

Picture Books as Mentor Texts

Resources

Jen Betton and Beth Mills

www.jenbetton.com || www.beth-mills.com

Character development/transformation:

Adrian Simcox Does NOT Have A Horse by Marcy Campbell and Corinna Luyken

Big Mean Mike by Michelle Knudsen and Scott Magoon

Leonardo the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems

Ella McKeen, Kickball Queen by Beth Mills

World-Building/Setting:

Journey by Aaron Becker

Little Fox in the Forest by Stephanie Graegin

The Arrival by Shaun Tan

Manjhi Moves a Mountain by Nancy Churnin and Danny Popovici

Show Don't Tell/ Emotive Language:

City Dog, Country Frog by Mo Willems and Jon J. Muth

Hedgehog Needs a Hug by Jen Betton

A Visitor for Bear by Bonny Becker and Kady MacDonald Denton

Poetry/ Metaphor/ Similes/ Metaphors, Figurative Language:

Before Morning by Joyce Sidman and Beth Krommes

Sleep Like a Tiger by Mary Logue and Pamela Zagarenski

Little Red and the Big Bad Editor by Rebecca Kraft Rector and Shanda McCloskey

Playful/Fun to Read Language

Nerp! by Sarah Lynn Reul

The Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman

The Dirty Cowboy by Adam Rex and Amy Timberlake

Using folktales in new ways:

Little Red Fort by Brenda Maier and Sonia Sanchez

Goldilocks and the Three Dinosaurs by Mo Willems

Little Red Gliding Hood by Tara Lazar and Troy Cummings

Point of View: 1st Person

Dim Sum, Here We Come by Maple Lam

Sparky! by Jenny Offill

Eyes that Speak to the Stars by Joanna Ho and Dung Ho

Point of View: 2nd Person

Jumper by Jessica Lanan

If You Want to See a Whale by Julie Fogliano and Erin Stead

Tea Rex by Molly Idle

Vamperina Ballerina by Anne Marie Pace and Le Uyen Pham

Point of View: 3rd Person

Pocket Full of Sads by Brad Davidson and Rachel Más Davidson

Mary Had a Little Glam by Tammi Saur and Vanessa Brantley Newton

My Story, My Dance by Lesa Cline-Ransome and James Ransome

The Paper Bird by Lisa Anchin

Unusual Perspective

I'm My Own Dog by David Ezra Stein

School's First Day of School by Adam Rex and Christian Robinson

We Don't Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins

Dialog-Only Books:

Naked! by Michael Ian Black and Debbie Ohi

Not a Box by Antoinette Portis

This Is Not My Hat by Jon Klassen

Wordless Books:

Sidewalk Flowers by JonArno Lawson and Sidney Smith

The Midnight Fair by Gideon Sterer and Mariachiara Di Giorgio

The Girl and the Bicycle by Mark Pett

The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney

Inference/Anticipation/Foreshadowing:

Bear and Chicken by Jannie Ho

Oh No! by Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann

That is NOT a Good Idea by Mo Willems

Voice:

It's NOT Jack and the Beanstalk by Josh Funk and Edwardian Taylor

The Duckling Gets a Cookie!? by Mo Willems

Please Mr. Panda by Steve Antony

Poopsie Gets Lost by Hannah E. Harrison

No Fuzzball! by Isabella Kung

Image prompts for writing (with collections for character, prediction, inference, etc):

<https://www.onceuponapicture.co.uk/>

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Writing and Illustrating Exercises

Jen Betton and Beth Mills

www.jenbetton.com || www.beth-mills.com

Story Sticks: good for all ages, and can be used as a story prompt, group exercise, or ice breaker. First explain the concepts of character, setting and plot (problem), if necessary. Select several favorite books - you can include more you think would be useful. Explain what the main character, problem, and setting are in each book. Make a list for each category. Use the lists to label colored popsicle sticks (or write on the board for a shorter project). When done, select three sticks (one of each color) and create your own story. Can also skip the craft element and just make lists to pick from instead.

Different Perspective: Select several picture books with at least two prominent characters (ex: *Ella McKeen*, *Kickball Queen* or *Wolfie the Bunny*). Rewrite the story from the point of view of the secondary character. Evaluate how this changes the story.

Mysterious Image: use a book with evocative imagery, like the *Mysteries of Harris Burdick* or a prompt from www.onceuponapicture.co.uk/. How does the image imply/infer narrative?

Drawing: Draw your own mysterious image that implies a narrative.

Writing: Use your own image, or an example image as a prompt to write a story.

Character's Bedroom:

Drawing: Show examples of kids' bedrooms from picture books: examples might include *Mary Had a Little Glam*, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, *Imogene's Antlers*, *Vampirina Ballerina Hosts a Sleepover*, *Fancy Nancy*, *Sophia Valdez, Future Prez*; *Aaron Slater, Illustrator*, etc. Note what items are in the space and what they show about that character. Then draw a bedroom or other personal space for a character.

Writing: Use the book *Outside, Inside* by LeUyen Pham as a writing prompt. Personal spaces are often used in writing or illustrating to show some of the internal attributes of a character. This book shows many characters around the world who are confined during the Covid quarantines, but doesn't share much about them in the text. Pick a character from the story and write about them, using the image to infer what they can about this individual, and using their imagination to develop more details of what that person is like. Character building handout available at www.beth-mills.com

Show Don't Tell

Select a picture book where the characters show emotion. Examples: *Hedgehog Needs a Hug*, *Visitor for Bear*. Look at one spread - how can you tell what emotion is being felt by looking at the image? Write a sentence about how your own character feels using similar techniques.

Handouts available at www.jenbetton.com/activities

Dialog: Look at some books where the main character does not speak: Curious George or wordless picture books. Invent dialog for that character, referencing the page numbers for the book you use. (From Teach Writing to Older Readers Using Picture Books)

Plot and Setting:

Look at several books with a similar plot, but different visuals or settings. Examples: *The Little Red Hen* and *The Little Red Fort*, or *Little Red Cap* and *Federico and the Wolf*. This is easy to do with retold fairy tales, but could be any stories with a similar plot.

Pick a character and problem/plot from a selection of picture books and change the setting, then rewrite the story in this new setting.

Wordless Books:

Look at examples of wordless books or books with “3 tries” structures. Make a 4-6 part story using only images.

1. **Intro: a character in a setting**
2. **Character has a problem**
3. **Character attempts to solve the problem**
4. The attempt fails
5. They try again
6. **The attempt succeeds**