



Link your Picture Book Project to the Primary Curriculum

Teaching consultant Prue Goodwin explains how this project can excite and engage children at the same time as fulfilling the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Primary Framework for Literacy.

The Competition and the Creative Curriculum

Looking for a way to cover your learning objectives for:

- reading, writing, speaking and listening
- artistic techniques, including ICT
- graphic design and technology?

Making a picture book will involve all these areas as well as requiring students to employ critical thinking, collaboration and production skills.

This competition comes at a particularly interesting time in primary education. The *Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum* (2009) and the Cambridge Review have pointed out that high standards in academic work are enhanced by engagement in purposeful, creative tasks. Creating a picture book from scratch is an ideal way of including 'well-planned opportunities to use, apply and develop knowledge and skills across the whole curriculum' (*Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum 2009*), especially for English, ICT and the Arts.

In the course of producing their finished book, the young creatives will also need to use skills from mathematics and design technology, not to mention many other subject areas according to their choices of topic or story. The whole process will be a truly cross-curricular project.

The following outline for doing this project uses Programmes for Learning from the recent curriculum review (Rose 2009). It would be equally easy to tick off the objectives in the old national curriculum and current Framework for Literacy.

Relevant statements from the Programmes of Study:

English, communication and language (ECL)

English and communication lie at the heart of our capacity to imagine, think, create and learn. Meeting, creating and responding to all kinds of texts, including those that combine words and images, offers access to the world of knowledge and generates lifelong enthusiasm and enjoyment.

- creativity and imagination are essential to making new meanings, exploring and experimenting with language and creating effects
- writing should be for a variety of purposes, a range of audiences and in a range of forms.

Understanding the Arts

Participating in a range of art forms helps children become creative, responsive, critical and appreciative.

- creative ideas can be developed in response to different stimuli and imaginative thinking
- create, design, devise their individual and collective work
- use ICT to explore line, shape, form, colour, texture and pattern

Creating a Picture Book Step by Step

Step 1

Before being expected to create their own picture book, children need to have had experience of reading a wide range of visual texts (see suggested lists). This will familiarise them with:

- the clever ways meanings are created by the interaction of words and images
- page layout, which words go on which page and how words are integrated into the overall artistic design
- the many ways that images are produced and presented.

Step 2

A lot of work has to go into making a good picture book. It would be a good idea for pupils to work in teams so that ideas and strengths can be shared. First they will need to decide who will be in their production team. They will then need to make plans by discussing, sketching, note-making, trying out and redrafting their ideas together.

Step 3

The production of both the written and the visual text could also be collaborative, with input from all members of the group on how ideas are progressing during the early stages of the work.

Authors

Writing a picture book text is very skilful. Authors should not spend any time worrying about presentation until the story is invented and expressed in words. Once the initial content is complete, the writing will need to be very carefully crafted.

Artists

Confident young artists will love creating their characters and settings. Before getting on with carefully produced pictures, they need to make a sketched version of each page. Remember there are many different ways of making pictures and illustrating stories; encourage experiment with cartoons in line drawings, painting, collage, photography and all sorts of computer generated images.

Step 4

You might like to make the final copy as professional as possible. Perhaps the school could invite in local designers, typographers, artists, photographers etc. to talk to the teams of children before they start to put their final copy together.