Beyond Sharing the Book:
Using Picture Books as Mentor Texts
To Engage Students in Effective Reading and Writing

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★ IDEAS
Where do ideas come from?  Is the message clear and interesting?  Are details used effectively?

_The Sea Chest_ Personal experience of growing up an only child and then having a foster sister come into our family
_Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling_ Inspired by my illustrator and the animal characters she added to the first volume (_Dawdle Duckling_) but woven throughout with my son's strong attachment to his friends
_Little Loon and Papa_ Editor-inspired but based on the loons of Rangeley Lake and my son's childhood fear of water
_No T. Rex in the Library_ Drawn completely from my imagination
_Adventure Annie Goes to Work_ Editor-inspired story based on my own "inner child"
_Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten_ Inspired by the spunk of the main character in the previous book and the humor and good-will of Maine kindergarten teacher Todd Bell.

★ ORGANIZATION
Is there a beginning, middle, and end?  Is the piece logical?  Is the structure interesting and appropriate?

_The Sea Chest_ (Frame Story):  The first and last double-page spreads tell a modern story while in the internal story Auntie Maita tells the story of her childhood 70+ years ago.
_Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling_ (Pattern of Three) Dawdle tries three times to hide and fails each time before succeeding.
_Little Loon and Papa_ (Pattern of Three) Little Loon swims away to avoid learning to dive and encounters three north woods animals before he finds his Papa and finally dives.
_No T. Rex in the Library_ (Circular Story) When Tess misbehaves in the library, Mommy puts her in time-out; when Tess brings T. Rex to life, he also misbehaves and the story ends with him in time-out.
_Adventure Annie Goes to Work_ (Pattern of Three) Annie tries and fails three times before she finds the missing report.
_Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten_ (Pattern of Three) Annie has three adventures before finally becoming Gold Star Deputy.
VOICE
Does the voice match the author and the intended audience? Does the voice engage the reader and arouse emotion?

The Sea Chest The voice here is quiet and reflective to match the mood of the story unfolding.

Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling The voice is light, sassy, and playful to match Dawdle’s character and the needs of the young audience.

Little Loon and Papa The voice is young and urgent to match the character and the mood of the story unfolding.

No T. Rex in the Library: The voice is playful and boisterous to match the two main characters, Annie and T. Rex.

Adventure Annie Goes to Work and Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten The first person voice is spunky and energetic.

WORD CHOICE
Is the vocabulary fresh, precise, appealing, and surprising? Are there strong verbs and colorful phrases?

The Sea Chest Many unexpected or unfamiliar words

Little Loon and Papa Strong Verbs: quivers, wobbles, squeeze, tuck, zip, disappear, dips, tips, kick-kicks

Kate Taylor, a loon biologist, read the manuscript for accuracy of language as well as loon calls

Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling Phrases drawn from the game of Hide-and-Seek

No T. Rex in the Library Strong verbs and exclamations move the text along at a swift pace

Verbs: snarls, snorts, tumble, topple, flop, groans, grins, grips, zips, bumps, scatter, lay siege

Adventure Annie Goes to Work and Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten Word choice reflects Annie Grace’s exuberant spirit.

SENTENCE FLUENCY
Is there variety in sentence structures? Do they flow smoothly? Is the piece enjoyable to read aloud?

The Sea Chest Text written in, and formatted as, poetry

Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling Repeated refrains allow the audience to join in

Little Loon and Papa Repetition drives enjoyment of the story when read aloud

No T. Rex in the Library The text is chock full of one word sentences

Adventure Annie Goes to Work Sentences that capture the action of the story

Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten A pleasing mix of long and short sentences
* CONVENTIONS
Are the “rules” of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and formatting followed?

*The Sea Chest* Font is altered to signal frame story

*Ready or Not, Dawdle Duckling* Narration depends heavily on dialogue (quotation marks)

*Little Loon and Papa* Carefully placed exclamation points to build excitement

*No T. Rex in the Library* Exclamations: ROAR! TIME OUT! BAM! Yee-haw! Watch out! Charge on! Wait! Arrr!

*Adventure Annie Goes to Work* and *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten* Like all young children, Annie asks plenty of question
A BIBLIOGRAPY OF SUGGESTED TITLES

**IDEAS**
Where do ideas come from? Is the message clear and interesting? Are details used effectively?

*Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale* by Deborah Hopkinson  
*Bag in the Wind* by Ted Kooser  
*The Chiru of High Tibet: A True Story* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin  
*Duck on a Bike* by David Shannon  
*House Takes a Vacation* by Jacqueline Davies  
*I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child  
*My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks* by Hanock Piven  
*My Father, the Dog* by Elizabeth Bluemle  
*The Uglified Ducky* by Willy Claflin  
*There Was an Old Monkey Who Swallowed a Frog* by Jennifer Ward  
*What if Everybody Did That?* by Ellen Javernick

**ORGANIZATION**
Is there a beginning, middle, and end? Is the piece logical? Is the structure interesting and appropriate?

*Forest Bright, Forest Night* by Jennifer Ward  
*A Good Day* by Kevin Henkes  
*The House in the Night* by Susan Marie Swanson  
*If You Give a Pig a Party* by Laura Numeroff  
*In the Small, Small Night* by Jane Kurtz  
*Jack's Treehouse* by Pamela Duncan Edwards  
*Previously* by Allan Ahlberg  
*Scribble* by Deborah Freedman  
*Stampede! Poems to Celebrate the Wild Side of School* by Laura Purdie Salas  
*This is the Wind* by Liz Rosenberg  
*Turtle Splash! Countdown at the Pond* by Cathryn Falwell  
*When a Monster is Born* by Sean Taylor
**VOICE**
Does the voice match the author and the intended audience? Does the voice engage the reader and arouse emotion?

17 Things I’m Not Allowed to Do Anymore by Jenny Offill
Because You Are My Baby by Jennifer Ward
Big Blue Whale (NF) by Nikola Davies
Dear Mrs. Larue: Letters from Obedience School by Mark Teague
Diary of a Fly by Doreen Cronin
Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! by Mo Willems
Chester by Melanie Watt
Cousin John is Coming by Elise Broach
I’m Big by Kate McMullan
Martha Doesn’t Say Sorry! by Samantha Berger
The Secret World of Walter Anderson (NF) by Hester Bass

**WORD CHOICE**
Is the vocabulary fresh, precise, appealing, and surprising? Are there strong verbs and colorful phrases?

The Boy Who Cried Fabulous by Leslea Newman
Bubble Gum, Bubble Gum by Lisa Wheeler
Chicken Dance by Tammi Sauer
An Egg is Quiet (NF) by Dianna Hutts Aston
Iggy Peck Architect by Andrea Beaty
Jose! Born to Dance (NF) by Susanna Reich
Mostly Monsterly by Tammi Sauer
Over in the Garden by Jennifer Ward
Scoot! by Cathryn Falwell
Ten On The Sled by Kim Norman
Thesaurus Rex by Laya Steinberg
Water Hole Waiting by Christopher and Jane Kurtz
**SENTENCE FLUENCY**

Is there variety in sentence structures? Do they flow smoothly? Is the piece enjoyable to read aloud?

*Bed Head* by Margie Palatini  
*Big Night for Salamanders* by Sarah Lamstein  
*The Busy Tree* by Jennifer Ward  
*I Ain’t Gonna Paint No More* by Karen Beaumont  
*Leonardo’s Monster* by Jane Sutcliffe  
*Muktar and the Camels* by Janet Graber  
*The Little Yellow Leaf* by Carin Berger  
*Some Dog!* by Mary Casanova  
*Under the Snow (NF)* by Melissa Stewart  
*The Village Garage* by G. Brian Karas  
*Whales Passing* by Eve Bunting  
*The Wolves are Back* by Jean Craighead George

**CONVENTIONS**

Are the “rules” of punctuation, spelling, grammar, and formatting followed?

*Alfie the Apostrophe* by Moira Donohue  
*Greedy Apostrophe: A Cautionary Tale* by Jan Carr  
*Hey, Little Ant* by Phillip M. and Hannah Hoose  
*Hot Rod Hamster* by Cynthia Lord  
*Imagine a Night* by Sarah L. Thomson  
*Penny and the Punctuation Bee* by Moira Donohue  
*Punctuation Celebration* by Elsa Knight Bruno  
*Punctuation Station* by Brian P. Cleary  
*Punctuation Takes a Vacation* by Robin Pulver  
*The Scrambled States of America Talent Show* by Laurie Keller  
*Yo! Yes?* by Christopher Raschka
IDEAS: Story Behind the Story from Other Authors

Susan Taylor Brown
Can I Pray with My Eyes Open?
http://www.susantaylorbrown.com/pray.html

Mary Casanova
One Dog Canoe
http://www.marycasanova.com/books/one.html

Dori Chaconas
On a Wintry Morning
http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resources/authors/stories_behind/storychaconas.html
One Little Mouse
http://www.cynthialeitichsmith.com/lit_resources/authors/stories_behind/storychaconas1.html

Shutta Crum
Read a “story behind the story” page for each title by clicking on “All About...”
http://www.shuttacrum.com/books.html

Jane Kurtz
Faraway Home
http://www.janekurtz.com/background_faraway.html
Water Hole Waiting
http://www.janekurtz.com/FAQwater.html

Christine Kole MacLean
Even Firefighters Hug Their Moms
http://www.christinekolemaclean.com/firefighters.html
Everybody Makes Mistakes
http://www.christinekolemaclean.com/mistakes.html

Pooja Makhijani
Mama’s Saris
http://www.poojamakhijani.com/note.html

Lynn Plourde
Each title link from this page leads to a “story behind the story” section
http://www.lynnplourde.com/picturebooks.html

Robin Pulver
Each title link from this page leads to brief “story behind the story” information
http://www.robinpulver.com/

Joan Sandin
Coyote School News
http://members.authorsguild.net/joansandin/work1.htm

Cynthia Leitich Smith
Jingle Dancer

Jennifer Ward
Read the “story behind the story” for each title on this page.
http://www.jenniferwardbooks.com/aboutbooks.html#aboutgarden

Jane Yolen
Read at least a paragraph of “story behind the story” information for each title.
http://www.janeyolen.com/pictbooks.htm
IDEAS: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Telling family stories from a relative's point of view.
• Hunting for details
• Creating a sequel
• Retelling the story with a change of character/setting
• Illustration predictions
• Details of characterization

ORGANIZATION: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Rewrite the story with a different organization
• Use a graphic organizer to analyze the pattern in the story
• Create a sequence chart
• Write a sequel using the same organization

VOICE: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Identify words that create the voice
• Examine how illustrations contribute to voice
• Uncover the POV character
• Write from another POV
• Discuss how the voice of the story reflects the MC

WORD CHOICE: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Identify DESCRIPTIVE DAZZLERS: strong verbs, colorful phrases, and unusual words
• Compare the use of adjectives and verbs for impact
• Search for sensory words
• Brainstorm synonyms
• Create invented words
• Listen for rhyme
SENTENCE FLUENCY: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Scout for sentences in a variety of lengths
• Keep time with the rhythm
• Discuss the effects of long and short sentences in reader's emotions
• Identify repetition
• Discuss the “shape” of the text on the page

CONVENTIONS: EXTENDING IN OTHER WAYS
• Telling family stories from a relative’s point of view.
• Hunting for details
• Creating a sequel
• Retelling the story with a change of character/setting
• Illustration predictions
• Details of characterization