

21 Picture Books – chosen from CLPE’s core book lists

The books listed here are picture books which have strong patterns and themes to provide inspiration and models for children’s own writing and bookmaking. They are a mixture of classic picture books which have stood the test of time and newer titles.

Also included are two illustrated collections of traditional stories.

Alan Durant and Mei Matsuoka: ***Burger Boy***

Andersen Press £5.99 978-1842705377

Benny hates vegetables and loves burgers. So much so, that his mum tells him he will turn into a burger and – lo and behold! – he does! He is chased, Gingerbread Man style, by dogs, cows and hungry boys who want to eat him. A familiar folk tale pattern demonstrating twists in the tale accompanied by wildly humorous illustrations which flow across the page with a real sense of movement.

Mini Grey: ***Biscuit Bear***

Red Fox £5.99 978-0099451082

A night-time adventure as a gang of biscuit bears create a wild circus in the kitchen. The arrival of a dog in the middle of the excitement creates total confusion but, unlike his literary forebear the Gingerbread Man, Biscuit Bear finds ‘somewhere safe to be’. The biscuits and their wild adventures are hugely good fun and the illustrations and overall design of this highly original picture book provide much to talk about.

Richard Waring and Caroline Jayne Church: ***Hungry Hen***

Oxford University Press £5.99 9780192723833

A hen down on the farm eats and eats and grows bigger and bigger, seemingly oblivious to the fox on the hill who is eyeing her hungrily. The fox waits, anticipating a more satisfying meal the larger the hen becomes until, one day, he can bear it no longer and he dashes down the hill... This story has a folk tale opening, a great build up, played out on bold textured pictures, and an ending that can be likened to that of a fable.

RAYNER Catherine: ***Augustus and his Smile***

Little Tiger Press £5.99 9781845062835

Augustus the tiger believes he has lost his smile so he sets off to find it. His search takes him to ‘the tops of the tallest trees’, over mountains and to the bottom of the ocean. When finally he finds it, he realises it was there all along. The collage style illustrations are beautifully uncluttered and almost tactile and would make excellent models for children’s own collage and art work.

Alison Lurie and Jessica Souhami: ***Baba Yaga and the Stolen Baby***

Frances Lincoln £6.99 978-1845077532

When Elena sees that her baby brother is missing, she realises that he must have been snatched by black geese who have flown him to Baba Yaga, a witch famous in Russian folklore, who lives in the forest in a house on chicken legs. She runs to rescue him, on the way helping three animals who each give her an object which, in turn, will help her. Collage illustrations.

Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler: ***The Snail and the Whale***

Macmillan £5.99 978-0333982242

A tiny sea snail 'with an itchy foot' has a great desire to see the world and hitches a ride on the tail of a humpback whale. They travel the seas together and see many wonderful sights, until one day the whale is 'beached in a bay', and the snail finds her own special way of saving her companion. The rhyming text is written in such a way that it points to elements in the pictures, making them inextricably entwined and mutually supportive, rather like the snail and the whale. This book has lots of opportunities for introducing cross-curricular themes as the snail and the whale make their way around the world.

Jill Murphy: ***On the Way Home***

Macmillan £5.99 978-0230015845

On her way home to tell her Mum about her bad knee, Claire meets assorted friends to whom she tells weird and wonderful stories, involving wolves, dragons, giants and ghosts, about what has happened to her. The combination of a repetitive pattern, flights of imagination and a carefully planned comic strip effect, where fact and fantasy are clearly indicated, make this book a winner. This book is a favourite for children to create their own versions.

Chris Wormell: ***George and the Dragon***

Red Fox £5.99 978-0099417668

'Far, far away in the high, high mountains in a deep, deep valley in a dark, dark cave... there lived a mighty dragon.' So begins the tale of a dragon and his fierce and ferocious exploits. However, he has one fatal flaw – he is afraid of mice! One day a mouse called George arrives in the next door cave and pays a neighbourly call. A matter of fact narration in a clear, large typeface runs under the illustrations which depict a huge red scaly dragon, an innocent-faced little mouse and a rescued princess who is not mentioned in the text.

GREGORY, Manju and LE Guo: ***The Dragon's Tears***

Mantra Lingua £7.50 Available in a number of dual language editions

A beautiful and magical folk tale, illustrated with Chinese brush art. It tells the story of Chun Li, a boy who is rewarded with the gift of a magic pearl for returning a talking fish to the river.

Hiawyn Oram and Satoshi Kitamura: ***Angry Arthur***

Andersen Press £5.99 978-1842707746

Arthur's frustration at his mother, who won't let him watch TV, makes his anger grow and grow until it reaches the crescendo of a 'universequake'. This evocation of strong childhood emotion strikes a chord with young people of all ages.

David Lucas: ***The Robot and the Bluebird***

Andersen Press £5.99 978-1842707326

A broken-hearted robot is left on the scrap heap as day turns into night, Autumn into Winter, beautifully and simply portrayed in four consecutive pictures. It seems he will never move again until a Bluebird arrives who needs help to get to a warmer place. The theme of self-sacrifice and caring for others echoes that of Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*

Nick Sharratt and Pippa Goodhart: ***You Choose***

Corgi £5.99 978-0552560351

Enjoyable crowded and colourful pictures invite children to think about and discuss the choices they might make about a variety of things, from family and friends to homes, from modes or travel to jobs.

John Burningham: ***Would You Rather***

Red Fox £5.99 978-0099200413

A book which creates much excited discussion as children decide which of the crazy options they would choose. 'Would you rather be made to eat... spider stew, slug dumplings, mashed worms or drink snail squash?'. This book is a favourite for children's own bookmaking.

Emily Gravett: ***Meerkat Mail***

Macmillan £5.99 9781405090759

Sunny finds life with his close-knit meerkat family somewhat cloying and claustrophobic so he sets out to explore the world. He stays with various mongoose relatives in a range of environments, sending home a postcard to his native Kalahari Desert from each one, eventually arriving back at ... guess where? The postcards, designed as flaps so that both sides can be read, can provide models for children's own writing.

Josephine Evetts-Secker and Nicoletta Ceccoli: ***Little Red Riding Hood***

Barefoot Books £5.99 978-1901223262

In this retelling of the well-known fairy tale, the wolf encourages Little Red Riding Hood to notice the beauty of birdsong and flowers prior to gobbling up the girl and her grandmother. Safe and sound at the end of the story, she wonders what she would do if she should meet another wolf in the forest. This illustrator makes effective use of shape, unusual perspective, and colour, here focussing on the verdant greens of middle European forests.

Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett: ***Snow-White***

Red Fox £5.99 978-0099185611

This literary retelling of the traditional story makes an interesting contrast with Fiona French's ***Snow White in New York*** (OUP). Angela Barrett's illustrations, drawing on gothic traditions and influenced by Pre-Raphaelite paintings, emphasise the sombre nature of the tale. These different versions could become the centre for discussion of varying interpretations of a familiar story, drawing on other versions children know, such as the Disney film.

Sally Grindley and Peter Utton: ***Shhh!***

Hodder £5.99 978-0340746622

A truly interactive book in which we are led by an anonymous guide through a giant's castle, peeking through doors, viewing things from different angles, the whole object being not to wake the sleeping giant. However, when he does awake, the only way we can escape is to SHUT THE BOOK!

Carol Ann Duffy and Catherine Hyde: ***The Princess' Blankets***

Templar £12.99 978-0763645472

A man with 'hard, grey eyes like polished stones' seeks solutions to warm a princess who is always cold, bringing blankets robbed from the ocean, forest, mountain and earth. She is only freed and nature's balance restored when a musician warms her with love expressed in the melodies he plays on his flute. Carol Ann Duffy's romantic story is enveloped by textured paintings which evoke the natural world. The art work provides inspiration for older children to create wonderful illustrations.

Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean: ***The Wolves in the Walls***

Bloomsbury £6.99 978-0747591627

Lucy is convinced there are wolves in the walls of her house, but no-one in her family believes her. Then, of course, one night...The story in this very contemporary book, with illustrations blending collage, photographs and drawn and painted images, has a pattern and shape reminiscent of traditional stories. It's a scary story laced with humour that keeps you returning for that frisson of fear.

Sally Pomme Clayton and Sophie Herxheimer: ***Tales Told in Tents: Stories from Central Asia***

Frances Lincoln £6.99 978-1845072780

Storyteller Sally Pomme Clayton travelled through the countries of Central Asia, including Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, collecting stories from people she met there. The stories she retells are interspersed with information about the region and the society as well as proverbs and sayings. At the end of the book there are notes about the stories, a map drawn by the illustrator and a glossary.

Dawn Casey and Anne Wilson: ***The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales***

Barefoot Books £14.99 978-1846862236

Connecting these seven stories from around the world are ideas about the interdependence of life on earth in all its forms. They range from an Australian Aboriginal creation myth to an Indian story based on real events, about a girl who prevented the destruction of trees. Each story is followed by step by step instructions for a related craft project.