



Sharing Wordless Picture Books



Sharing wordless books is a terrific way to build important literacy skills, including listening skills, vocabulary, comprehension and an increased awareness of how stories are “built”.

Wordless picture books are told entirely through their illustrations — they are books without words, or sometimes just a few words. Sharing such books with a child provides an opportunity for literacy-rich conversations. Each “reader” listens and speaks and creates their own story in their own words. Sharing wordless books also reinforces the idea that, in many books, the story and the pictures are connected. Below are a few tips for sharing wordless picture books with your child:

- Recognise that there are no “right” or “wrong” ways to read a wordless book. One of their wonderful benefits is how each child can create their own story (or stories!) from the same pictures.
- Spend time looking at the front cover and talking about the book’s title. Based on these, make a few predictions about the story – what does your child think is going to happen?
- Take a “picture walk” through the pages of the book. Enjoy talking about the pictures and look carefully at the expressions on characters’ faces and the story’s setting. Talk to each other about what you see. Enjoy the pictures and point out a few things, but don’t worry too much about telling a story yet. Just enjoy the pictures and get a sense of what the book is about.
- Now go back through the book a second time but this time telling a story based on the pictures. Perhaps you could go first and demonstrate to your child how to tell a story.
- Encourage your child to “read” you the book, telling their story. Help them to expand their thoughts by encouraging him/her to add information from the illustration’s details. One way to encourage more details is by asking “W” questions: Who? Where? When? Why?
- Finish your wordless book sharing by asking a few simple questions: Which pictures helped you tell the story? What was your favourite part of your story? Have you had an experience like the one in your story?

For a book with few words, you’ll be surprised at all the talking you will do, and all of the fun you’ll have!