



What is a Picture Book?

A picture book is:

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- ★ Intended for children from 0 – 8, with 2-5 being the “sweet spot”
 - ★ Designed to be *read to or with* the child, rather than for the child to read to him or herself

A picture book has:

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- ★ 32 – 48 pages maximum, with 32 being by far the most common
 - ★ Pages are divided into 16 double-page spreads, generally featuring either a minimal amount of text and prominent art, or a balance between the two
 - ★ 0 – 1000 words maximum, with 500 or less being the ideal
 - ★ Illustrations on every page (or every facing page)
 - ★ Illustrations may be full color, black and white, or any combination thereof, but they complement and further (rather than just reflect) the story
 - ★ A simple plot and a limited number of characters, with a child or child-like protagonist at its center who is trying to solve a problem or achieve a goal.

A picture book can be:

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- ★ Written in prose, verse, or wordless (meaning art only)
 - ★ Fiction, Non-Fiction (How-to, educational, real-life), or “Concept” (i.e. an illustrated poem or song, ABC, counting, or I Spy books)

A picture book does not have:

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- ★ Chapters
 - ★ More than 1000 words (except older classics)
 - ★ Less than 32 or more than 48 pages
 - ★ Dozens of characters
 - ★ Complicated plots or sub-plots
 - ★ Adult Protagonists (with the exception of fables and fairy tales, and child-like adult characters like Amelia Bedelia.)

A picture book should not be:

Long-winded, overly descriptive, corny, sentimental, didactic, preachy, cutesy, condescending to kids in any way or more “talky” than active (i.e. no ‘talking heads’.)