

reading pictures

introduction

All reading is about making meaning from text. A text may represent meaning either through the printed **words** themselves, or via the visual images or **pictures**.

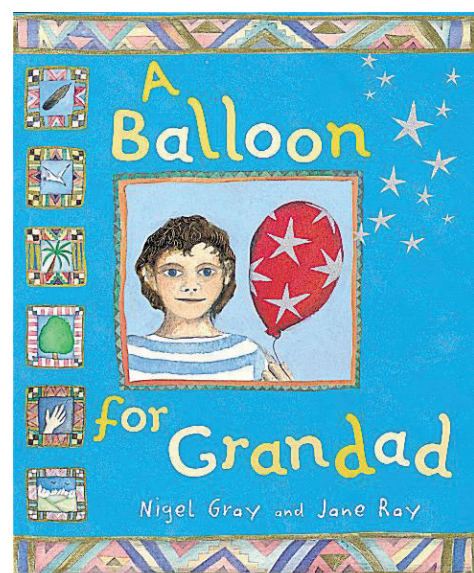
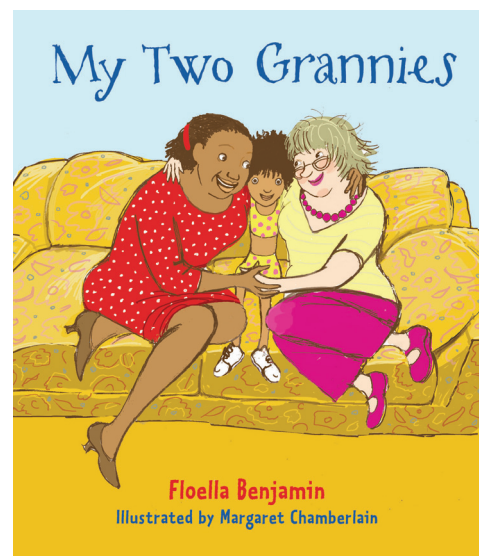
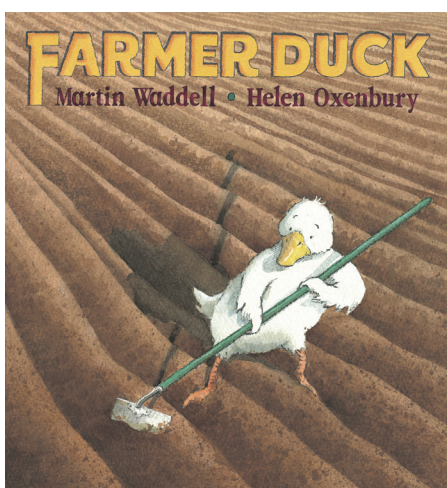
When we read a story, we combine the literal meaning of the words on the page with a deeper understanding of the abstract ideas and feelings they suggest. Similarly, when we read an image, the artist's use of colour, line, shape and space conveys a combination of straightforward and deeper meanings. For example, a bright sunny day may indicate not simply good weather, but a happy occasion; whilst a gloomy, rainy day suggests unhappiness.

In picture books, the full meaning of the text can only be understood through the combination of both the **words and the pictures**. When sharing books with children, you can explore both.

Look at end papers, book covers and title pages as well as illustrations. These images not only illustrate the words, but add new and often more complex layers of meaning to the story.

The four picture books used as examples in this project are:

- *A Balloon for Grandad* by Nigel Gray and Jane Ray (Orchard Books)
- *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell and Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)
- *Pumpkin Soup* by Helen Cooper (Picture Corgi)
- *My Two Grannies* by Floella Benjamin and Margaret Chamberlain (Frances Lincoln)



character, setting, mood and imagination

When reading a story, we usually find out from the first few pages what is happening, who the main **characters** are, and what the **mood** of the story is (i.e. spooky or light-hearted).

When we read picture books, we are usually introduced to setting, mood and character through the illustrations.

Ideas presented visually can be understood by very young children, especially if pictures are discussed with a parent or teacher.

Helping young children to interpret a picture and use their visual skills to create a meaning beyond the surface prepares them for more traditional literary study in the future.

When discussing picture books with children, it is helpful to have a detailed knowledge of the book, so that you are able to draw attention to all aspects of the visual text as well as the written story.



For more recommended books, plus ideas, activities and tips for sharing picture books, visit www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk

A vital element of any story is its potential to engage the **imagination** of listeners and readers. Picture books, where word and image provide parallel paths to meaning, can inspire the imagination.

When selecting books to share with young children, as well as looking for well crafted writing and high quality artwork, look for books which celebrate and encourage the use of children's imaginations.



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