

Things to do with a picture book

Writing stories and making books is much easier for children when they can base their work on books they know well. Settings and characters can be changed to give a new flavour to stories. The shapes of traditional stories provide an excellent basis for re-tellings.

There are many ways to help children enter the world of the stories and develop their writing.

Here are some suggestions.

- 1. Read the book aloud – and re-read it**
Reading aloud is one of the best ways to enable children to get to know a book, to become familiar with the story shape and patterns of language.
- 2. Talk about the book using open questions**
What did you like or dislike about the book – do you have any questions about the book?
- 3. Make a story board or story map**
Use a story board format to help children to re-tell the story.

You can make a map of the setting – key features, show the narrative as a journey, writing key parts of language, characters etc
- 4. Re-tell the story orally using the storyboard or story map – this helps children to become familiar with the story as preparation for writing.**
- 5. Draw a character**
Draw a picture of a character and annotate the picture with captions that tell you about the character.
- 6. Use drama techniques - hot seat/freeze frame/thought tracking**
Ask the character questions (hotseating)- or ask children create a freeze frame of a scene in the story – then ask them what the character is thinking or might be saying. This helps children to enter the world of the character and enables them to write in role as a character in the story.
- 7. Write a letter, postcard, email or text message to or from a character – writing in role is an accessible route to writing for all children.**
The best way to do this is to write this together, as shared writing. Children can then write individually or in pairs. The letters can be used as part of the picture book that they write.
- 8. Design a book cover – include a blurb, ‘book reviews’ from newspapers and information about the author**
- 9. Write a poem**
Use strong words or phrases from the text, use children’s words in response to a picture to create a list poem.
- 10. Do a painting, use pastels, computer art or make a collage and photograph it - to illustrate your own version of the story.**
- 11. Find out information linked to the theme of the book**