

One for the Books: Using Picture Books to Encourage Creativity
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	Title	Author	Application
Creative Inspiration	"What Do You Do With an Idea?"	Kobi Yamada	Use as an introduction to creative thinking and as inspiration as students begin to brainstorm new ideas. As the child in the story realizes, ideas, even unusual ones, have great potential to make changes throughout the world.
	"Hooray for Diffendoofer Day"	Dr. Seuss, finished by Jack Prelutsky	Celebrating individuality and creativity, this is the perfect story for when we need a reminder about the importance of creative thinking. The book would also be great as encouragement before high-stakes testing.
	"Sky Color"	Peter Reynolds	"Sky Color" is a story about what can happen when we slow down and allow our surroundings to inspire us. Use Marisol's story as an example of the beauty around us and to inspire a creative spark.
Fluency	"Late for School"	Stephanie Calmenson	In the story, the teacher is late to school and keeps having to change his mode of transportation. Have your students brainstorm as many ideas as they can for getting to school.
	"Not a Box"	Antoinette Portis	Both of these books take a unique look at everyday objects. Encourage your class to brainstorm ideas for what the box or stick could be. How many unique ideas can they come up with?
	"Not a Stick"		
Flexibility	"Spork"	Kyo Maclear	A spork is a combination of a spoon and a fork. In the story, no one appreciates Spork until a baby joins the family. What are two other things that can be combined to serve a purpose?
	"It Looked Like Spilt Milk"	Charles Green Shaw	Things are not always what they seem in this classic picture book. After reading, have your students place a dab of paint in the center of a piece of construction paper. Then, the students should fold the paper in half. When they open it up, the students can brainstorm what they think the paint looks like.
	"The Thingamabob"	Il Sung Na	While the mysterious red object may look like an umbrella to readers, a curious elephant attempts to discover how he can use his new found thingamabob. After reading, have the students brainstorm other uses for a standard umbrella. Remind them that it does not have to stay in its usual shape, but can be turned upside-down, sideways, etc.
	"Rosie Revere, Engineer"	Andrea Beaty	Rosie Revere is a young engineer who combines found items to create new inventions. As you are reading, stop every once in

			a while to discuss what she combined to create her new products. After reading, the students can use found materials to make their own useful invention.
	"Ten Black Dots"	Donald Crews	"Ten Black Dots" is not your ordinary counting book. After reading, allow the students to select a number from one to ten. Give them that many black dots and have them turn their dots into something else.
	"Not a Box"	Antoinette Portis	After brainstorming as many ideas for a stick or box (fluency activity), the students can select one idea to develop further. Encourage the students to select the idea that they think is the most unusual and then illustrate their idea.
	"Not a Stick"		
	"Perfect Square"	Michael Hall	Just like in the book, students can start with a square shaped piece of paper. Encourage them to something with it (cut it, punch holes, tear into smaller pieces, etc.) and then turn their new "square" into something else. What can they make from the deconstructed square?
	"The Obstinate Pen"	Frank W. Dormer	Things are not always what they seem- like a pen that tells it like it is and does not hold anything back. Students can pick an inanimate object and make it come to life. What would a chair say to those who try to sit in it? What kinds of things would a lamp see throughout the day? Encourage students to take their time as they think about what their item might encounter in a day.
	"What if You Had Animal Hair?"	Sandra Markle	Combining nonfiction and creativity, both of these books ask children how life would be different with a rather unique animal characteristic. Have the students imagine themselves with the animal hair/feet or evaluate which animal's trait they would prefer.
	"What if You Had Animal Feet?"		
	"Animal Soup"	Todd Doodler	"Animal Soup" is a short flap book about what would happen if you combined different characteristics of different animals. After enjoying the mixed up animals, students can create their own combinations. What new creations can they come up with? Don't forget to add a name and illustration for their new animal.
Originality	"Inventor McGregor"	Kathleen T. Pelley	Hector McGregor is great at inventing new items to help solve problems. The students can use Hector and his inventions as inspiration as they work to create an original invention that would solve a problem. What kind of ideas can they come up with?
	"If I Built a Car"	Chris Van Dusen	

	"If I Built a House"		In both of these rhythmic stories, the character shares his plans for a dream house or car. As he describes his over-the-top ideas, have the students brainstorm what their dream house or car would look like. After reading, the students can illustrate their creations. Take it even further by having the students construct a model using recycled materials (boxes, paper towel rolls, etc.).
	"The Day the Crayons Quit"	Drew Daywalt	Just as the crayons in the story request, students can use crayon colors in different ways to create an original artwork. Use the story as inspiration to break out of the box!
	"The Leprechaun Trap"	David Clinch and Kelly Clinch	After reading the story of how three young children try to capture a cute and clever leprechaun, students can design their own leprechaun traps. Just as the children do in the story, the students should use what they know about leprechauns to help make their traps work. Who can come up with the most original idea?
	"The Museum"	Susan Verde	Highlighting the power art can have on our emotions, this story follows a young girl as she journeys through an art museum. In the end, the little girl is tasked with filling her own blank canvas. This is a great opportunity to encourage students to fill their own blank canvas. What can they produce when given the time and space to think creatively?
	"I'll Save You Bobo!"	Eileen and Marc Rosenthal	Instead of reading books he does not like, Little Willy decides to take matters into his own hands and craft his own writing piece. Fueled by the antics of Earl the cat and his own imagination, Willy writes about an adventure with his stuffed monkey. This story is a great starting point to encourage originality in students. If you do not like the book you are reading, why not make up your own story?
Elaboration	"Meanwhile..."	Jules Feiffer	Watch as the main character escapes from trouble by adding a "Meanwhile" jump into his story. After reading, students can elaborate on a story by including a similar kind of jump. Where would their meanwhile take them? Encourage the students to elaborate by adding details and including illustrations.
	"If I Built a Car"	Chris Van Dusen	In both of these rhythmic stories, the character shares his plans for a dream house or car. As he describes his over-the-top ideas, have the students brainstorm what their dream house or car would look like. After reading, the students can
	"If I Built a House"		

			illustrate their creations. Have students focus on the quantity of ideas as they elaborate and add more and more details.
	"The Mysteries of Harris Burdick"	Chris Van Allsburg	The black-and-white illustrations in "The Mysteries of Harris Burdick" can inspire even the most reluctant writer to think creatively. Students can select one picture to use as they draft their unique version of the story that would go along with their chosen illustration.
Wordless	"Quest"	Aaron Becker	Wordless picture books offer a wonderful opportunity for students to use their imaginations and individual perspectives to craft the story that could go along with the pictures. Use the whole book and see if they can follow the sequence of events already outlined. Or, allow the students to select a page or two to write the words that would go along with the illustrations.
	"Journey"		
	"Flotsam"	David Weisner	
	"Tuesday"		
	"Sector 7"		
Using Your Imagination	"My Name is Not Alexander"	Jennifer Fosberry	In the story, the main character uses his imagination as he transforms into various influential and historical men. Let Alexander's adventures be a model for students as they imagine taking on the persona as someone famous. What would their life be like? How would it be different? Have the students draft a creative writing piece from the perspective of their famous person.
	"Harold and the Purple Crayon"	Crockett Johnson	Follow along as Harold draws himself an adventure as he thinks of new ideas. Students can mimic Harold's imaginative journey by illustrating their own sequence of events. Simple drawings help students to see the value of ideas, instead of worrying about being especially artistic.
Being Unique	"Odd Velvet"	Mary E. Whitcomb	Velvet is a little different than the rest of her peers. However, when she invites her class to her house for a birthday party, the other students realize that different can be a lot of fun. Use Velvet's story to highlight the importance of being yourself.
	"Frooodle"	Antoinette Portis	"Frooodle" is a great example of what can happen when we stop worrying about being "normal" and focus more on having fun. The students will enjoy the nonsense words the birds speak as they break out of the norm and change things up a little. Encourage the students to try their own hand at being unique as they craft conversations among animals. Remember, the animals don't care about being normal- they just want to have fun.

	"Weslandia"	Paul Fleischman	In the story, the main character does not really fit in with the other children. One summer, however, he creates his own civilization and his peers start to appreciate his uniqueness. After reading "Weslandia," students can create their own civilizations. Encourage them to include as much detail as Wesley does in the story.
Perseverance	"Rosie Revere, Engineer"	Andrea Beaty	As a budding engineer, Rosie learns she sometimes has to take risks in order to accomplish her goals. Though her first idea did not work, Rosie must overcome her fear of failing so she can keep working on her invention. As you read, have a discussion about persevering and what is meant by the "perfect first try".
	"Ish"	Peter Reynolds	Being an artist does not mean you are perfect. Use Ramon's story to inspire students to keep doing what they love. This is a great opportunity to talk with students about appreciating their talents. Ban statements like, "I can't draw" and "I am not a very good artist" from your classroom. Remind students that it is okay to be a little -ISH.
	"Beautiful Oops"	Barney Saltzberg	Great things can come out of mistakes. Teach your students that saying "oops" can lead to even better ideas. To try it out, have students drop some paint, poke a hole, or bend a corner in their paper. Then, encourage the students to look at their "oops" from different angles as they turn it into something beautiful.
	"Mistakes That Worked"	Charlotte Foltz Jones	A nonfiction book about inventions that were created out of mistakes, "Mistakes That Worked" is a great book to use when talking about perseverance. The stories for each invention will help the students to realize that great things do not always happen the first time. Instead, the more they try out new things, the more likely they are to be successful.
	"The Most Magnificent Thing"	Ashley Spires	After coming up with a big idea, the little girl in the story realizes it may not be as easy as she originally thought. This is a great story to use as part of a discussion on perseverance and how to work through those stumbling blocks that often arise. Sometimes a new perspective is all you need to create the next big thing.
Creative Problem Solving	"Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs"	Judi Barrett	These stories are all great for practicing Creative Problem Solving. Some of the stories are centered on one major problem, while others have multiple issues scattered throughout the book. While reading, stop every once in a while to talk
	"Jumanji"	Chris Van Allsburg	
	"Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm"	Jerdine Nolen	

	"Inventor McGregor"	Kathleen T. Pelley	about potential problems and solutions. Before finding out how the problems have been solved, allow the students to engage in a creative problem solving process by generating solutions, using criteria to evaluate their ideas, and developing an action plan to help solve the problem.
	"The Leprechaun Trap"	David Clinch and Kelly Clinch	
	"How the Ladies Stopped the Wind"	Bruce McMillan	
	"Randy Riley's Really Big Hit"	Chris Van Deusen	
	"Late to School"	Stephanie Calmenson	
Miscellaneous	"Magritte's Marvelous Hat"	D.B. Johnson	You might have to re-read this story to allow ample opportunity for students to notice all that is happening. While you read, encourage students to take a second look, use their imagination, and to sometimes expect the unexpected. This is also a great opportunity to talk to the class about surrealism and have the students craft their own artwork inspired by the paintings of famous surrealists.
	"The Pink Refrigerator"	Tim Egan	In "The Pink Refrigerator" students are shown how exploring can open up a world of opportunities. After reading the story, have the students write their own story about what the note would say and what would be inside of the refrigerator. Encourage them to elaborate by describing their ideas with a lot of details.
	"Going Places"	Peter and Paul Reynolds	"Going Places" is a great story about the power of collaboration. Just like the old saying "two heads are better than one," the characters find they can do so much more if they work together and combine ideas. Use this book to help encourage collaboration in creativity.
	"The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes"	Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein	A great story for the perfectionists in your classroom, "The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes" will help children to realize that it is okay to mess up. In fact, it can even be a lot of fun! Use Beatrice's story to spark a conversation about the power in risk-taking and sometimes making mistakes.
	"Extra Yarn"	Mac Barnett	While reading, students might pick up on the idea that creativity is not something you can use up. Instead, you should spread it around to help others become more creative, too. As a class, brainstorm ways that you can all spread creativity throughout your school building and community.
	"Elephants Can Paint, Too"	Katya Arnold	The students will be amazed at the talents of the elephants in this nonfiction story. This is a great story to use as inspiration for creativity. Just like elephants, we can learn to be more creative, too!

New Ideas from Conference Session:

The Big Orange Splot

Motel of the Mysteries

If... A mind-bending new way of looking at big ideas and numbers

Little Cloud by Eric Carle

Weslandia- use for habitats and gardening; create a garden

Henry P. Boloney- story about being late to school and not having homework; uses made-up words

A Remarkable Adventure