

# CREATING PICTURE BOOKS

## Blending words and pictures

Picture books combine two art forms: words and pictures. The best are a perfect blend. Sometimes, a person who is a good writer and artist can create both words and pictures. More often, there is a different author and illustrator; it is the publisher's job to make sure that the words and pictures work well together.

Picture book creation goes something like this ...

## Creating the words

An author writes a story, then sends it to a publisher who produces similar kinds of books.

If the publisher likes the story, they contact the author and possibly suggest changes. Many drafts may be created before both publisher and author are happy. Meanwhile the publisher chooses an illustrator whose style suits the story.

## Creating the pictures, making the book

Now the illustrator has the opportunity to tell the visual side of the story. Illustrators may create a few sketches and sample artwork to suggest their interpretation of the story and to show the author and publisher how the pictures complement the words.

Once the publisher and author agree on an illustrator, work on the artwork begins. Illustrators often experiment with different styles and media. They might create a layout or storyboard with small rough sketches to show how text and illustrations work together on each page. They might produce a dummy, which resembles the finished book and helps to show how the story progresses as the pages turn. A book designer may also be involved. Designers plan the book's size and shape, paper, typography, layout and the finished look.

During this time, the author and illustrator sign a contract with the publisher—to produce the best book they can.

Many discussions and changes happen to refine the words and pictures. There is so much to consider: cover, endpapers, title page, words, pictures, and blurbs about the book and its creators. Each book is different, and every detail is important.

## Printing the book

When the publisher is satisfied with the words, pictures and design, the book is ready for printing. The printer produces examples, or proofs, of the text and illustrations to check that everything is perfect. The colour must reflect the original artwork; the text must be perfect; and words and pictures must be accurately positioned. Printing begins after proofs are approved and the number of copies decided.

It may take several years for a picture book to be produced. By the time the book reaches readers, the author, illustrator and publisher are already working on more books.

## Finding readers

How will people discover a new book when so many already exist?

Publishers send copies to newspapers and journals so reviewers can write about the book. Booksellers stock the book, libraries and schools buy it and individuals buy or borrow it.

Good picture books are generally available in libraries and bookshops. The best survive and are read by one generation after another.



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The Children's Book Council of Australia  
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# THE CREATORS

## Gary Crew

Gary Crew was born and educated in Brisbane, Queensland. He left school at 16 to work as a draftsman and later taught English and history at several Brisbane high schools. Crew's teaching experience led him to begin writing novels for adolescents in the 1980s, using the macabre and other forms popular with teenagers. He has worked with many outstanding artists to create inventive picture books for older readers.

Since 1989, Crew has been a full-time writer and published over 100 books. He holds a PhD in

