

RESOURCES:

www.picturebookart.org

Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art

www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/magicpencil/home.html

The British Library—Magic Pencil: Children's Book Illustration Today

www.ala.org

American Library Association

www.cbcbooks.org/html/aboutauthors.html

Children's Book Council – Illustrating Children's Books/ In the Artist's Studio

www.nccil.org

National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature

www.scbwi.org

Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators

www.rif.org

Reading Is Fundamental, Inc.

Picture Books Plus: 100 Extension Activities in Art, Drama, Music, Math, and Science

by Sue McCleaf Nespeca and Joan B. Reeve.
American Library Association, 2002.

Beyond Words: Picture Books for Older Readers and Writers
by Susan Benedict and Lenore Carlisle, Eds., Heineman, 1992.

Art & Story: The Role of Illustration in Multicultural Literature for Youth: The Virginia Hamilton Conference
by Carolyn S. Brodie and Anthony L. Manna, Eds.
Highsmith Co., 1997.

Reading Contemporary Picture Books: Picturing Text
by David Lewis. RoutledgeFalmer, 2001.

Story Stretchers: Activities to Expand Children's Favorite Books

by Shirley C. Raines and Robert J. Canady.
Gryphon House, 1990.



RIF's Guide to

Picture Books



Picture Books

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF *Picture Books*

Picture books represent a unique literary form that blends stories with art. In a picture book, the illustrations are as important as the text, and both work together to tell the story. When you share picture books with children, be sure to pay attention to the illustrations—reading picture books means exploring the art as well. This brochure from Reading Is Fundamental can help you get more out of picture books by showing you how to use the illustrations to engage children and enhance the reading experience.

HOOK KIDS IN WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

We are told, “don’t judge a book by its cover.” Well, children do it all the time. A child’s first impression of a book is usually shaped by the pictures. So involve children in choosing books with wonderful, eye-catching illustrations that beg to be explored. Conduct “picture walks” through books by leafing through the pages to look at the images and discussing what you see before you read. That way, the illustrations will draw in even the most reluctant reader.

Illustrations can do even more than draw a child into a book; they can hook children into a lifelong love of reading. For

our youngest children, pictures are an introduction to the world of books. Long before they can read, children respond to images in an effort to place themselves and others in their lives into the world around them.

Picture books aren’t just for young children. Older children are often more motivated to read picture books because they see them as more fun and easier to read than books without illustrations. Picture books are also appealing as a break from longer novels because most can be read in a single sitting.

BRING BOOKS TO LIFE

Pictures enable children to explore the world within their own imagination and make connections to characters and events they see in books. When you help children connect with characters and events, you make the book more real to them.

Here are some ways that illustrations bring picture books to life:

- * Illustrators usually tell stories with pictures.
- * Authors use illustrations to depict specific scenes of high emotion or action.
- * Illustrators often use a variety of techniques to convey mood and tone as well as character and plot.

When illustrations reflect people, objects, and situations familiar to children, the images help validate a child’s emotions and experiences. The process of making an emotional connection can help a child learn empathy and compassion for others.

READING IS FUNDAMENTAL, INC. prepares and motivates children to read by delivering free books and literacy resources to those children and families who need them most. RIF's guides are designed to help parents and other adults aid children in becoming lifelong readers. To support RIF's work, please visit www.rif.org and click on “How You Can Help.”



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A Guide for Parents from
Reading Is Fundamental®



SEE THE WORLD

Illustrations convey meaning and carry information, especially in non-fiction books where pages are often filled with commentary that is not in the text. Be sure to “read” your way around the pages—read and discuss the captions, tables, charts, and the information conveyed by the illustrations themselves. Storybooks, although fictional, can also convey a great deal of information. A story about a trip to a farm or to the moon may have illustrations that can teach kids a lot about these places. Realize that it takes time to explore picture books when you are using them to learn about the world.

Expose children to pictures of the unfamiliar, or use images in books to confirm and expand upon what they already know. Illustrations in children’s non-fiction books can expose children to new ideas, different people, and places they’ve never seen. Or careful exploration of the illustrations may uncover new facts about familiar objects. Whether fiction or non-fiction, a picture book can help children gain knowledge and move them to ask new questions about history, inventions, nature, other cultures, and more!



BUILD READING SKILLS

Picture books help young children understand that words convey meaning, well before they are aware of the text. Pictures can help increase vocabulary, an important building block for reading. Books can help young children to identify:

- ✦ Colors, shapes, numbers, and letters.
- ✦ Names of people, places, animals, and everyday objects.

Picture books can also help build background knowledge that is essential to successful reading. A child who has never been to the zoo, a farm, or a beach can still learn all about these places by exploring picture books. Select books with simple or realistic images so that kids can point to objects and learn names.

Picture books help older kids with comprehension and prompt them to read critically. They can use the pictures to predict what’s going to happen next. The images can teach children to watch, look, and listen for clues, warning signs, and exciting things they might otherwise miss. More experienced readers can learn how to cross-reference the text and pictures in order to “read between the lines.” Choose books whose illustrations convey meaning not contained in the text, and help older readers play detective by going back and forth between the story and the pictures.

EXPLORE ART WHEN YOU READ TOGETHER

Picture books present a perfect opportunity for adult-child interaction, another critical element in developing a lifelong love of books. Talking about what the child likes or dislikes about illustrations is an easy way to generate conversation around a book and its plot.

Here are helpful hints for choosing picture books for children of different reading levels.

Pre-Readers — Choose books that have bold, vivid, and colorful illustrations of everyday objects.

Beginning Readers — Choose books with simple storylines and illustrations that closely match what is going on in the story.

Independent Readers — Choose books with illustrations that tell a story of their own or provide factual information.



Quick Tips!

Play “What’s that?” by pointing to objects on the page and having the child name what they see. Or read the story, stopping periodically to ask the child to find the picture of the object or character you just read about.

Help children use pictures to keep track of the story as they go and suggest that they retell the story to you. Encourage them to predict what will happen next based on the pictures they are seeing. Help them pay attention to the clues the illustrator left to hint at what is coming.