

The Six Traits of Writing + Picture Books = Growth as a Writer



Essential Questions

- HOW CAN PICTURE BOOKS HELP ME TO BECOME A BETTER WRITER?
- WHAT CAN THE PICTURE BOOKS TEACH ME ABOUT THE SIX TRAITS OF WRITING?

Learning Intention / Overview

Picture books are a fun activity when children are young. As they get older, they begin to read less and less of these colourful, artistic works. What most students and teachers fail to realize is that picture books can be a great resource for reviewing idea development, organization, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, and conventions. These are founding principles of writing and should be emphasized during all writing assignments. These are a number of ideas provided in this lesson to structure how to use picture books to teach writing.

Methods / Teaching Strategies

- Direct instruction
- Group work

Assessment of Learning

- Class participation
- Completion of mini lessons, writing activities, etc.
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How might you customize or alter this lesson?

Key Learning Areas

The Six Traits of Writing

Concepts Taught

Idea development

Organization

Word Choice

Voice

Sentence Fluency

Conventions

Target Age

9 – 15 Year Olds

Duration

16 x 60 minute Session

You will need:

Picture books



edgalaxy.com

Cool Stuff for Nerdy Teachers

Online Resources:

- <http://edgalaxy.com/educational-quotes>
- <http://edgalaxy.com/classroom-posters-charts/2013/9/10/14-educational-quotes-posters>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPnYfwLOW84>

Teaching Instructions

16 Activities for Using Pictures Books to Teach Writing

As a teacher, we sometimes get tired of using the Writing & Grammar textbook. It seems too focused on the parts of speech or on the uses of a comma. Needless to say, your students are ready for a change too! Consider making picture books an intriguing teaching tool in your Language Arts classroom. Read on to find out how picture books can teach various components of writing.

Picture Books Teach Idea Development:

Students will probably remember the day when they were content with reading only one or two words per page. A story that had more color and pictures than words was adored, but if you notice that students idea development is less developed than one of these quick toddler reads, send them back in time to the days of *Elmo's First Book of Colors*.

Activity 1: Have students read a picture book and then develop the main idea into a full-length paragraph or a full-length story. Students may want to bring in a book that they read during their preschool years, or you may have some available in class too.

Activity 2: Allow students to get into small groups and read a preschool type picture book. Once they are finished, have the students compose a letter to the book's author explaining everything they forgot in the book. This lets the students take charge and use their imagination to further develop the plot and overall structure of the story.

Activity 3: Pick a picture book that matches the current season or an approaching holiday. Read the students MOST of the story. Then, have them write the ending. This fun activity lets them use their knowledge of conflict resolution to solve the puzzle that's spinning in their heads. This is a sure way to get students thinking.

Picture Books Teach Organization:

By utilizing these activities, students will understand what organization is and how to successfully incorporate it in their writing.

Activity 1: Have students read a picture book by themselves. Have them cover up all of the transitions in the picture book with small sticky notes. Then have them read the book aloud to a classmate, while omitting all transitions. This quick activity will emphasize the need for transitions to shift ideas from one thought to another.

Activity 2: Create a slideshow of picture book covers or line up several picture books in the front of the classroom. Regardless of the way you present them, the titles should not be visible. Students should only be able to see the front cover illustration. Try to choose books that are more unfamiliar. Have students create titles for the book based on the front cover illustration alone.

Activity 3: Create a slideshow that contains various book summaries for picture books. (Alternately you could simply read the book summaries aloud to your class.) The summaries should not contain any pictures. Show the students the book summaries one at a time, allowing them to title each work based on the summary. This will allow them practice with creating titles.

Activity 4: Have students read a picture book of their choice. After they finish reading it, have them rewrite the picture book using a different point of view. For example, if the picture was told by a first person main character, they need to rewrite the entire picture book using a second person minor character's viewpoint or a third person narrator.

Picture Books Teach Voice:

Allowing students to truly let their personality emerge in their writing can be difficult. Try using these activities to help them understand how important an author's voice is.

Activity 1: Locate several books that have animals as the narrators. Some of my favorites include *Click Clack Moo*, *Dear Mrs. Larue: Letters from Dog Obedience School*, and *Amelia's Notebook*. Allow students to read the book once before giving them the news that they will be creating a voice for the main character. This allows them to get familiar with the text. Afterwards, ask for a volunteer to read the book to the class using the voice that they have created for the character. This will emphasize the personal nature and connection that voice gives to writing.

Activity 2: Have students read a picture book that was targeting a specific population. Consider a book that is geared towards a child, such as: *How Many Kisses Do You Want Tonight?* Have students rewrite the text of the book, targeting a different audience, for example, the child might be asking the mom how many kisses that she wants tonight.

Picture Books Teach Word Choice:

Activity 1: Read a picture book to students. As you read the book, have students just listen the first time. The second time, ask students to write down a list of words that they think are boring, overused words. Have students work in groups to brainstorm their stronger, revised words. Allow students to share their new, re-energized books.

Activity 2: Have students read a favorite preschool book. Allow them to rewrite the book, replacing preschool vocabulary with words that are more appropriate for their age range.

Picture Books Teach Sentence Fluency:

Activity 1: Have students read a picture book. After finishing, have them find a sentence that starts with each part of speech.

Activity 2: Have students read a picture book aloud to a friend. Have their friend write down an example of a declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory sentence from the book. If there isn't one for each type, have students compose one that would logically fit into the text.

Picture Books Teach Conventions:

Students get really bored with having to listen to the lesson from the textbook and complete exercises 3 and 4 for homework. Try collecting some picture books from your home or library and using those to emphasize grammar skills.

Activity 1: If you notice that students are struggling with commas. Who doesn't, right? Spend some class time reviewing the dozen or so uses for a comma. Then pass out picture books and have a scavenger hunt. Encourage students to find a comma that meets all of the requirements on your list. Students will be actively thinking about how the commas are used, but this will have much more meaning than do numbers 1 – 10.

Activity 2: Prior to writing short stories, have students take turns reading aloud the dialogue in picture books. This will allow them to pay attention to how dialogue is punctuated, but it will also allow them to think about how dialogue sounds differently than other narrated text in literary works. Kids will love the reader's theatre style classroom, and you will appreciate the quotation marks that find their way into students' short story rough drafts.

Activity 3: Encourage students to search through a picture book and look for their spelling words. Additionally, they could use the picture books to look for words that they don't know. This could be collected to be used as a future spelling or vocabulary list.

Why Use Picture Books?

Using picture books in daily lessons serves two great purposes. First, they are fun to read and expose students to great writing examples. Second, due to the relatively short length, it is easy for students to use the ideas presented to practice revising and targeting specific skills.

Picture Book Scavenger Hunt



Directions: After reading the book picture that you selected, identify a sentence that starts with each of the eight parts of speech. If you cannot find one of the eight parts of speech, rewrite one of the existing sentences to start with that part of speech.

Picture Book Title: _____

1. Noun	
2. Verb	
3. Adjective	
4. Adverb	
5. Interjection	
6. Preposition	
7. Conjunction	
8. Pronoun	

Commas Scavenger Hunt

- Select a picture book.
- Read the picture book.
- Re-read the picture book, trying to find an example for each of the commas uses listed below. Record the different examples that you find here.
- If you cannot find an example for one of the comma uses, rewrite one of the original sentences to showcase correct comma usage.

COMMA USE:	EXAMPLE FROM PICTURE BOOK:
To join two dependent clauses.	
To separate a items in a series.	
To connect two independent clauses.	
To set off an introductory phrase or word.	
To set off a parenthetical element.	
To separate an interjection.	
To separate two or more coordinating adjectives.	
To quote or punctuate dialogue.	