

Picture Book Groups for the Early Years



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Picture Book Mix & Match No 1a



Often we choose books based on their topic, but there are so many other ways to select and curate books for engaging students and designing learning. In this series of resources, 20 picture books are selected and grouped based on features such as genre, theme, character, subject matter, audience and relationships, organisation, language features, literary devices and visual features.

All picture books in the collection below can and should be used to foster the joy of reading through shared reading whilst being accessible for independent reading in classroom libraries. In addition, careful selection of books is key to teaching reading and modelling writing to students.

The books listed below have been selected for the early years of primary school. After carefully reading a selection of books several times, it becomes clear that they can be grouped based on a range of different features and thus used for different purposes in the classroom.

20 Picture Books for the Early Years

[Train Party](#) by Karen Blair (2021, Penguin)

[Grandma's Treasured Shoes](#) by Coral Vass and Christina Huynh (2020, National Library of Australia)

[Not Cute](#) by Philip Bunting (2020, Scholastic)

[Pink!](#) By Margaret Wild and Judith Russell (2020, Harper Collins)

[Going to the Footy](#) by Debbie Coombes (2019, Magabala Books)

[Thelma the Unicorn](#) by Aaron Blabey (2017, Scholastic)

[I Just Ate My Friend](#) by Heidi McKinnon (2017, Allen & Unwin)

[The Great Rabbit Chase](#) by Freya Blackwood (2017, Scholastic)

[Handa's Surprise](#) by Eileen Browne (2016, Walker Books)

[Baa Baa Smart Sheep](#) by Mark Sommerset (2016, Candlewick Press)

[Pinkalicious](#) by Elizabeth Kann (2016, Harper Collins)

[Press Here](#) by Hervé Tullet (2011, Allen & Unwin)

[Where is The Green Sheep?](#) By Mem Fox and Judy Horacek (2006, Penguin)

[Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!](#) By Mo Willems (2005, Walker Books)

[Pete the Sheep](#) by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley (2004, Harper Collins)

[I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato](#) by Lauren Child (2003, Candlewick Books)

[Our Granny](#) by Margaret wild and Julie Vivas (1995, Omnibus Books)

[We're Going on a Bear Hunt](#) by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury (1993, Walker Books)

[A Lion in the Night](#) by Pamela Allen (1988, Penguin)

[No, David!](#) by David Shannon (1998, Blue Sky Press)





Repetitive narrative structure

- A Lion in the Night
- The Great Rabbit Chase
- I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato
- Not Cute



Clear narrative complication

- The Great Rabbit Chase
- A Lion in the Night
- Thelma the Unicorn
- Pete the Sheep
- Pink!
- Pinkalicious



Animal characters

- Thelma the Unicorn
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- A Lion in the Night
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep



Humorous characters

- I Just Ate My Friend
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- Not Cute
- Pete the Sheep
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep
- Pinkalicious



Representation of family relationships

- The Great Rabbit Chase
- I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato
- No David!
- Grandma's Treasured Shoes
- Our Granny
- Pink!



Representation of diverse communities

- Handa's Surprise
- Going to the Footy
- Grandma's Treasured Shoes
- Our Granny



Characterisation (actions, dialogue, feelings and thoughts)

- Thelma the Unicorn
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- No David!
- I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato
- Not Cute



Plot and description developed through adverbial phrases

- Train Party
- The Great Rabbit Chase
- We're Going on a Bear Hunt
- A Lion in the Night
- Going to the Footy
- Press Here



Noun groups to describe

- We're Going on a Bear Hunt
- Grandma's Treasured Shoes
- Our Granny
- Handa's Surprise



Statements, commands, questions, exclamations

- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- Where's the Green Sheep
- No David!
- I Just Ate My Friend
- Not Cute
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep



Direct interaction with audience

- Press Here
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- Where's the Green Sheep



Offers and demands to engage audience

- I Just Ate My Friend
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- Not Cute
- Pete the Sheep
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep



Creative word play (onomatopoeia)

- We're Going on a Bear Hunt
- Not Cute
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus
- Pete the Sheep
- Baa Baa Smart Sheep



Symbolism (colour)

- Pinkalicious
- Pink!
- Thelma the Unicorn

What you can do

- Collect and read the above books to identify the features.
- With colleagues, collect another set of books. Read several times before grouping based on features.
- Establish a system for curating and recording groups of picture books based on common features. This will be valuable for future planning and lesson design.
- Join the [FREE Resource Centre](#) to access more resources.
- Check out [Professional Learning](#) opportunities to further develop knowledge of language, literacy and literature.

