

**Picture Books Aren't Just For Children:  
Using Picture Books with Secondary Students**

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1. Overview: Picture books (stories in which the both the text and illustrations contribute to meaning) have long been thought of as appropriate only at primary grade levels because of their short length, simple plots, and minimal number of characters. When used in secondary grades, their principal function has been as remediation for struggling readers or English language learners. However, anecdotal evidence and an exhaustive literature review strongly suggest that the supplemental use of picture books increases engagement and learning among high school students at all instructional levels

2. Anecdotal: Personal experiences (“The one thing I noticed, more than anything else, was just more engagement.”)

3. Positives: Picture Books Are:

- Are non-threatening
- Are focused
- Provide a common knowledge
- Help students visualize place/time
- Build reading comprehension
- Empathy
- Can breathe life into dry factual information
- Teach critical thinking skills
- Have art!
- Are fun!



4. Prejudices:

- Rigor and standards
- Administrator & educator attitude
- Student attitude

5. Research: Alexander, Blue: The Effectiveness of Using Picture Books with Adolescent Students in Inclusive Social Studies Instruction , 2010

- Interesting (Multiple perspectives/single topic)
- Can present complex ideas
- ESOL/Disability: accessibility & student confidence
- Engage Reluctant Readers
- Help Visualize Time/Place of Historical Events
- Level the Playing Field

6. More Research (Studies with results)

- Guzetti (1992) Topic- China (6<sup>th</sup>). Found statistically significant differences that favored the literature-based group.
- Smith (1992): Topic- US History (8<sup>th</sup>) Found that students in the literature group recalled significantly more details, main ideas, and overall historical information
- Alexander (2010): Immigration (12<sup>th</sup>) Post-test: Control group 21.8%; Treatment 42.5% improvement

7. ESL/ELL/ESOL

- Images and print can help students “picture” concepts (even difficult ones like irony), and make them easier to remember.
- Images help students understand concepts when language is difficult
- Builds cultural background knowledge

## 8. Sample Lesson Ideas:

- Disclaimer: not the teacher
- Handouts: email me
- Bibliographies: Samples gleaned

## 9. Math

- Book can act as introduction or supplement
- If You Hopped Like A Frog (Schwartz)
- Teacher sets up proportion
- Students are required to set up their own proportions from the book

“It is amazing how artwork can make mathematics concepts real for students”  
-Laura Hoff

## 10. History: War

- Many beautiful and painful books about war.
- WWII particularly
- Literature connects kids in a way textbooks can't

## 11. Current Events

- Chicago Teacher's Strike, 2012
- “Teachable Moment”
- Collective bargaining
- Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type
- Teacher brought in newspaper articles about the strike, discussion.
- Read story.
- Looked up articles online
- Groups: Two differing parties (notecards) come to an agreement.

## 12. Social Studies: Government

- Constitutional Studies
- Preamble
- Check for understanding of document
- Read We The Kids
- Check for understanding
- Extensive Unit

## 13. Science: Biology

- Introduction to Human Biological Systems
- Digestive system
- Story of the Little Mole Who Went in Search of Whodunit
- Each student gets assigned an animal and related scat, has to research their diet and why the scat is formed in such a way.

## 14. LA/Vocabulary

- Alphabet books
- Animalia (Base)
- Besides the Alliteration for each letter, images are all things beginning with that letter.
- VERY complex
- Group discussion/contest

## 15. LA/Voice & Point of View

- Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude
- Teaching how each character has his/her own voice
- Story told from 2 points of view
- Assignment: Work collaboratively on a story with two different points of view. Fairy tale, action story, etc.
- SS connection- assign a time period

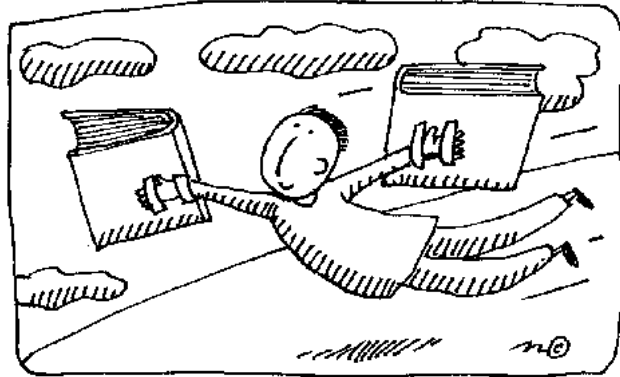


## 16. LA/Figurative Language

- ALLITERATION: Zoe and Her Zebra (Beaton)
- FLASHBACK: Miss Rumphius (Cooney)
- FORESHADOWING: Owl Moon (Yolen)
- IRONY: Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig (Oxenbury)
- PARODY: Piggie Pie (Palatini)
- PERSONIFICATION: Sylvester and the Magic Pebble (Stieg)
- SATIRE: Story of Ferdinand (Leaf)

## 17. Wordless

- What can I teach using wordless picture books?
- Main Idea
- Inference
- Drawing Conclusions
- Cause and effect
- New Vocabulary
- Sequencing
- Quotations/Dialog
- Summarize
- Punctuation
- Verb Tense
- Character, Plot, setting
- Making Connections



## 18. Art

- Too numerous!
- Had to mention—such a resource for art teachers

## 19. Responses from Secondary Students: Reiker, Melissa. The Use of Picture Books in the High School Classroom: A Qualitative Case Study. 2011

- Recall particular memories
- Recognize symbolism
- Understand the essence of empathy
- Feel disturbed at negative aspects of human nature
- Describe childhood experiences/books from
- Think about how to teach advanced concepts to young children
- Identify/relate to diverse cultures

## 20. Books

- Have some bibliographies here
- Real recommendation: Google
- “WWI picture books”
- “Math lessons picture books”
- Teacher lesson sites

## 21. Information

If you want any handouts, or a copy of the presentation, or just to chat about books, contact

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