Dear Educator,

Picture books are a remarkable resource for young readers to learn about many facets of the world around them. Books can be mirrors, doorways, magnifying glasses, rocket ships, and warm blankets. Entertaining, didactic, or a tool for self-reflection, stories and words can become teachable moments. So, too, can a book’s visuals, which are the primary exposure to original artwork that most children experience. Picture books give readers a chance to learn to read with their developing phonetic awareness, visual and aesthetic awareness, self-awareness, and social and emotional awareness.

Windmill picture books feature critically important themes relevant to every school’s character development education. Topics like self-esteem, getting along with others, and having empathy are opportunities for discovery. This guide is a tool for using Windmill picture books in your classrooms or libraries. These suggestions can kick-start the creativity, sensitivity, and fun that you bring to teaching literature in the earliest grades.

Thank you for powering your students’ imaginations.

Kind regards,
The Windmill Books Editorial Team
Activation of Prior Knowledge

As an educator, you know that there are many strategies and tactics for preparing your students to engage with new material.

Prompts for Before Reading:

- **Pre-reading Questions**
  - Have I read a book by the same author?
  - What is the title of the book?
  - What does the cover look like?
  - Have I read a book about the same or a similar topic?

- **Share the main details of the book (for example, that it is set in space or is about a bunny, etc.)**
  - Ask students to draw pictures related to the main details
  - Invite students to think aloud in small groups or a whole group about that topic
  - Ask students what kind of story they might write on that topic

- **Creating context**
  - Introduce expository materials to help elucidate a plotline if students do not currently have a fund of knowledge to aid in reading comprehension
  - Show a video or clips that help illustrate an idea
  - Read material in a textbook together
  - Create a “show and tell” that creates informational context
  - Facilitate learning stations related to the topic to allow for self-directed learning

- **Rehearse the process of reading with your students—remind them to follow along, to spot details, and to make note of important events as you read together**
Reading Together

Educators can be active facilitators while reading.

Tip – Try different modalities while reading:

• Display a book on a SMART Board or with a camera and projector for visual learners
• Use a digital eBook with narration for auditory learners
• Gather on a cozy rug for kinesthetic-emotional learners
• Create a book walk and gallery by reproducing the pages of a book and posting them down the hallway
• Pause while reading a picture book at a significant point in the narrative and ask readers to draw or act out what is happening in the text or what they infer may come next, then complete reading the text together

Interactive Read-Aloud Activities

• Turn & Learn
• Walk & Talk
• Perform & Brainstorm
• Hand on Demand
• Hand Cue to Review
• Think Aloud to the Crowd
• Pause and Draws
Prompts for Reading Together:

What does the title tell me about the story?

Who or what is the text about?

What details are most important?

When and where does the story take place?

What do the illustrations tell me?

What is the lesson, moral, or message of the story?

What are the main events of the story?

Use the Story Guide reproducible for whole group, small group, or individual learning. Ask students to write or draw their answers.
**Story Guide**

*Show what you know.*

**Title:**

**Author:**

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What is your favorite part?
Post-Reading Writing Activities

Young readers can demonstrate comprehension and practice written expression by responding to these prompts.

In the beginning...

Next...

The big problem is...

After the character...

The ending was...

A different ending...