

WAYS OF VIEWING AND TEACHING PICTURE BOOKS

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Why Picture books?

Through picture books children can develop skills and understandings in

- Visual literacy
- critical thinking
- literary technique
- literary analysis

“A picture book is a world of ideas. We play with the ideas and play our own ideas around the pictured world. The more skilled we are, the more ideas we generate. In the process we create something of our own. Active involvement and interaction involves our senses, our emotions, our thinking skills. We can make the stories our own.” (Maurice Sendak)

VOCABULARY FOR VISUAL LITERACY

1. GAZE

- can indicate communication between a character and the viewer (demand)
- no communication with viewer (information)
- can show relationships, attitudes, emotions within text

2. PROPORTION/SCALE/SIZE

- can create the illusion of depth, 2D
- can create relationships of strength/weakness
- can create a sense of vastness
- are useful in factual/scientific type diagrams

3. THEME/GIVEN POSITION

- is usually on the left
- the given is what is known already / the new is new information, the message

4. COLOUR SATURATION

- the more grey = less saturated
- no/little grey = highly saturated
- can manipulate emotions, attitudes etc.
- can indicate the past/future

5. COLOUR HUE – creates moods

- red — active, passion, masculine, emotion, danger
- orange — excitement, desire
- yellow — warm colours, cheerful, joy, enlightenment, light hearted
- blue and associated colours — cool, calm, wisdom
- pink — sensuous, emotion, feminine, romantic
- sepia — the past or age
- green — knowledge, hope, promise
- black — evil, mysterious, powerful, fear
- white — purity, innocence, timeless, mystical
- purple — passionate, smouldering, caring
- grey — neutral, uncommitted, non-involvement

6. **LIGHT AND SHADE** — light sources can affect how something is represented
7. **TONE** – ranges from lighter to darker
8. **CAMERA SHOTS** – used for a variety of purposes
 - Close Up – shows detail (engagement)
 - Mid – further back, will show relationship to something else
 - Long Distance - shows entire scene
9. **ANGLES**
 - frontal — involvement
 - side-on — detachment
 - verticals/low angles (looking up) — power, dominance
 - verticals/high angles (looking down) — weakness, submission i.e. they show attitude
 - horizontal shots tend to give balance
10. **VECTOR** – a line between the doer and the done-to
When complemented by facial expression creates attitude, mood, emotion etc.
11. **REPRESENTING SOMETHING BY CLASSIFYING INTO DIFFERENT TYPES**
(i.e. different types of one product/thing e.g.)
 - a range of microphones, mouses
 - set of subordinates
 - superordinate + subordinates
 - metonyms and icons need to be discussed
12. **SYMBOLS** – used to represent an idea, concept etc.
e.g. the Statue of Liberty, a Cross
13. **FOREGROUND / MIDDLEGROUND / BACKGROUND**
– used to indicate relationships
14. **CENTRALITY** – placing of the central figure, object, main idea
— focuses attention
15. **SALIENCE** – the importance of a figure, in relation to other objects in the picture,
— focuses attention
16. **CROPPING** – the picture is shortened/made smaller
17. **LINE** –
 - horizontals and verticals can suggest stability
 - diagonals, dots, broken lines can suggest motion
 - cross-hatching can suggest solidity, calm
18. **BLUR** – can imply motion
19. **MIST** – can imply memory, gives prominence to a figure, idea
20. **MOTION** – normally from left to right
 - slowed or still motion can be created amidst intense activity
21. **TIME** – is indicated by left to right progression
22. **SHAPES/CONTOURS**
 - squarish shapes can suggest rigidity, harshness
 - curves suggest flow, softness

23. PERSPECTIVE

- isometrics can be impersonal
- frontal provides a sense of depth
- side-on, looking from above etc.
- point of view
- relate to camera shots and angles

RECOMMENDED PICTURE BOOKS

An ordinary day	L Gleeson & A Greder	Scholastic
Animalia	G.Base	Puffin
Detective Donut and the Wild Goose Chase	B.Whatley	Harper Collins
First Light	G.Crew and P.Gouldthorpe	Puffin
Grandad's Teeth	R.Clement	Harper Collins
Grandfather	J.Baker	Redfox
Grandmother	J.Baker	Refox
Hansel & Gretal	A. Browne	Walker Childrens
John Brown, Rose and the Mldnight Cat	J.Wagner	Puffin
Josh	A.Mclean	Allen and Unwin
Let the Celebrations Begin	M.Wild and J.Vivas	Orchard
My Dog	J Heffernan & A McLean	Scholastic
Piggybook	A. Browne	Knopf
Queenie the Bantam	B.Graham	Walker Books
Rose Blanche	R. Innocenti and C. Gallaz	Harcourt
The Deliverance of Dancing Bears	E.Stanley	Pelican
The Great Escape from City Zoo	T.Riddle	Harper Collins
The Highwayman	A.Noyce and C.Keeping	Oxford uni
The Lost Thing	S. Tan	Lothian
The Kraken	G Crew & M McBride	Lothian
The Red Tree	Shaun Tan	Lothian
The Story of Rosy Dock	J.Baker	Greenwillow
The Water Tower	G. Crew & S. Woolman	Era Publications
The Two Bullies	J.Morimoto	Random House
The Whales' Song	D.Sheldon and G. Blythe	Puffin
The Wolf	G.Cross	Puffin
Way Home	L. Hathorn & G. Rogers	Random House
Voices in the Park	A.Browne	Doubleday
Where the Forest Meets the Sea	J. Baker	Walker Childrens
Where the Wild Things Are	M. Sendak	Red Fox/Bodley Hd
Willy & Hugh, Willy the Wimp, W. the wizard	A. Browne	Red Fox +Walker
Window	J.Baker	Redfox/Random H.
Zoo	A. Browne	Redfix/Random H.

USING PICTURE BOOKS AS 'RELATED' TEXTS IN SENIOR SCHOOL

In critically analysing texts, students should be aware of the techniques which composers of picture books use:

- **contrast** — comparing 'before' and 'after' Changes in perspective, point of view, colours and saturation, style can be made to imply or state changed attitudes
- **exaggeration** — for emphatic effect
- **juxtaposition** — to differentiate ideas, attitudes or objects by placing them in proximity
- **artistic style & use of intertextual allusion** — use of an existing artistic style or allusion to a secondary text in order to draw on embedded knowledge and thus evoke a more profound response
- **imagery & symbolism** — e.g. relying on associations with particular colours, signs, symbols and images to enhance significance or complexity by intensifying our response
- **dialogue & word choice** — language of narrator and/or characters, or speech bubbles in cartoons
- **irony** — showing a reversal, an unexpected outcome
- **voice or perspective** — demonstrated in both graphics and print (language) Alterations in either may provide resistant readings, or imply changes in character or situation

SUGGESTED READING LIST

Constructing Images A.Clemens and P. Scalen (Understanding Visual Texts, Book A, B & C) User Friendly Resource Enterprises Ltd 1996

Exploring How Texts Work B.Derwianka. PETA 1990

In the Picture: reading Visual language R.Quin, B. McMahon, R.Quin, Curriculum Corporation. 1997

Picture This: Reading Visual Language R.Quin, B. McMahon, R.Quin, Curriculum Corporation. 1997

Reading Images, The Grammar of Visual Design, Kress and Van Leeuwen 1994

Teaching Viewing and Visual Texts, Secondary English Curriculum and Teaching program R.Quin, B. McMahon, R.Quin, Curriculum Corporation. 1995

Viewing for Learning: Video and Booklet Package, Literacy and Learning Curriculum Corporation 1999

Words about Pictures, Noddleman, 1988

Western Australian Dept of Education site – viewing through picture books, with links to other articles
<http://www.eddept.wa.edu.au/centoff/cmisis/eval/fiction/classroom/fc3.htm>

“Picture books — Who are they for? By Shaun Tan

A paper presented at the 2001 AATE/ALEA Joint National Conference

<http://www.discover.tased.edu.au/english/tan1.htm>

Australian authors and illustrators for young A – Z listing of interviews, study guides for Jeannie Baker, Graeme Base, Shaun Tan and many more.

<http://www4.tpgi.com.au/welwel/ausauthors/autht.htm>

A visual interpretive analysis of Anthony Browne’s ‘Voices in the Park’

<http://www.suite102.com/anna/voices/voices.htm>