



Mediating Wordless Picturebooks

Our DIALLS library includes wordless picturebooks that can be used to promote discussions about cultural literacy themes such as diversity, tolerance and citizenship. Mediating wordless picturebooks can be challenging as it is tempting to either 'tell' the story to the children or bombard them with questions about it. We asked the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) for their expert advice and they have given us some tips on how you can co-construct meaning together with the children through careful prompting and open-ending questioning. It is important to support children to engage deeply with pictures and their messages and to encourage them to work together to build meanings.

- Take time to prepare in advance of sharing with the children to think about the potential of what could be explored.
- Spend time discussing the front cover, endpapers, title page and back cover. How are they similar/different?
- Pictures early in the book can be used to invite prediction about character and plot. As the reading continues, these predictions can be re-assessed.
- When discussing pictures, ask children to point to evidence for their ideas and interpretations.
- Consider the perspective and the effect this has on the reader.
- Consider the colours, focus and shapes.
- Where is your eye drawn to in the illustration? What effect does this have?
- Use a viewfinder to help you focus in on the characters more clearly (a black sheet of paper with a cut out window). Look at the facial expressions and body language of characters and where they are in relation to each other. What feelings do the above effects induce in the reader?
- Consider how props are used in the pictures.
- What interesting things do you notice about the text? Look for repetitions or links between pages (for example, how does the end of the text link to what happened in the beginning?).
- Invite children to engage more deeply with the pictures through questioning – e.g. why might this be significant? How does this image capture the essence of the story?
- Consider how framing is used and the effect that it has.
- It is very important that children learn how to spend time on the pages and not simply skim through the text.

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