



# Picture Book Analysis

Questions to Consider When Studying a Picture Book



# Story / Structure



## **NARRATIVE FICTION / NON-FICTION**

- Who is the main character? Whose emotional journey is it?
- What do they want or need? What is their goal, or problem?
- What obstacle(s) are in the way of achieving their goal or overcoming their problem?
- How does the dramatic tension escalate?
- How is the problem resolved, or goal achieved?
- What does the hero learn, and/or how have they changed or grown by the end?
- What's the theme or takeaway?
- What is the Central Dramatic Question of the story?
- What or where are the “heart” moments? (Aww! Oh no! Ha ha! etc.)





# Story / Structure



## CONCEPT / EXPOSITORY

- What is the subject, topic, or concept?
- How is the subject or concept introduced?
- How is the narrative structured? What is the “shape” of the story?
- Is there any tension, problem to be solved or question to answer?
- How is the problem resolved, or question answered?
- What does the reader learn by the end?
- What’s the theme or takeaway?
- What is the Central Dramatic Question?



# Narrative / Style



- What/whose point of view is the story told from?
- What tense does the story unfold in?
- What is the voice or narrative style?
- How does the story begin? (Opening sentences/pages, *in media res*, exposition, etc.)
- What is the balance of dialogue, if any, to narrative?
- What is the balance of narrative to art?
- Are there examples of *showing* rather than *telling*, esp. with respect to emotions?
- Are there any juicy verbs, concrete nouns, or other specific word choices?
- Is there any playful or artful language? (Patterns, refrains, alliteration, echoes, onomatopoeia, personification, parallelism)
- Is there incorporation of the senses? (Smells, sights, sounds, tastes, tactile feelings)
- What is the pacing like? How are the page turns used?
- How does the story end?



# Illustrations



- How do the illustrations capture or underscore the theme?
- How do they unify the story elements?
- How do they further the action?
- What additional information comes through illustrations that is not in the text?
- What interesting/unique elements, approaches, or materials have been used?
- How do the surrounding materials support the story or provide additional context? (Endpapers, cover, case cover, backmatter, jacket copy)



# Other



- How does this story relate to others on this subject or theme?
- What does it add to the “conversation”?
- How does it intersect with current events, history, STEM, or other aspects of the world in which it lives or the issues facing its readers?
- What are reviewers saying or noticing about the story?
- What aspects or elements of this story make it uniquely picture book-friendly?
- Why is this story best told through the picture book format?
- What are its uniquely child-centric aspects or considerations?