspirational.

There is nothing fictional here; the text is concise and written in short paragraphs, yet it manages to be poetic in the detailed descriptions of each moment: the light, the activities, the clothes, peoples' worries, and expectations. The images are just as moving as the text. The first three illustrations -before the Flash- have a more descriptive quality to them. The reader can view a busy city, the details of the local women's and a soldier's clothes and a family's morning breakfast routine with precision. Things are drawn in a wide and very defined ink contour. A hue of indigo or bright blue with touches of red is the prevailing colour.

Then, after the Flash, everything changes. A burst of diagonal white, black and red lines invades the comforting morning scene and shows the mother, father, and Mii, the daughter, seeking refuge with their hands over their heads and bent bodies. Everything else, plates, food, chopsticks, flies around them. And from then onwards, the images become more sensory, emotional, and abstract, and are drawn in a free line. Mother and child embrace before a red cloud eats the next spread and the few people that are depicted in the middle of it, in an apocalyptic vision. Two ghostlike characters try to connect with Mii, it's her mother and father while being carried away by the river. A double spread with no words shows the horror of the bomb: naked burnt bodies scattered everywhere, amidst red and orange fumes and flames, painted with rough brushstrokes and ink. The overlapping of flames and the lines that draw the naked dead bodies contributes to creating a sensation of confusion, which is also enhanced by the blurred effect of the paint on paper. Death and obscurity are portrayed through the use of dark colours and shadows.

The illustrations return to a more orderly composition, with a greater proportion of white space and defined elements, after we know, as readers, that four days have passed. The imperfect style of the drawings contributes to making the story feel more personal and true, as real life is far from being perfect. This picturebook is a useful tool to investigate more about the Second World War and the atomic bomb. It can also be used to approach the difficult subject of international conflict, and reflect on how this story is lived today: from the survivor's perspective, or as an analogy to other present-day conflict situations.

# M

McCloskey, Robert. *Make Way For Ducklings*. Penguin Books, 1941.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal, 1942.

McCloskey is known as a true American comic storyteller. Labelled the Norman Rockwell of children's books for his heart-warming portrayal of American life, McCloskey brings a duck family's story to life with embedded comic moments and vivid relatable details. *Make Way For Ducklings* tells the story of a pair of mallard ducks who decide to raise their family on an island in the lagoon in Boston Public Garden, a park in the center of Boston, Massachusetts. The book was inspired by his own time spent as an art student in Boston: On his way to art classes on St. Botolph Street, McCloskey sometimes passed through the Public Garden and fed the ducks. When illustrating the book, McCloskey went so far as to purchase live ducks to capture their movements and gestures. He depicts the ducks with realistic lively drawings, rendered in charcoal and then lithographed onto zinc plates. McCloskey illustrated the book with sepia drawings rather than the traditional black-and-white pictures found in most children's books of the time. The warm brown ink matches the softness and charm of the subject matter as the ducks attempt to make their home in a city and a police officer attempts to protect them.

The story is told from a duck's vantage point, making the reader see the city with new eyes and depicting realistic behaviour of ducks. McCloskey captures this perspective when the reader is given a duck's eye view of the city (13-14) or when the bicycle nearly knocks Mrs Mallard down (11-12). Most scenes are illustrated in two-page spreads with word patterns and repetition suited to a young child's love of repeated actions and sounds. The detailed illustrations of each scene provide effective pacing as they force the reader to slow down. Children identify with the ducklings because they behave as children do which allows them to relate to the theme of the story, to appreciate the many animals that are at risk in a city habitat.

McCloskey, Robert. *Blueberries for Sal*. The Viking Press, 1948.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal, 1949.

In keeping with his affinity for writing picturebooks related to human interaction with nature, McCloskey highlights the similarities between humans and animals in this touching story of a human mother and daughter; as well as a bear mother and her cub who go blueberry picking in the hills of Maine. The themes of survival and parental responsibility are explored as Sal gets separated from her mother while looking for blueberries and at the same time the bear cub follows Sal's mother to eat blueberries from her bucket. In both cases, Sal and the bear cub share a love for sweet blueberries and a need for protection. A mirrored view of their naive vulnerability is shown when Sal sits down in "a large clump of bushes and [eats] blueberries" (17), and shortly after that the bear cub sits down "right in the middle and [eats] blueberries" (23). Repetition in the text is used to highlight the youngsters' common needs.

McCloskey illustrates the book with etched lithographs which are inked with a dark blue ink to connect to the blueberries. As with *Make Way for Ducklings* where the illustrations are inked in sepia tones, McCloskey admitted to finding black and white too stark for a children's book. The dark blue ink used to print *Blueberries for Sal* matches the feel of the pine-covered Maine countryside and helps to evoke the emotion of a fresh, natural setting: one can almost feel the breeze off the ocean as it comes up the hills which are illustrated in detail. *Blueberries for Sal* is a true picturebook since its illustrations are not an add-on to the text but are integral to the story. *Blueberries for Sal* is a sensory feast, appealing to one's sense of sound with the repetition of words like "kuplink, kuplank, kuplunk" (40), as well as Nicholson, one's sense of sight with the incredibly detailed drawings of the bears and the natural scenery. McCloskey deservedly continues to inspire picturebook writers today.



# N

Nicholson, William. *Clever Bill*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1926.

William Nicholson was a designer and illustrator who deserves great credit for creating what is one of the first modern picturebooks in a format in which words and pictures work together to convey a story and engage the reader in the ‘drama of the turning page’ which Barbara Blader famously defined as one of the picturebook’s primary affordances. Equally importantly, Nicholson writes a spare text that depends upon illustrations to tell the tale. Furthermore, he tells his story using sentences that are spread out over several double spreads and employs a landscape format for the book. In this way, the pace of the story is slower and the reader anticipates what will happen next. Nicholson employs the dynamic of having to turn the page in order to finish reading a sentence which Sendak acknowledges as inspiration for his pacing and spacing of text in *Where the Wild Things Are*.

*Clever Bill* is illustrated with simple line drawings in black and white with bright primary colours of yellow, blue and red to accentuate the toy soldier, Mary and her belongings. The text is handwritten, giving the book a homey quality and making the letter that Mary’s aunt writes her feel authentic. The illustrations occupy most of the space on the page and the text is sparse, changing the dynamic of illustrated children’s books to focus more attention on the images and relying less on the text to make sense of the story. Nicholson is said to have created *Clever Bill* and *The Pirate Twins* for his grandchildren so it is not surprising that these early picturebooks have a home-made quality to them.

# P

Potter, Beatrix. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Frederick Warne & Co, 1901.

Strictly speaking this book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and the numerous other small illustrated storybooks by Beatrix Potter are not picturebooks. They are in fact illustrated storybooks much in the style and format of illustrated books. This format is known as ‘illustrated’ book or storybook in which the verbal printed words on the page convey a story that can be told by words alone. Of course, in this case Potter’s exquisite delicate watercolours are wonderful enhancements. They contribute to the creation of a stunning visual and literary artifact, a small hand-sized children’s book. This book and the collection of Potter’s other small books are important to the evolution of the picturebook for several reasons. First their success clearly demonstrated that there was a developing market for small children’s illustrated books, and second that there was interest in illustrated storybooks for young children. The market for finely illustrated novels such as collections of fairy tales, *Treasure Island*, some of the works of Dickens, Louisa May Alcott, and others grew in this time as colour printing evolved and as the middle class market grew. A remarkable movement in children’s books was inspired by Potter’s books since their popularity and sales successes clearly demonstrated that people wanted books for a young audience. It is important to note that this occurs before there are very many children’s books in public libraries and certainly very few schools for small children public or private.

While *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* may not be a true picturebook, it has had a great influence on many picturebooks today. It was one of the first books to anthropomorphize an animal while portraying realistic behaviour at the same time. Potter observed animals in their natural habitat and illustrated them both in a natural way on all fours (8) and with human posture and habits (10). This contradiction between the made up world of Peter Rabbit and the real world creates a sense of irony as exemplified in the unfortunate death of Peter Rabbit’s father. Peter’s mother points out that father had an accident and “he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor” (10) which is both realistic and terrible at the same time. Potter’s illustrations are not required to make sense of this whimsical story, but they enhance the experience by highlighting the humour and irony of a rabbit getting into predicaments in his interactions and parallels with the human world.



# R

Rand, Ann. *Sparkle and Spin: A Book About Words*. Illustrated by Paul Rand. Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1957.

This is a poetic picturebook about the nature of language, words, and their power to help us communicate. Written in playful, short verses, the text captures the essence of many childhood questions, as if the author were looking through a child's point of view, only to conclude that the most important thing is to be able to use words to connect with others. Ann Rand evokes moments from day to day life that can be familiar to any reader, like a visit to the beach, and recreates universal sentences that everyone has said, such as "how hot the sun has got" or "how pretty a seashell is," using playful language.

Irregular and imperfect paper cut illustrations in bold plain colours (red, blue, yellow, white, black, pink and beige) are combined with hand-drawn sketches to give the picturebook a childish, playful look as well. Complex ideas are translated into friendly rhymes and simple images that help connect the young reader to the text, but that also gives new meaning to the words.

Paul Rand uses a lively line to highlight certain details, such as objects' faces, to give even the most common inanimate things a friendlier look. Typography also plays an important role in the construction of each spread. Sometimes it is the center of the image itself, as in the big NO with a sad face that covers almost both pages, or FAIR written in different fonts. In other images, typography reflects the tone of that fragment of the text, as when the train is accompanied by a Toot Toot Toot Toot in letters of different sizes that are displayed in disorder, following the path of the bridge, or the zigzagging stenciled letters that spell Tintinabulate.

Although the illustrations are two dimensional, with almost no perspective or depth, they reflect movement and dynamism through the use of contrasting colours, diagonal and pointy lines, and rough edges. These also serve as cohesive resources, even if there is no connection between each image, as they all portray different situations and characters. The overall artistic style and colour palette give the book continuity and cohesiveness. This picturebook can inspire children to create their own poems and texts in different writing styles, so as to play with words, as Ann Rand does.

# S

Selznik, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. 2007.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal in 2008.

This hybrid graphic novel (with a combination of novel, picturebook and graphic novel elements) masterfully alternates between pages of prose and pages of illustrations. Although the book includes a total of 533 pages, nearly 300 of them are pictures, and those pictures are just as important in telling the story as the words. Occasionally, a page features only one sentence. Selznik sets his novel in a real place, the Montparnasse railway station in Paris and he uses the illustrations to fill in the gaps of information left out in the prose chapters as well as to enhance the reader's understanding of the story. Since the story is a mystery, the illustrations provide important clues which add to the meaning in the prose. Hugo Cabret gives the word "reading" a completely new meaning: reading this graphic novel for older readers includes interpreting illustrations just as one would do when reading a picturebook.

Selznik illustrates the book with black and white pencil drawings in order to evoke the flickering images of the silent films to which the book pays homage. The pencil drawings are remarkable for their subtle shading as the graphite provides an evenness and subtle texture on the watercolour paper it is drawn on. Selznik based his illustrations on real people whom he asked to pose for him, but his storyline is completely invented. The novel was inspired by the true story of the French film-maker Georges Méliès, a man who was once famous for making the very first film, *Le voyage dans la lune*, but who eventually became destitute and ended up having to work selling toys in a train station. Selznik used many cinematic techniques to capture the mood of the early black-and-white silent films of that period in order to tell this story. He shows the protagonist from many angles, a bird's eye view, in profile, close up, and from behind to give the reader the feeling of looking at a scene from his perspective. He also illustrates the *mise-en-scène* or objects that make up the scene in separate images to give the feeling of capturing each element and noticing their symbolic purpose in the story. This artistic marvel has been an inspiration to writers of children's literature for its innovative style and for pushing the boundaries with its interplay among genres.

# S

Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. Harper & Row, 1963.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal, 1964.

This revolutionary picturebook captures readers' attention and imagination right from the start with its remarkable cover. Unlike typical children's books of the day, Sendak chooses to leave the reader guessing by placing a monster on the cover and omitting the protagonist. The small sailboat perched on the shore alludes to a voyage into a strange land and visions of iconic fairy tales with monsters or dragons immediately come to mind. Contrary to expectation, the protagonist, a young boy named Max, is not a prince but is a regular child living in a typical home. Max is wearing a wolf suit, which shows that he is 'acting' and this costume allows him to explore his wild side, chasing his dog and yelling, "I'LL EAT YOU UP!" to his mother (6). On the surface, this may seem to be a simple story of a boy who is sent to his room for misbehaviour and has a strange dream of wild creatures, but on a deeper level, this daring narrative reveals a child's inner struggles as he seeks self-actualization.

A key element that the journey Max takes is imagined is the moon, a consistent element that is visible as Max travels from his room to the wild kingdom and back to his room again. The moon is seen from Max's bedroom window and in the land of the wild things, signifying that the wild things are part of him and represent an emotional journey that he has taken. Sendak's treatment of a child's psychological journey is a departure for the children's book genre. In his depiction of Max, who is given space to vent his frustration at his mother and to explore his emotions, Sendak validates the universal fears and fantasies of children. By portraying a protagonist who goes through a psychological struggle, *Where the Wild Things Are* brings a level of 'realism' to the picturebook genre. This direction towards realism is adopted by other picturebook authors of the time, such as Ezra Jack Keats with his exploration of an urban setting and multiculturalism in *The Snowy Day*.

Sendak uses many innovative techniques to entice the reader forward with the drama of 'turning the page.' He employs simple text to highlight the carefully placed details in each scene. Words are rhythmic, and almost poetic, slowing down the pace to allow the reader to contemplate the hidden messages in the illustrations. When there is more written text, the pace speeds up and the unusual sentence structure and repetition resemble a jungle chant: "[T]he wild things roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws" (18-19). In addition to the carefully selected text, Sendak carefully composes space on the page: the early pages of the book contain more white space as Max is introduced, but when he visits the land of the wild things, more and more of the page is filled with detailed, exotic illustrations leading up to the climax -- "the wild rumpus" -- where the pages are filled with double-page spreads depicting wordless scenes of abandonment as the monsters and Max rejoice in their savage freedom. The musical quality of the text leading up to this climactic moment makes the reader more aware of the implied musicality as the characters dance and swing without the need to rely on text.

The images are illustrated with finely textured cross-hatching made up of short, black ink lines. This technique combined with the pale colour palette gives the creatures and the scenery an 'other-worldly' quality that is unique to Sendak's work. While his illustrations utilize simple lines which give them an animated, cartoon quality, his muted watercolour tones are more natural than what is typically used for cartoons. The illustrations capture the readers' attention since they convey much more than the words, powerfully depicting Max's transformation as he succumbs to self-expression: As the forest grows so does Max's demeanour change - his face goes from sullen to gleeful and his body language changes becomes more confident and self-assured the further away from home he imagines himself to be. In fact, Max becomes more frightening than the creatures he encounters who are given giant heads and bodies the same proportion as a child's body. Sendak plays with perspective to demonstrate that Max can be bigger and smaller than he really is depending on his emotional state.

*Where the Wild Things Are* ushers in the 'modern age of picturebooks' through its complex layers of implication in exploring the psychology of the child. Due to its timeless quality and open-ended narrative framework, this intriguing story continues to appeal to readers today, demonstrating it to be a true work of art.

# S

Sendak, Maurice. *In the Night Kitchen*. Harper & Row, 1970  
Winner of the Caldecott Honor, 1971.

One of Sendak's three most highly acclaimed picturebooks (in addition to *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Outside Over There*), *In the Night Kitchen* explores the inner feelings of children as they manage to come to grips with the reality of their lives. *In the Night Kitchen* relates the story of a young boy named Mickey who wakes up in the night and has a series of bizarre experiences after he "[falls] through the dark, out of his clothes past the moon & his mama & papa sleeping in the night" (4-5). The unusual and strange storyline involves Mickey being put into a recipe of cake batter in the night kitchen by a trio of bakers. The night kitchen represents Mickey's dream world and is a vehicle for the protagonist (and the child reader) to explore various pressures put on him, such as the temptations of popular culture, the desire for self-actualization, and the fear of being alone. The 'Mickey Mouse' ovens that the bakers use symbolize the pressure of children to follow popular culture and be tempted by commercialization. The three bakers seem to represent the arbitrary world of adults who manipulate children to be something that they are not. When Mickey rejects their plans he shouts, "I'M NOT THE MILK AND THE MILK'S NOT ME! I'M MICKEY!" to proclaim his own self-worth. The fact that Mickey falls naked "into the light of the night kitchen" has been the subject of controversy and has led to the book being censored in many states in America. The fact that Mickey is naked has been interpreted to have sensual implications; however, it could simply suggest that Mickey is as innocent as a baby as he falls prey to the adults of his world, represented by the bakers. The protagonist's dream world is shaped by his own mind, which is influenced by the pressures he faces every day, and his dream state mirrors his own learning process as he discovers that he doesn't need to rely on "mama & papa" (5) to protect him. He manages to turn his batter into a plane to fly away and find milk for the cake, succeeding in spite of his fears of standing up for himself in the world without parental protection. Sendak uses a comic-book style to depict the story, innovatively employing text boxes, dialogue balloons, and paneled graphics to capture the spirit and feeling of a dream. As Mickey floats, flies and dances from one panel to the next, it is not taken seriously as it would be if it were more realistically portrayed. The expressions on the characters' faces are somewhat comical, Oliver Hardy clones, a popular film comedian of Sendak's childhood whose doopy expressions might be seen to make light of the real fears that the child experiences. *In the Night Kitchen* has been interpreted in many ways and continues to inspire writers to push the boundaries of picturebook conventions.

Seuss. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Penguin Random House, 1957.

The famous author of this book, Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel wrote this story along with approximately sixty other books after his original career as an illustrator and cartoonist (for magazines such as *Vanity Fair*) ended. Most of Geisel's children's books were written in rhymed verse with simple, stylized hand-drawn illustrations by the author. Seuss' first children's book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was rejected by over forty publishers; however, once his books began to be published they were soon favorites in the children's book industry by both publishers and readers alike. *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* has commonalities with many works by Dr. Seuss: It has an unusual, almost surreal narrative, is written with a strong rhythmic cadence, and it has a message about the human condition. This picturebook criticizes the commercialization of Christmas and was conceived after Seuss himself found he had lost the joy in celebrating Christmas. Seuss masterfully conveys the poignancy of Grinch's displeasure and withdrawal from his community with a limited vocabulary proving how few words it takes to narrate a complex story that continues to appeal to adults and children.

# S

Smith, Sydney. *Small In the City*. Groundwood Books, 2019.  
Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award, 2019.

This poignant picturebook provides a unique perspective on life in the city. Like a beautifully constructed art film, images of the city are revealed through a cinematic lens to highlight a child's perspective as he observes the cityscape. The first two pages of *Small in the City* consist of a wordless sequence of images as the child in silhouette looks out the window of a bus. These pages set a tone of ambiguity as we scan the visual field through his eyes. The child seems to be alone and is immediately placed in a position of vulnerability. The images, made up of inky marks and charcoal lines, are blurry and impressionistic portraying the gritty distance one feels when travelling alone. The subsequent pages (4-5) provide a closer view of the child as he reaches to pull the cord to signal his stop, a random dangling hand in his face and shadows of adults towering above him but with nary a friendly look (4-5). This slow beginning makes the first words of the story more emphatic when the narrator says, "I know what it's like to be small in the city" (6).

Smith uses sequential aspect-to-aspect panels (reminiscent of graphic novel panels) to show views of the city as the child takes in his surroundings (8-9). In a combination of ink and graphite with a mostly monochrome colour palette accentuated by splashes of yellow, green and red, the illustrations present scenes of downtown Toronto as a cold, bustling entity which humans navigate in isolation. The city towers above the child whose green toque with its red pompom, yellow and red rubber boots and warm winter scarf provide the only element of warmth. This contrast highlights the voice of the child narrator as he gives advice to an unknown presence: "Alleys can be good shortcuts. / But don't go down this alley. / It's too dark" (15). At first the reader might presume that the child is directing the advice to him or her; however, Smith cleverly reveals the true object of the child's concern with subtle hints that do not become clear until one has read through the whole story once and maybe even only after a second or third reading. Smith uses pauses through wordless images to allow the reader to take in the sequence of the story and understand the looming subtext that becomes clear with each new image. This mysterious and evocative picturebook captures the moment by moment journey of a child coming to terms with loss on the sidewalks of a cold and impregnable city. *Small in the City* promises to capture the imagination and heart of young and old, highlighting the plight of vulnerable creatures large and small.

# T

Tan, Shaun. *The Arrival*. Lothian Books, 2014.

Children's Book Council of Australia, Picture Book of the Year 2007, For ages 4 and up.

This revolutionary wordless graphic novel is accessible and of interest to children and adults alike. The story begins with a man leaving his wife and daughter to board a ship and travel overseas, mimicking the voyage taken by immigrants journeying to Ellis Island. The reason for the man leaving is unclear but the outline and shadow of a dragon's tail (a symbol) hint at an oppressive dangerous regime. It is assumed that the man will seek a safer place and lay the groundwork for his family to move over later. The story is wordless, forcing the reader to work hard to understand and interpret clues which 'tell the story'. This is both challenging and a relief since anyone can see what they wish in the story: one is not bound by a clearly stated message and both children and adults can access a story of images. The wordlessness of the book also imitates the challenges of being an immigrant in a foreign land, knowing neither the language, customs nor native animals of the new found land. In a series of vignettes, Tan demonstrates the universality of the immigrant experience - each new person has their own reason for fleeing home. The man experiences homesickness and loneliness. Images of strange buildings and exotic creatures emphasizes the foreignness of his new home. Words appear as strange symbols. *The Arrival* is a touching story which anyone can relate to and which provides insight into the immigrant experience, suggesting that we have more in common than we know. The book is dedicated to the author's parents, so one can presume that Tan's family were immigrants at one time.

From the cover of *The Arrival*, a faux-vintage aged album, one gets the feeling of stepping into the past; however, the normal-looking man on the cover is at odds with the strange animal he meets. The endpapers of *The Arrival* include passport-sized images (resembling photos) that are drawn in pencil to create realistic portraits of people from different ethnic backgrounds. The use of pencil creates a sense of oneness and underline the similarity of the human experience when confronted with a new homeland. The theme of diversity and immigration set from these first pages is a timeless one. The inner pages of the book are also illustrated with pencil and in varying in shades of sepia: some illustrations are lighter and some darker, while others use a shade of grey to stand out. While *The Arrival* is a graphic novel, the artwork is not cartoon-like. The pencil-drawn images and nostalgic style of the artist create a strong cohesion throughout the book. While some pages depict extremely futuristic, seemingly dystopic scenes (pp 36-37) others are highly relatable (19-20). In both cases, there is continuity in the colour palette (sepia tone) and soft pencil shading which is very appealing. For each new story (such as a vignette narrated by a person the man meets), the colouring is slightly different. Much of the book is told through moment-to-moment depictions in a series of square panels. Storytelling is done in the small panels, while two-page spreads are used to set the reader up for a change in location or perspective. For example, the protagonist shares his story with a man wearing glasses using his notepad (in a metacognitive moment, the artist draws a sketch of his own art from the early part of the book). When the man with glasses begins to tell his own story, his eyes light up with remembered images, each panel shows a closer view of his eye as he 'sees' or remembers the past. What he supposedly describes is a scene of small people fleeing giant creatures with horn-like weapons (59-60). By this time, the reader has learnt to interpret such scenes as allegorical. Tan illustrates a scene which is fearful, with the small size of the people, one can sense the danger they are in. The fact that Tan uses soft pencil strokes to create such a range of effects is remarkable. His subtle colour palette emphasizes the universality of experiences and at the same time emphasizes the strangeness of the foreign place. Tan is revolutionary in his approach: using a blend of old and new images, he creates a montage of experiences to reveal the challenges faced by immigrants.





Ungerer, Tomi. *Moon Man*. Harper & Row, 1967.

*Moon Man* is a revolutionary departure from more conventional children's picturebooks. Instead of the softer palette of pastel-hued tones typically used for picturebooks of this time, Ungerer's colour palette places dark blue and black in contrast with brilliant yellow, pink, orange, red and green primary colours. These heavily saturated colours appear to be coloured with felt markers. The dark, mostly black background gives the story an otherworldly feel and highlights the ghostly whitish-grey figure of *Moon Man*. His pale, shimmering form scrunched up inside the moon's sphere becomes human as he jumps off the surface of the moon to catch a "shooting star." In a gentle satire of bureaucracy and fear of others, Moon Man ends up in jail as soon as he lands on earth. Ungerer sneakily finds a way for *Moon Man* to escape jail as he waxes with the moon and becomes slim enough to slip out. This trick is repeated as he is able to fit onto Doktor Bunsen van der Dunkel's space ship and return him home. This story emphasizes *Moon Man*'s unique qualities and difference through the salient white paint used to capture him, his odd, quirky bald head, strange gestures and his desire to dance. Humour is found in the story where *Moon Man* is mistaken for a costume party goer, and when he is able to outsmart his jailers. *Moon Man*'s return to his "shimmering seat in space" brings the story full circle and reinforces the idea that being different makes it difficult to fit in.



# V

Van Allsburg, Chris. *The Polar Express*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1985.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal, 1986.

As a virtual outsider of the picturebook community, Van Allsburg began his artistic career as a sculptor and came to writing books as an outlet of his artistic creativity. For this reason, there is something unique about his books since he began writing stories outside of the children's literature community, making his storytelling very personal and original. His picturebooks often have a surreal quality to the illustrations which is magnified when contrasted with the plain and simple language of the text. This dichotomy forces the reader to look more closely at the intersections between text and images for deeper understanding of the story. Van Allsburg was inspired to write *The Polar Express* after a vision he had of a boy getting on a train and having something important to deliver to the North Pole. This is part of the magical quality of this book, since it starts out as a sort of dream-quest which anyone might have. The colours in the illustrations are muted, with forms being fuzzy and simple scenes that leave room for the imagination. Even Santa and the reindeer do not seem to be unique: they have a symbolic quality which emphasizes the dreaminess of the boy's experience. It seems to be a reenactment of a childhood memory. The message of the story revolves around the bell, whose ring represents a child's ability to remember the joy and magic of Christmas. This story resonates with adults as well as children since

Van Camp, Richard. *We Sang You Home*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Orca Book Publishers, 2016.

This profound picturebook plays homage to the spiritual bond between parents and their children, even before they are born. Using a lyric and poetic text, meant to be read or sung, the author recalls the wisdom of First Nations peoples in using their voices to sing to the souls of those who they wish to encounter in life, in a ritual akin to that of Buddhist tradition, where souls choose the parents they wish to reincarnate with. Each phrase invites us to read it more than once, for it encloses a deep understanding of the nature of parenthood and, above all, of human relations. It can be seen as an analogy to any spiritual rite: first comes the hope, the wish that is manifested through the prayer; then, the faith and dedication, in the everyday practice of love; finally, the thankfulness for the miracle that has been granted. Such is the miracle of the gift of life, depicted here with analogies to the natural elements and their mysterious forces: as migrating birds fly home, a new soul reaches its chosen parents following their song back home. The image of home is more than the warm fireplace, it is that sacred place inside each one of us, the only place one can return to, where our spirit resides. The simple illustrations contrast with the depth of meaning of every word that is written but also refers to the simple nature of the message: that life is a miracle one must cherish and be thankful for. The illustrator uses digital collage to recreate natural settings that sometimes evoke a dream-like scenario, or to depict a very realistic image of a house, a bed, a fireplace. In doing so, both text and image contribute to showcasing life's duality, the constant movement between the spiritual inner world, and the material outer one. This is an emotional and moving text that inspires many readings and interpretations; that lives between song and poetry, phantasy and reality, in a tribute to nature's gift of life.

# V

Van Camp, Richard and George Littlechild. *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses*. Children's Book Press, 2003.

This thought-provoking picturebook is unique in many ways. First of all, it is narrated by the author himself who describes his own life and where he is from, going so far as to include actual photos of his family and friends. In addition, the narrator inquires about horses, an animal that he has little knowledge of since he comes from the Northwest Territories. This establishes an interesting perspective as it shows the reader that things looking differently depending on where you are from. Van Camp places the reader in his hometown of Fort Smith where it is “forty below” and “so cold the ravens refuse to fly.” In this context, Van Camp introduces the theme of identity by announcing himself “half Indian” and “half white,” with an accompanying illustration (5) depicting himself to be literally divided in half to illustrate his differing cultural influences. The narrator takes pride in his Dogrib Indian heritage on his mother's side of the family and incorporates Dogrib words into his narrative, such as the words for dog -- /tlee/ -- and horse -- /tlee-cho/. The author points out that his people are “dog people,” whereas his friend George Littlechild (illustrator of the book) is Cree and “[h]is people are horse people.” This allows Van Camp the opportunity to introduce a few words in Cree, underlining the fact that different groups of people speak different languages but also have much in common. In fact, he points out, the word for horse in both Cree and Dogrib is “big dog” (26). This connection underlines both the importance of animals to Dogrib and Cree people, but also the way two groups of people can be like-minded. The focus of this meandering story seems to shift its purpose as the question, “What's the most beautiful thing you know about horses?” is asked of different people. It not only investigates the question of understanding what is special about horses but also brings out the idea that everyone views things differently.

Language is used playfully throughout the story in the use of repetition and occasional rhyme: ““While Dogrib Indians say, ‘Ho!’ / Cowboys say, ‘Let's go! Let's go!’” (13). Words in the story are placed thoughtfully beside illustrations which enhance and interpret their message. George Littlechild uses a bright, colourful palette of pink, purple, turquoise, and orange to illustrate the book, matching the fun and fanciful mood of the story. The bright splotches of spots and stripes on horses, dogs and faces are unusually cheerful and imitate the expressive, uninhibited strokes of children's art. These vibrant illustrations provide a positive compliment to the text, and underline the idea that each person has a different view of the world since the horse is depicted differently in each illustration -- with freckles as Heather sees horses (25) or blue (27) as the narrator sees them.

This is a story which shows the importance of asking questions, but not necessarily having one correct answer to the question. It is a story about inquiring about one's world, being open to learning from others, and ultimately, admiring the qualities of “the animals of the earth” by recognizing that they are all special in their own way (just as each human is) and how all living things are interconnected. *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses* illustrates the values of indigenous ways of knowing where each person is interconnected to their land and in relationship to others.

# W

Wagner, Jenny. *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*. Illustrated by Ron Brooks. Puffin Books, 1977.

This deceptively simple story can be interpreted on many levels. On the surface, it relates the relationship between Rose, an older woman, and her dog, John Brown, demonstrating their closeness and John Brown's resistance to the presence of the Midnight Cat who keeps coming around. However, the story can be read from an allegorical perspective whereby the Midnight Cat represents Rose's illness and impending mortality. John Brown rejects the Midnight Cat because he cannot accept this change in her (illness) nor her death. Children may not fully understand this deeper meaning right away but they will sense the changes in Rose, noticing her inactivity and John Brown's mournful isolation by the end of the story. In this way, children can be subtly introduced to a topic that they can digest slowly, internalizing only that which they are ready for.

Wagner skillfully imbues her text with multiple meanings. The use of a real person's name for Rose's dog, John Brown, suggests his importance and his new role as companion to Rose in place of her husband. The narrator uses anthropomorphic language to give John Brown a human-like presence in the story. For example, John Brown realizes that he needs to not selfishly cling to Rose and he asks, "Will the midnight cat make you better?" His sensitivity shows that John Brown deeply cares for her and his acceptance of her changing state (her illness and eventual death) models healthy behaviour for the reader. The implied message in this question is 'what is best for Rose.' Another example of words with multiple meanings is the name 'the Midnight Cat.' Midnight is associated with darkness and danger, and in the context of the story, death. The repeated appearance of the Midnight Cat shows that it will not go away and the final image of the Midnight Cat curled up contentedly is suggestive of sleep, implying that midnight is the time to go to sleep, as well as that death must be accepted as a peaceful transition.

The visual systems in *John Brown* are similarly simple yet full of meaning. The illustrations are made to look like old photographs or vignettes with their light, pastel tones and faded backgrounds. Cross hatching is used to add shape to pen and ink drawings. Images of a familiar scene of an elderly woman, bread on the table and an armchair provide a comforting setting to explore a complex theme. Rose and John Brown appear on almost every two-page spread. At first, they are shown side by side, but as the story progresses, they are seen in separate locations. This shift in visual format occurs when the cat is introduced and indicates a menacing element threatening their peace. The cat appears at night when it is dark. Like a shadow, the Midnight Cat takes away the colour of the early sunnier scenes where Rose is shown in her pink sweater and the home is full of happy tones of yellow and green. *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* is a multi-layered story whose text and visuals work harmoniously together to support the complexities of the themes of anxiety and loss.



Wise Brown, Margaret. *The Important Book*. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. Harper Collins, 1949.

This illustrated book portrays a tender approach to growing up and an idealized image of childhood. As the name suggests, the text focuses on the important things that a child can do between the ages of one and six. Using verse and playful rhymes that invite one to read it aloud, this uniquely poetic picturebook fosters a child's positive self-image by showcasing the different skills he can come to master. It is also fun to read and look at, with colourful illustrations that have a different mood depending on the subject matter of each two-page spread. The illustrations reinforce the tactile nature of each topic. For example, the spoon that a child can "eat with" is the same size as a real spoon and gives the reader the sense that he or she can pick it up. Objects are realistically drawn to give a child a real connection to the topic, such as the apple which is "white inside" with juice that "splashes in your face." Since the apple is rendered as the same size as a real apple, these sensory details make the images seem to leap off the page. The ending is surprising and unconventional, breaking with the linear narrative style in what seems to be a leap into reality to connect with the child: the frame on the last page is the discovery of himself as a protagonist of his own story. This playful and inspiring text can be shared with young children as a tool to boost their self-esteem and engage them in the pleasures of reading.

Wise Brown, Margaret. *The Golden Egg*. Illustrated by Leonard Weisgard. Golden Books, 1942.

*The Golden Egg* is a picturebook which was published under the umbrella of a series of books known as the 'Little Golden Books.' Author Margaret Wise Brown believed that children could be fascinated in the simple pleasures of the world around them and this Easter story about a golden egg will intrigue readers with the mystery of an unexpected prize. The story relates how a rabbit finds an egg which is making noise inside and eventually leads to the hatching of a duck. Rather than telling a fantastical tale for Easter, this story celebrates life and the very real magic of nature.

When the Little Golden Books first entered the market they were snubbed immediately by the children's literature community of librarians and reviewers. Trade publishers were none too pleased as well because the Little Golden Books sold for twenty-five cents in dime stores, drugstores, and eventually supermarkets. This price compared to \$2.50 or more for a regular trade book. However, at twenty-five cents they fit slim budgets. These little books had hard covers and were sturdy. Furthermore, the publisher used excellent illustrators, many from animation who had worked on major animated films. The Little Golden Books sold well, became popular and expanded into Golden books of assorted sizes. They employed some of the best children's book illustrators of the time, many of whom had worked in animation.



Wiesner, David. *Flotsam*. Clarion / Houghton Mifflin, 2006.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal, 2007.

This stunning visual feast by David Wiesner won him his third Caldecott Medal. Using hyper-realistic and detailed illustrations, Wiesner explores the shoreline and ocean life from a variety of perspectives to comment on the importance of observing things carefully. The title *Flotsam*, might seem to suggest that the things being showcased in the book are unimportant but the opposite is true. Wiesner wishes the reader to demonstrate the same observation skills as the boy in the story to have the same reward of uncovering many incredible sights. From the very first page of the book one is shown a gigantic eye observing a hermit crab (1). Upon turning the page, the reader sees the boy whose eye was observing the crab. In this way, the reader can empathize with and appreciate the viewpoints of both. Later on, when the boy finds an underwater camera, he uncovers a fantasy world of beautiful images, painted in watercolour, such as mermaids clinging to sea creatures or seahorses being invaded by aliens. These incredible scenes suggest that there are many wonders awaiting those who go looking for them. Wiesner includes several full bleed spreads which help to immerse the reader in the work. The story is told without narrative text to allow the reader to feel like they are inside the story and to allow for many versions of a story to be told. The purpose of this remarkable picturebook is to force the reader to find new ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Wiesner, David. *Tuesday*. Clarion Books, 1991.  
Winner of the Caldecott Medal in 1992.

This mostly wordless picturebook reveals its innovative spirit right from the start with its off-kilter cover illustration including barely recognizable lily pads floating in partial view. The title, *Tuesday*, suggests an ironic tone since *Tuesday* is not typically an exciting or remarkable day of the week. This fantasy story offers a unique perspective: Wiesner imagines what might happen as the sun goes down and we are not around to watch. The first page is presented from the perspective of a turtle noticing something strange on “Tuesday evening. Around eight” (2). The subsequent two-page spread (4-5) provides the reason for his surprise with a close-up view of frogs floating in the air right before the turtle’s eyes. His shocked expression contrasts with the frogs’ nonchalance as they calmly look past the reader. Wiesner’s watercolour illustrations provide a dreamy quality as the blue and green colour palette creates a magical land of the outdoors as compared to what is going on inside a home (11). Also, the contrasting tones of light and dark help to highlight the strange movements of the frogs as they fly through the air with a cape, flip upside down or touch a remote control with their tongue. Wiesner captures various perspectives as he reveals the playfulness in the frogs, the creepy feeling of the man eating a sandwich (11), or the dog getting chased by an army of floating frogs (20-21).

With the use of a limited number of words, Wiesner manages to slow down the tempo of the story, slowing down time to reveal each part of an evening and what adventures might occur between dusk to dawn. His message that not everything is as it seems is demonstrated with the juxtaposition of realistic images with unrealistic ones. For example, a sense of dramatic irony is created in the scene of the old woman asleep in front of the television while frogs surround her (16-17). He seems to suggest that humans are oblivious to half of the things that happen around them. At the end of the book, Wiesner underlines our supposed lack of connection to reality (in this fantasy world) by showing pigs flying. This play on the phrase, “if pigs could fly,” suggests that the unimaginable can really happen.



Willems, Mo. *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*. Hyperion Books for Children, 2003.  
Winner of the Caldecott Honor, 2004.

This minimalist picture book adopts comic book techniques to tell a humorous story about a pigeon who wants to drive a bus. The ridiculous incongruity of this scenario will appeal to young readers who will also relate to the pigeon's desire to do something that is "not allowed." Willems uses a pastel colour palette with pops of colour as the pale blue pigeon and teal bus provide salience against a background of beige. Similar to a comic or cartoon, the subjects are illustrated with simple, black graphite lines which appear to be hand-drawn. This loose style is easy for children to relate to and the iconic figures allow the reader to focus on the simple movements on the page such as the position of the pigeon's eye and mouth to suggest that he is talking and expressing emotion. Text is written in a simple typed font and appears in speech bubbles to represent the voice of the pigeon and the bus driver. What is especially interesting about this picturebook is the way the pigeon and the bus driver speak directly to the reader, breaking the fourth wall. Children will wish to respond to the pigeon since he is portrayed in a way that he is looking outwardly from the book and directly speaking to the reader. In addition, the pigeon is sometimes drawn partially on the page to give the suggestion that he is just arriving (walking onto the page) or just leaving. This inventive subversion of picturebook conventions is employed right from the beginning as the bus driver announces the title of the book in the endpapers while literally telling the reader, "Don't let the pigeon drive the bus!" The character of the pigeon is conveyed through small gestures, the closing of an eyeball, hands on his hips as he cajoles and whines to the reader to let him drive the bus. A child reading this story will no doubt be inspired to respond by talking back to the pigeon and will enjoy his tantrum as he shouts in capital letters and has a fit that turns his eyeball into a red swirl (22-23) screaming, "LET ME DRIVE THE BUS!!!" The antics of the pigeon will be recognizable as the reactions of a young child who cannot do something he or she wants and this story will open up a discussion about why adults sometimes have to say no. Due to his background as a professional animator Willems succeeds in capturing the humour of childhood antics with just a few strokes of genius and will have youngsters wanting to read it again and again.



# Y

Yashima, Taro. *The Umbrella*. Viking Press, 1958.

This intriguing picturebook includes references to Japanese culture, such as the use of Japanese kanji to signify important stages in the story, simplistic illustrations suggestive of Japanese woodblock prints, and an understated story of a child's growing autonomy. Words, such as momo (peach) or ame (rain) are translated from Japanese to bring a sense of authenticity in portraying a Japanese family living in New York. When Momo finally gets to use her umbrella and boots her face is shown to the reader. Her eyes are depicted as dark orbs without whites which stand out on a round, pale white face with hints of rosy cheeks. The illustrations are simplistic and stylized, and powerfully portray the delicate features of the girl while contrasting her small body against a backdrop of brilliant colours of the city. The umbrella and boots are the most salient features, representing the girl's obsession and later, her growing autonomy.

Taro Yashima is known for his unique colour separations producing interesting effects on a field of brilliantly saturated colour. Up until the late 1980s illustrators were sometimes asked to create the mechanical colour separations for a book's illustrations instead of providing full colour final art. This was done to save the cost of expensive photo separated and created colour plates. Technology in the 1980's and the advent of digital printing eliminated the need for mechanical separations. Nonetheless full colour printing is still expensive and more expensive than single colour printing. *The Umbrella* showcases the talent and experience of a master print maker in the great tradition of Japanese print-making as it demonstrates how mechanical colour separations can have a compelling liveliness to them. The process of rendering mechanically separated colour plates often robs the work of a vital sense of life and movement; however, Yashima was able to create brilliant colour separated illustrations by predicting the colour that overlays of process colours will produce. Examples of the wonderful colour produced by this process are the scenes with Momo with her umbrella and the rain falling off in blue streams that match. This is seen as well in the water falling to the ground as it splatters and makes lines in a rainbow of colour. The patience that Yashima demonstrates in creating mechanical colour separations is mirrored in the voice of the narrator in *The Umbrella* who notices the changes in the child protagonist as she masters a new milestone. The symbolic narrative suggests the importance of slowing down and appreciating new things without trying too hard to grow up.

# A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Definitions by  
Alex Friesen  
Logaine Navascués  
Dylan Shroeder  
Kathryn Shoemaker



**Agitprop-** A combination of agitation and propaganda. It can be used in picturebooks and comics in the service of a political agenda. Maurice Sendak's *We're All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy: Two Nursery Rhymes with Pictures*.

**Allegory-** A literary device frequently found in picturebooks with the story used as a metaphor for a bigger message. An allegory need not be subtle or clever it simply cannot be the 'face value' of the narrative. In picturebooks, John Marsden and Shaun Tan's *The Rabbits* is a fine example of an allegory related to many things but most importantly to the history of Australia.

**Animation-** Animation in picturebooks is the quality of liveliness in the illustrations, conveying a sense of movement. It may also be found in highly interactive picturebooks in which the viewer is asked to actually move and touch the physical book in special ways such as in Tullet's *Press Here*.

#### **Authentication of children's literature-**

Authentication is the process of verifying the cultural accuracy and authenticity of the information portrayed in works of children's literature. In illustrated materials, it covers the analysis of the suitability of the visual depictions of cultural elements, such as clothing, customs, and racial features, so as to avoid stereotypes and include the real values and beliefs appreciated by that culture. This is a most important task in the creation of multicultural literature and in the adaptation of original texts to other formats or retellings in contemporary versions. In this latter case, it also involves the examination of the appropriateness of the language used, tracking the changes in the narrative –the story itself- and/or in the depiction of the characters. In all cases, authenticity must take into consideration the creator's background and context, so as to understand the decisions taken.

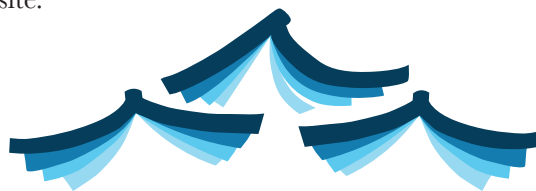
To authenticate the information in his graphic novel *Maus*, Art Spiegelman researched all the available sources he could find regarding life in concentration camps, so as to contrast this information with his father's testimonial about his experience in Auschwitz. In a passage where his father explained how he managed to survive by fixing German soldiers' shoes, Spiegelman resorted to shoe-fixing manuals that were published in the same years. He then illustrated how the process was performed. He also visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. He obtained copies of the architectural plans, in order to verify the information his father had given him and create a realistic depiction of the site.

**Black Comedy-** A form of humor centered around issues that seem antithetical to the idea of comedy. Black comedy can center on violence, illness, death and other such topics. A woman making jokes about her dead father in Alison Bechdel's graphic novel *Fun Home* is an example of black comedy, for example. Often also used by villains in comics when they commit crimes and atrocities of various degrees to try and add levity to a dark situation. *The True Story of the Three Pigs*, *I Want My Hat Back*, and *This is Not My Hat* are fine examples of picturebooks that use black comedy.

**Bleed-** In picturebooks, bleeds are used when an image on one page or double page spread extends beyond the page. It is a layout strategy that requires knowledge of how the final product will be printed. It can be utilized for the dramatic dynamic of bringing the viewer into the image in contrast to giving the viewer a space between the image and herself that a frame provides. In graphic novels and comics, images that bleed are of particular interest, as they break the structure of the grid by eliminating the panel and gutter. In doing so, they become more salient and gain narrative relevance.

**Burlesque-** This is taking the spirit or essence of something serious and turning it into a joke or a mockery. *The Stinky Cheese Man* is a fine example of this kind of playful burlesque in a picturebook. Alternately it can also involve the portrayal of something trivial, framing it in a serious way. It is often outrageous or vulgar to highlight the absurdity of something.

**Chapbook-** Chapbooks emerged in England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries as an economical and popular form of literature for the masses. Since printing methods became cheaper, Chapbooks were able to reach lower and semiliterate commoners. Meanwhile, books remained a privilege for the educated. They were sold by chapmen or street book dealers (chap means trade in Old English) who offered them door to door and in public spaces, hence their name. They covered different topics that appealed to adults and children, ranging from romantic stories and cookbooks to nursery rhymes and folk-tales. As they also included rough woodcut illustrations -although not necessarily related to the content- they can be considered early predecessors of illustrated children's books. In present times, the term is still used to refer to inexpensive or pocket format publications, mostly used in underground literary circles.



**Children's literature-** The idea of creating literature specifically for children is a somewhat modern construct, which relates directly to the notion of childhood as a separate stage in life. First came the advancement of Puritanism in the late 17th century and its conception of children as sinful beings. Then, John Locke proposed that children were born in a blank slate state and modeled through education, while Rousseau later described the child as an innate innocent being, who was corrupted by society. All these scenarios highlighted the role of education in a child's development; hence, the first literary works for children were religious or informative books, some of which were illustrated. Until then, oral folk tales, popular literary forms such as chapbooks, and literary texts had been targeted at both adults and children. Soon, they were also adapted to suit society's moral codes towards them, generating works that were both educational and entertaining, such as fairy-tales. Today's definition of children's literature covers all genres and media made for children and young adults –board books, comic books, graphic novels, novels, short stories, literary apps, plays and movie scripts- both entertaining and educational, in different genres. It also recognizes the existence of cross-over works which are intended for children and read by adults, and vice versa.

**Coherence-** Coherence is the overall perception of completeness or wholeness of a given sequential narrative. This implies that the narrative structure and plot are well organized, through the use of interrelated cohesive resources that help readers make sense of the message.

**Cohesion-** Cohesion is the bond or relation between each and all of the systems used to convey meaning in a multimodal work -typographical, verbal, narrative, topographical and visual- so as to create an impression of unity and coherence. In illustrated books, some cohesive resources are image repetition, salience, position, line, texture, shape, size, scale, colour and palette configurations, composition and rhythm.

**Collage-** Creating art by using smaller pieces of various other works to create a new big picture. People often do this by snipping pictures out of magazines to make vision boards or other types of art projects. It can now be created using computer tools such as Photoshop to grab bits of various images to create something new. Cutting panels of various existing comics to create a new story would be a form of collage. Some picturebook creators who use collage both with physical materials and digitally are Julie Flett, Eric Carle, Elizabeth Cleaver, Ann and Paul Rand to name a few.

**Connotative-** Connotation is the implied meaning and subjective reading of an image or text. It can be culturally assigned, learned by convention or a personal interpretation based on the different resources used from the visual, verbal and narrative systems, typography and topography. Connotative images may be more abstract.

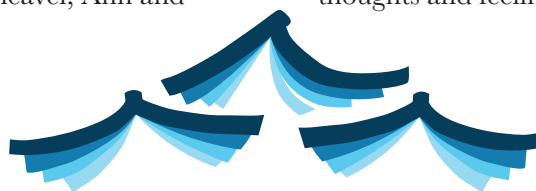
**Context-** In illustrated children's books and materials, context can be defined as the depiction of the setting –physical space or situation- where the narrative unfolds and that enables the interaction of its components and characters. On an external level, it is also the social, economic or cultural background and practices that the author or illustrator bring to the work, explicitly or not, as a reflection of its moment of creation.

**Continuity-** Continuity refers to the perception that the events in a narrative sequence are part of the same moment or situation, through the consistent use of verbal and visual elements. This effect can be achieved by creating patterns such as the repetition of colour, words, or the iteration of characters, so as to connect the narrative along the separate spreads, frames or turning of pages.

**Dialogic-** Dialogic refers to the use of dialogue as a means of communication. In that sense, it implies that there is a speaker/creator and a listener/reader. Children's books use a dialogic communication process, in that they also foster an interaction between the creator and the reader/viewer, by leaving specific information gaps that the latter must fill with his/her own experience and knowledge. Sometimes, this involves reading between the lines, understanding the hidden connotations of a literary work. In multimodal texts, the dialogue is also established between modes, by the interaction between the visual, verbal, typographic, topographic and narrative systems and cohesive resources.

Dialogic reading is an interactive method of reading to children where the adult/teacher prompts them to become the tellers of the story by asking questions and expanding on their responses so that they develop critical thinking, creativity and literacy skills, such as vocabulary and visual literacy.

**Didactic-** Something that is didactic is something that seeks to teach or instruct. A didactic picturebook or graphic novel seeks to have its reader learn something. This approach is popular in picturebooks that aim to help children learn about their world or about their own thoughts and feelings.



**Doggerel-** A simple, often irregular, form of verse or rhyme. It can commonly be seen in children's rhymes and songs. Often picturebooks written in verse or rhyme make use of doggerel as it can be simple and easy for children to understand and is often fun to read aloud. Think of Dr. Seuss.

**Dummy-** In graphic design, a dummy is an exact copy or printout of the designed material -be it a book, magazine or brochure- before the final printing process is started. It serves as a model of what the finished work will look like, with the same number of pages and size, although sometimes it may be printed to scale. Several dummies may be created as the design process evolves, as a tool to examine the early development of the concept or go through a final edition of the images. It helps to visualize the rhythm, coherence, cohesion, and suitability of the chosen format in a concrete, material medium.

**Epiphany-** The moment in a story in which a character comes to an important realization or uncovers a truth that had previously been hidden from them. An epiphany can often lead to a shift in the narrative as previous events are cast in a new light. In *Where the Wild Things Are* Max realizes that he really wants to be "... where someone loves him best of all."

**Epistolary-** A story told in the form of letters exchanged between characters. *The Jolly Postman* is a popular example of this kind of storytelling. In children's literature it is often used in the form of pen pals exchanging letters to each other. *The Day the Crayons Quit* is another fine example.

**Eponymous-** This is when the name of a character is in the title of the work. *Curious George*, *Babar*, *Madeline*, *Corduroy*, are just a few of the many picturebooks titled after the main character.

**Foregrounding-** Putting an image in a position of prominence on a page or in a panel to draw the eye of the reader. Foregrounding is usually realized by making an element in the image large and prominent, at the 'front' of a picture so that it is the first thing a reader notices. Often it looks the closest to the reader and is the most detailed part of a picture. In literary analysis, foregrounding refers to the action of bringing attention to some part of the text or information, making it more visible so as to emphasize its importance. This may be accomplished by choosing specific words or phrases that break the rhythm of the text or that create provocative images in the reader's mind.

Visual sequential narratives also apply this technique to highlight the importance of a given character or element within a frame and across the narration, through the use of salience, size, contrast, prominence, location in composition and other resources.

**Format-** The material composition and arrangement of printed and bound pages of a book. Illustrated books come in a number of formats including the picturebook format and the pop-up novelty book format. Format is distinct from genre in that the picturebook is a form and format but a biographic picturebook is a genre.

**Framing-** Framing is part of any narrative. It is the creation of units of information that contain characters and their actions, to give the sense of a beginning and an end. As a literary device, it is used to insert or conceal a story within another story.

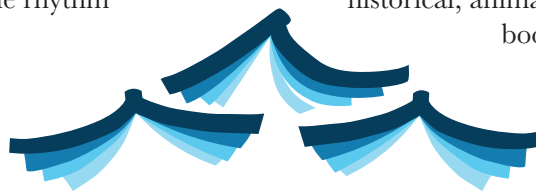
As material objects, illustrated books and other visual sequential narratives have a physical frame, such as the page or the TV screen. Within the specific medium, frames are employed to organize the composition, creating a visible enclosure to underline certain elements or characters. When lines, panels, and borders are employed to create these concealed boundaries, they are called formal frames. Informal frames refer to the use of other elements, such as windows, doorways or shapes to highlight information.

**Frame Narrative-** A frame narrative is a form of story structure where there is an overarching or main storyline that is used to encapsulate the various smaller stories within a larger narrative. In *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel the frame narrative is her as an adult trying to write a story about her father, which then encapsulates the other narratives where she is a child and a young adult as she is reflecting on her past through the frame narrative.

**Gaps in multimodal texts-** Semantic gaps are created in multimodal texts when one mode doesn't express all the information required to convey meaning. Hence, it needs to interact with other modes. In a picturebook, images fill the gaps left by the text, and vice versa, in an interdependent relationship.

Gaps are also established between the work and the viewer when the latter is exposed to open endings or undefined information. Hence, he must fill in the gaps with his own knowledge and experience to create closure.

**Genre-** This term refers to a kind of content such as historical, animal stories, fairytales, mystery, funny/silly books. It is not a form/format but a topic.



**Gutter-** In comics, gutters are the blank spaces between panels. Although empty, they are not free of content. On the contrary, they are acknowledged as semantic gaps where the reader interprets or imagines what happened between panels. In doing so, he creates a sense of unity and renders meaning to the sequence as a whole. This ability to fill in the gaps and mentally connect two panels that seem to be independent or unrelated is called closure. According to Scott McCloud, gutters serve as panel-to-panel transitions, operating in one of six categories, according to the sequence that is depicted: moment-to-moment, action-to-action, subject-to-subject, scene-to-scene, aspect-to-aspect, and non-sequitur.

**Halftone-** Using dots instead of lines to create an image. By putting a bunch of dots close enough together in a certain pattern, if you view them from a distance, they create a picture. It can also be used as a form of printing because it uses less ink to halftone as there is all the deadspace between the dots where no ink is needed.

**Hermeneutic circle-** Hermeneutics refers to the art of understanding and interpreting. The term, which originated in philosophy, is also applied in other fields of study, such as literary analysis, to understand how we interpret a text.

The hermeneutic circle establishes that the reader must take into consideration the parts of the text individually, and how they relate to the structure of the whole, to fully interpret a text.

This approach gains significance while analyzing multimodal works since each mode is considered to be an individual element. Nevertheless, unless the relationship between the other modes and the text as a whole is studied, its content cannot be fully understood.

**Hybrid Picturebook-** A book that combines both traditional, novel or storybook written sections with the illustrations and comics of a graphic novel. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is a huge series in this form and has inspired many similar series. Some hybrids include pages of full text, some with images, and some with comic conventions such as panels and speech/thought balloons. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* is a kind of hybrid of a prose novel and a wordless picturebook.

**Hypertext-** In an illustrated or picturebook, hypertext refers to any narrative that runs parallel to the main one. It is a common resource in postmodern picturebooks with fragmented or nonlinear storylines, such as those with multiple perspectives and/or time spans. Hypertext creates links or paths to other stories, details or information that do not form part of the main story, breaking or complementing the linear flow. Hence, it can be viewed as a feature that creates one or more spatial planes that coexist, but may not interfere in each other's narrative progression.

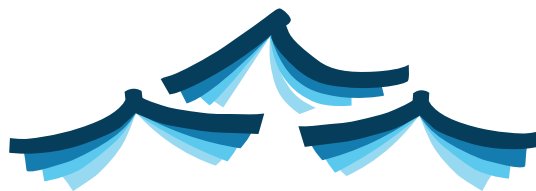
**Illustration-** An illustration is the rendering of a concept, text or idea as an image. It may be rendered in a variety of media from photographic image, digital layers and from the application of paint, pigments, and other tactile materials onto a background. An illustration is usually a picture and represents something. A drawing of a turtle in a book is an illustration in that it is not the actual turtle but is a recreated representation of that turtle in a visual artistic medium.

**Illustrated Book-** This is a huge family of codex forms that includes picturebooks, board books, artist books, wordless books, scrapbooks, and instructional materials to name just a few. In these forms, illustration may or may not be vital to the conveyance of information. Within it is the picturebook, a multimodal form in which both words and images depend upon each other to co-construct meaning.

**Implied Reader-** The implied reader is the one an author assumes to be the reader of their book. It may be someone the author believes meets the demands of the text and has the skills required to consume the work. For example, the implied reader of a graphic novel for kids would be a child who can see the pictures and read the text. As well that reader is at the point of emotional growth where the work would be of interest to them.

**Information Book-** A piece of nonfiction that seeks to offer facts on a subject to its reader. It seeks to educate on a particular subject and doesn't need to have a story or a narrative. A children's book about the water cycle and all its stages would be an information book.

**The narrative information picturebook-** In this kind of book, information is written in both a narrative and a picturebook form which is to say that the meaning is co-constructed by the words and images that convey a narrative.





**Interactive-** In interactive picturebooks and illustrated materials, the reader has an active role in interpreting, responding to or co-creating the narrative. Readers must physically engage with the books, opening flaps, pressing the pages, shaking them or following other directions. Hence, their actions act as an additional mode of meaning-making. The notion of performance attributed to postmodern picturebooks is associated with this interactive quality. Performance refers to the material nature of the book and how it performs as an object to convey meaning. Herve Tullet's body of work, with titles such as *Press Here*, is a clear example of interactive picturebooks.

**Intertextual-** Referencing a book or story within another book or story. In *The Jolly Postman*, the letters and postcards are to and from well-known fairy tale and nursery tale characters. An intertextual reference can also be visual in the adoption of the style of another artist in a character design or panel.

**Intratextual-** Intratextual is using references from within a work to comment on that work. It can be done by a reader saying, "this character says this earlier, so it makes sense that they would behave like this here" or it can be used by the author to create visual themes and motifs within their own work.

**Leitmotif-** Originating in music, it is a repeated theme or melody that is correlated with a specific person or idea. In literature, it is referring to a recurring theme or idea (Ex. how *The Imperial March* plays in *Star Wars* whenever Darth Vader is shown on screen). In books a leitmotif might be a recurring image that shows up whenever a particular character appears or is referred to. It can be a recurring pattern or theme inside a story filled with symbolic meaning. Picturebooks display visual motifs to enhance particular ideas. In picturebooks, the leitmotif can refer to the repetition of a passage that has a certain musicality or orality to it, such as in *Blueberries for Sal*.

**Literacy -** At its most basic level, it is the knowledge of how to read and write. However, it can also be used to describe a person's proficiency (or lack thereof) in other areas, such as technology, popular culture, and so on. Ex. "I may need some help. I am not very computer literate".

**Malapropism-** The act of accidentally using the wrong word because it sounds similar to something else, usually resulting in an amusing or nonsensical statement. Ex. "What's so controversial about youth in Asia?" as opposed to Euthanasia.

**Manga-** A style of Japanese comic books and graphic novels, often confused with Anime which is its television or film counterpart. There are often a comic book and television show version of the same story with the same characters (Ex. *Dragon Ball Z*, or *Cowboy Bebop*). However, not all manga has an anime counterpart and vice versa.

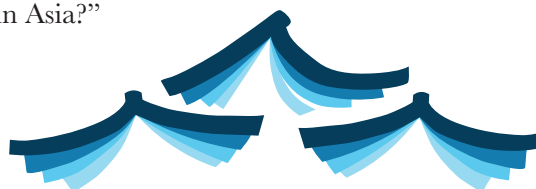
**Meme-** Derived from the Greek word "mimeme", meaning "something imitated", it is a funny or topical image, typically with some form of text added on top, which is spread quickly between users online. Memes can be either incredibly esoteric or massively relatable, and are almost like a worldwide inside joke that can remain popular and relevant anywhere from a few days to a few years.

**Metacognition-** the knowledge of a person's own thought processes and the ability to regulate one's own thinking. An example of this is the knowledge or awareness that you tend to be late for engagements and reminding yourself to try harder to be on time. In a classroom setting, metacognition refers to the practice of encouraging self-awareness in students so that they can be more aware of their thought processes and learning styles so they can achieve higher levels.

**Metafiction-** Metafictional devices are a common characteristic of postmodern picturebooks. They emphasize the fictional nature of the story, making evident that the book is an artifact, that the characters are all part of a narrative and that they are aware of the reader's presence (sometimes even addressing him directly). Metafictional works break literary conventions by displaying a constant self-consciousness about language, storytelling and the boundaries of narrative.

**Multimodal-** Multimodal refers to any kind of communication that integrates different modes to convey meaning. Speaking is a multimodal activity, as it involves the use of orality, facial expressions, and body language. Movies are multimodal sequential narratives that incorporate sound, image, and light. Illustrated picturebooks are multimodal too, as they combine visual, verbal, narrative, typographic and topographic modes and their specific resources.

**Narrative-** The telling of a story or event, either verbally or textually. It usually refers to the whole story, told in great detail either literally or figuratively. Characteristics of narrative writing include characters, plot, conflict, setting, and point of view.



**Parody-** To mimic a specific style, person, or genre with the intent of overstating for comedic effect. One of the most famous parody songwriters is Weird Al Yankovic who has popularized many parody songs, such as *Amish Paradise* as opposed to the original *Gangsta's Paradise*.

**Pastiche-** The act of imitating the style of one or more existing artists, typically used in reference to visual art. It can also refer to a work that consists of a medley of things taken from varying artists or artistic movements. Unlike parody, pastiche does not mock, but rather celebrates the work that it is imitating.

**Picturebook-** A picturebook is a multimodal illustrated book where image and text are mutually interdependent, as one cannot convey meaning without the use of the other. The format affords the telling of stories on any topic and genre. Some picturebooks depict controversial topics that are less suitable for young audiences. They are described as sophisticated and are aimed at crossover audiences.

**Picturebook theory-** While there are numerous academics who initially claimed and attempted to create picturebook theories, the fact is that as a complex multimodal form requiring the co-construction of meaning by two very different modes, language and image, recent views acknowledge the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the construction of such a theory. David Lewis in *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks* posits that it makes good theoretical sense to look at the picturebook from an ecological perspective in which each book needs to be assessed within its particular origin of creation and its particular use of meaning making resources.

### **Picturebook systems of meaning making**

**resources-** There are Six Systems of Resources for making /constructing meaning in a picturebook:

- (1) **NARRATIVE-** the system of narrative resources; the narrative, characters, settings, activities or events, narrative conventions.
- (2) **TOPOGRAPHIC-** the topographical material resources of the form; the physical properties of size, height, width, paper, binding, paper textures, quantity of pages.
- (3) **VERBAL-** the verbal resources; the words and grammar of the language used.
- (4) **VISUAL-** the visual resources; colour, texture, tone, line, shape, dot, texture.
- (5) **TYPOGRAPHIC-** the typographic resources; the font style, size, weight, colour, texture colour, tone, line, shape, dot, texture.

(6) **COHESIVE-** the multimodal cohesive resources—a mixture of resources from the other systems that integrate the text: colour configurations, associations, identities, palettes, repetition sense relations, rhythm, salience, contrast, position, information value, information focus, Theme and Rheme, New and Given.

**Point of view – (POV)** In fictional writing, it is the narrator's position in relation to a story being told. For example, "this story is told from the mother's point of view". It can also refer to the position from which something or someone is observed; ex. "I don't agree with you, but that's just my point of view".

Most picturebooks are told in third person, sometimes first person in the verbal narrative. This is also the case in film and graphic novel. Far more rarely, a picturebook or film has a first person visual POV. This is challenging in the visual mode, far more so than rendering that POV in a written or spoken text because the visual POV is limited to what the narrator sees and which rarely reveals who the narrator is or at least how the narrator appears to others.

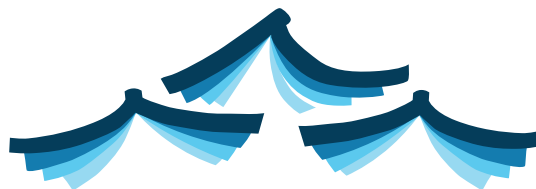
**Postmodern-** Postmodernism is a cultural movement that developed in the 1960s in opposition to the beliefs of progress and logical reasoning that prevailed during the previous era of Modernism and the Enlightenment. Many art forms, such as architecture, painting and literature were influenced by it, including picturebooks.

The postmodern picturebook has particular characteristics that showcase the defying line of thought of the era, breaking the conventions of traditional storytelling through the use of key features such as excess, boundary breaking, indeterminacy, parody and performance.

**Salience-** Along with framing and position, salience is one of the basic resources of composition. It refers to the quality that makes certain objects or characters stand out and attract the viewer's attention first and to different degrees. This is achieved through the use of colour, line, texture, size, shape, scale, dots, tone, the placement in the foreground or background, and contrast, among other resources.

**Semantic-** Relating to meaning within language. It is commonly heard within the phrase "it's just semantics", something often said during an argument or conversation surrounding the definition of a word.

**Semiotics-** Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols; it explores how words and other signs make meaning.



**Sequential Visual Narrative-** This is a family of visual narrative forms. A sequential visual narrative is a form of storytelling that uses visual elements to push the narrative forward. These elements must render actions that are organized in a logical sequence so as to convey the desired meaning. Comics, graphic novels, picturebooks and films are examples of formats that use sequential visual narratives.

**Sign-** As defined by semiotics, a sign is anything that can convey meaning and that represents something else. It is made up of two components: the signifier, or form, and the signified, or represented content. An illustration of a house is a sign, as it is a drawing (signifier) that represents an actual object, the physical house (signified). A stop road sign (signifier) is an instruction to act and stop (signified). Semiotics states there are three types of signs: the symbol, the icon and the index. Picturebooks and illustrated materials are exemplary tools to analyze the diverse nature of signs.

**Story-** The account of an event, either factual or fictional, told for entertainment purposes. A story can be told literally through written or spoken words, or figuratively through the use of visual art or music.

**Storyboard-** A storyboard is a tool that helps organize and structure how a sequential narrative unfolds, visualizing it frame by frame, scene by scene or page by page, depending on the media. Underneath every image there is a description regarding the actions taking place in each scene, and other comments that help understand its meaning. It is widely used in advertising, cinema and book design. As a tool, it also helps identify issues in continuity, cohesion and coherence.

**Surreal-** Meaning bizarre or strange, or referring to surrealism: an avant-garde art movement. While it is very difficult to clearly define surrealist art, it is quite the opposite of realism. For example, surrealist painter Salvador Dali's works were full of things that one would never see in their daily life (such as a melting clock or elephants with incredibly long, treelike legs) as opposed to a realist painter Edouard Manet, who painted mostly lifelike portraits of people in nature.

**Symbol-** A symbol is an image or object that represents something else, not related to its original form, literal definition or worth. As signs, symbols are social constructs, since their representational value must be previously defined or agreed upon. They are the product of conventions, something that is learned and passed from generation to generation or shared in a certain context or culture. They can also be personal, as representations of abstract feelings or ideas.

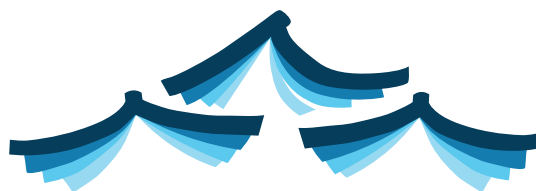
Symbolism is the act of giving something symbolic meaning. Generally, the symbolic value of the object is deeper and more significant than its literal or physical value.

All narratives use some level of symbolism. For example, by convention, each letter of the alphabet is a symbol that represents a sound. Many picturebooks depict common symbols as part of their language: hearts to represent love or the color black to symbolize death in the Western world.

**Typography-** Typography is an element of design and storytelling. It is the art of arranging characters or type (letters) so as to assure that they are legible and readable and ready for print (or for online publication). There are many families of type with different characteristics and designs. Each one is called a typeface and can connote different sensations or ideas. Hence, choosing a typography is an important decision for all the meaning it can convey. Some picturebooks use typography as the sole element of design, in lieu of illustrations, while others employ it as a means of enhancing or expanding the visual and textual content.

**Visual literacy-** Visual literacy is the capacity of understanding visual information, reading meaning in pictures, colours, shapes, composition, and other visual resources that function as signs. Like any other literacy, it is a skill that is mastered through repetition, hence becoming a permanent process of interpretation.

**Wordless or silent book-** Wordless books are those that tell a story exclusively through the use of images and illustrations. Nevertheless, they do include some words, such as the title and/or phrases drawn as part of the pictures, which direct the reading and help to convey meaning.



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and over a century of picturebooks.

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RIDE