

*Behold!*

THE

PICTURE

BOOK

# How To Read A Picture Book Out Loud!

*When you read a picture book out loud, you're introducing children to the many wonders of literature: the richness of language, the beauty of art, the deeply human delights of a good story told well. But also: No pressure! Ideally, reading together is enjoyable—for both you and the kids listening.*

1

## Preview the book

Before you share a picture book for the first time, read it by yourself, ideally out loud. Look at the illustrations. A lot of the storytelling happens in the pictures, but it will be hard to take in the art while you're sharing the book. You'll get a sense of how the story moves before you share it. Are there any unfamiliar words you want to look up or practice pronouncing?

2

## Perform

When it's time to read, you're some combination of storyteller, stage actor, and karaoke singer. Make sure you show the pictures—ideally, hold the book so both you and the kid can see the pages. Try using different voices for characters. (If you feel silly, that's ok! It's good for kids to see adults try new things and even feel vulnerable.) Turn a page slowly to build suspense... or turn many pages quickly to create the sense of frenzied action. For a big reveal, turn the book towards yourself and react to the picture before you show it to the kids. Your voice, your face, your gestures, even the physical book itself—these are all tools you can use to make your performance more exciting.

3

## Transcend Your Taste

Inevitably, kids will ask you to read a book that you, personally, cannot stand. (Hopefully it's not one I wrote.) When I read a picture book I don't like, I still try to make the book the best version of itself. No smirking, no rushing, no rolling my eyes. Children are developing their reading tastes. It would be a shame for an adult's disdain to crush a kid's genuine enthusiasm for a book.

4

## Talk About the Book

A picture book is a portable artwork that adults and kids encounter together. You've both read the same story, and now you can talk about it. So: Ask kids what they think. Tell them what you think. Share your favorite parts. Revisit some of the illustrations. Don't be surprised when kids notice things you didn't. When children and grown-ups discuss a picture book, they better understand the story, each other, and the world.

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