Picture Books for All
By Jeannie Standal

Think your students are too old for picture books? While picture books are usually targeted to the youngest readers (or listeners), they can also be used effectively with students through high school! Amazing! A well-written and illustrated picture book is, like universal design, necessary for those for whom it was made, and really very helpful for everyone else.

There are a couple ways picture books can be especially helpful for any age group:

Learning English: picture books can provide an entry point to the Idaho Core Standards Anchor Standards for Reading for those who are learning English. They can also be used to meet a content standard, depending on the book. STEM picture books provide tools to build background knowledge about topics that are new to students.

Vocabulary Building: Students, especially those with limited exposure to vocabulary at home, will find a treasure trove of rare words in picture books. Want vocabulary builders? Break out the nonfiction picture books. *Not all children’s nonfiction is created equal, so ask your school librarian to recommend some high-quality titles on your topic.

Introduction to a New Topic: A good picture book is written clearly, so that everyone can understand. The text and illustrations work together and lead to even better understanding of a topic. Consequently, a picture book can make a great introduction to a new topic for any age group. A picture book that would make a good read-aloud can be even better. Nearly everyone likes to be read to, even if they roll their eyes first.

Interest Levels: There are even picture books out there that are written at a very sophisticated level with smaller print and less white space than you would think. They are written for an older reader, and still a picture book.

Authentic Reading: Unlike some sets of books that are contrived stories designed to cover a specific skill or sound, a picture book tells a real story. It allows students the opportunity to become immersed in a great story, and perhaps change attitudes toward reading.

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Low Hanging Fruit
Tips and tools from your school library

LINKS TO MORE LEARNING

November is Picture Book Month!
Find loads of information on the virtues of picture books here: http://picturebookmonth

Caldecott Award Winners and Honor Books
Find all the winners and honors from 1938! Some have fallen into obscurity, and some are still as popular as ever.
http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/caldecottmedal/caldecotthonors/caldecottmedal

This is Your Child’s Brain on Reading by Carina Storr, Special to CNN.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Picture Books in Middle School:
Want an example of how this would look? Check out this lesson plan called Post Modern Picture Books in Middle School using the 1991 Caldecott Winner, Black and White by David McCaulay: http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/postmodern-picture-books-middle-66.html.

DIGITAL TOOLS

NoveList K-8 Picture Book Extenders:
Use these activities to build on and further explore the themes of a picture book.
To access the picture book extenders, click on the Quick Links tab on the top left and select Picture Book Extenders.