



125 West Bay Road
Amherst, MA 01002
(413) 658-1100
www.picturebookart.org

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

How Picture Books Are Made

Objective: To help students understand the process of creating a picture book.

Questions: In preparation for your trip we suggest that prior to your visit you read some Eric Carle books to your students. After a few readings have a discussion with your students about how books are made. The following questions might serve as a springboard for discussion:

- Has anyone here ever made a book?
- What was the first thing you did?
- Why do you think some books are called picture books?
- Who do you think helped to make this book? This is a great opportunity to talk about author, illustrator, editor, and publisher.
- Who can help us understand the word process?

For older students, you might want to give them an Eric Carle book to examine in order to have them think about the stages of making a book. Have them write down their ideas.

Group Project: Select some of the stages listed below. Place each of the stages you select on a card. In a random order present the various stages to your students. Depending on the ages of your students and what you wish to highlight, you might want to use between 5 and 10 stages.

Ask the students to place the stages in order, encouraging them to explain their reasoning. It's OK if students disagree and if the stages aren't presented in the order listed below. The point of the exercise is to have students begin to think about the process and the logic behind the process. After reaching a consensus on the order of the stages, help the students reflect on the time, hard work, and ups and downs that are all a part of this process.

Ideas: After the above discussion, introduce the students to the author, Alike. Tell them that Alike has written a book about the process she uses to create her books. Read it to them with the purpose of comparing the stages they identified with the ones outlined by Alike. After reading the book you can discuss similarities and differences, if any.

Individual Project: Instead of doing this as a group project, you could give the stages to individual students or small groups of students to place in order.

(Continued)

List of Possible Stages to Use with This Activity:

- The author has an idea
- The author writes down a story
- The author keeps trying to make the story better and better (revising)
- The story is sent to an editor to read
- The editor likes it and finds a publisher
- The artist/illustrator begin sketches for the story
- The “dummy” (a handmade book which serves as a model for the printed book) is made
- The author/illustrator, editor, and designer make changes to make the book even better (editing)
- The artist makes the final drawing for the book using the dummy as a guide
- Everyone checks the book one last time for mistakes
- The art and words are put together
- The book is printed
- The book is cut, folded, and sewn together
- A hard cover and dust jacket are made and put together
- The book is distributed to stores and libraries
- The book is read by the public

Some wonderful graphics for these stages can be found in Alikì’s *How A Book Is Made*.

Other books on this topic:

What Authors Do by Eileen Christlow

What Illustrators Do by Eileen Christlow

Book Takes Root: The Making of a Picture Book by Michael Kehoe

Cherries and Cherry Pits by Vera B. Williams