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Glossary

When talking about picturebooks with other teachers or with learners we may not always know the specific term, the meta-language, for a particular part of the picturebook or for a detail we can see in the picturebook illustrations. Here is a picturebook glossary with some of the terms, to make it easier for teachers of English and their learners to talk about picturebooks together more knowledgeably.

| Term | Description |
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| 32 pages | A book needs to remain affordable, so since the early 1900s the printing process has involved printing in large sheets, signatures, which are cut into eight parts. When folded and held together they make bundles of 16 pages, and two of these bundles are used to make a picturebook. So, the standard length of a picturebook is 32 pages, though of course there are exceptions e.g. 24 pages (one and a half signatures) or 40 pages (two and a half signatures). Having 32 pages means that <i>authors, illustrators</i> and <i>author-illustrators</i> know they must work to fitting everything into those 32 pages. <i>Illustrators</i> will often make use of all these pages which means they overflow into parts of the book which usually remain unillustrated e.g. the <i>endpapers</i> and <i>the front matter</i> . |
| Authors, illustrators and author-illustrators | Picturebooks can be created by two people, <i>the author</i> (the person who writes the words), and <i>the illustrator</i> (the person people who draws the pictures). However, some picturebooks are created by one very talented person, an <i>author-illustrator</i> who creates both pictures and words. |
| Barcode | Barcodes represent data in a way that a machine can read it. The barcode on a picturebook usually sits on the <i>back cover</i> . Sometimes they look like regular barcodes, but sometimes they are camouflaged or decorated and can be quite exciting to look at and talk about. |
| Blurb | Blurb usually appears on the <i>back cover</i> of a picturebook, it might give a short summary or information about the book |

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| | from the publisher. Blurb can also appear on <i>dust jacket flaps</i> . Blurbs might also include reviews or comments from readers. You can share blurbs with older learners, and they can even write their own. |
| Covers | All books have covers - front and back ones. They can be <i>hard back covers</i> , or <i>soft covers</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hard back covers</i> are made with thick card, cloth or leather. • <i>Soft covers</i> are usually made of thin card. The <i>front cover</i> may have visual information which contributes in some way to the visual narrative – presenting characters, the setting etc. Sometimes the <i>front and back covers</i> make one whole illustration – that’s always a treat, so make sure you open it up and show the children. |
| Dedication or dedication page | A dedication is usually placed in part of <i>the front matter</i> . It can be on the same page as the <i>publisher information</i> , or it can have a page all of its own - <i>a dedication page</i> . Some picturebooks have some interesting dedications, which children will enjoy discovering and thinking about. |
| Designer | A designer never has their name on the front cover, but they have a really important role in the creation of a picturebook. Designers are responsible for the picturebook’s materiality - it’s physical appearance and the way it works as a whole - the picturebook as object. Sometimes the <i>illustrator</i> or <i>author-illustrator</i> is also the picturebook designer. |
| Double page spread or spread | Picturebooks don’t usually have numbered pages, so we refer to double page spreads. These are two facing pages, the <i>verso</i> (left page) and the <i>recto</i> (right page). Usually, when sharing picturebooks we show a spread at a time. In a 32-page picturebook, there are usually 12 or 13 double page spreads. |
| Dust jacket, book jacket or book cover | Some picturebooks, especially <i>hard back ones</i> , come with a detachable outer cover – this is a <i>dust jacket</i> . It protects the book but can also be used by <i>illustrators</i> and <i>designers</i> quite creatively. The dust jacket and the <i>book covers</i> may have different illustrations, so always take a look and see. |
| Endpapers, end pages or ends | Remember that picturebooks usually have <i>32 pages</i> ... if it is a <i>hard back</i> picturebook, pages 1 and 32 will be stuck onto the inside of the <i>front and back covers</i> . This is a common way of ensuring a <i>hard-back</i> book holds itself together. It also means that pages 2 and 3 are the first pages we see when opening a picturebook, and 30 and 31 are the last pages. Picturebook <i>illustrators</i> may use these first pages in some way to contribute to the visual narrative or sequence. Endpapers may be white or coloured, patterned or with motifs representing the main theme of the narrative. They may be the same front and back, or different. |

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| | When a <i>hard back</i> book is made into a <i>soft back</i> one, the endpapers are no longer needed to hold the book together, but if they are visually important, they will be present. So, watch out for endpapers. Enjoy discovering, with the children, why they have been included. |
| Flaps | <i>Dust jackets</i> have folded flaps which hold it onto the <i>front and back covers</i> of the picturebook. These flaps may have <i>blurbs</i> about the picturebook, information about the <i>author, illustrator or author-illustrator</i> , information about prequels or sequels. You can share these with the children if they are interesting. |
| Front matter, back matter, or publisher information | All books contain publisher information. It is usually in the front of a book but can also be at the back (then it becomes <i>back matter</i>). Front matter is the fine print – it gives information about the publisher, copyright information etc. Sometimes there's a note on the artistic medium used in the illustrations, or what font the lettering appears in. The front matter is usually found on page 4 and 5 of the picturebook and can also include illustrations. |
| Gutter | When two pages meet (due to their binding) in the middle of a book, they create the gutter. This can be used creatively in a picturebook. |
| Peritext | Gerard Genette (1997) coined the term 'peritext' as anything that comes before (or after) the main body of a book e.g. the <i>covers, endpapers, front and back matter</i> etc. In picturebooks, the illustrations in the peritext should be shown to the children you are sharing the picturebook with. These parts of the picturebook can provide important visual information which may contribute to the narrative and also enable opportunities for prediction and meaningful talk in English. |
| Prologue and epilogue illustrations | Prologue illustrations are found in <i>the front matter</i> . Epilogue illustrations are in the <i>back matter</i> . They often have something to do with the visual sequence in the picturebook. |
| Title page | A title page is part of the <i>front matter</i> and contains the title, <i>author's, illustrator's or author-illustrator's</i> names, and the publisher's name. It is usually illustrated as well. The illustration may contribute in some way to the visual narrative. It can introduce the main character, the setting or the theme of the picturebook. It might also be the beginning of the visual narrative, or even part of a visual sequence which began on <i>the front cover, or the end papers</i> . Never miss it out when sharing a picturebook with children. |

Reference:

Genette, G. (1997), *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.