

Types of Books with Pictures

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/picture-book-types/>

This entry is part 1 of 5 in the series [Story Types](#)

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Updated and extended list of all the types of books with pictures.

What's the difference *really* between an art book, a picture book and a wimmelbook?

What about the difference between a chapter book and an MG novel?

Almost sounds like the beginnings of a joke. "Book Art, Picture Book and Illustrated Storybook all walk into a bar. Each one says, 'Ouch!' -but with different pictures."

Here's a breakdown of the different types of books with pictures.

ACTIVITY BOOK

An activity book is a type of coloring book, one with special pages that prompt the reader to complete a certain type of task. Activity books sometimes have a storyline, sometimes they don't.

Here are *some* activities you might find in this type of book (aside from coloring pages):

- **Codecrackers:** similar in appearance to a crossword puzzle, letters have been replaced by numbers. The task is to crack the code and find what words are then revealed.
- **Connect-the-dots:** part of a picture is drawn, and the rest has been replaced by a series of dots. The dots are labeled with numbers or letters and the task is to connect the dots in the correct order to reveal the rest of the drawing.

- **Crossword puzzles:** A box with boxes and a series of clues. The task is to find the right words to fit into the boxes, based on the clues given.
- **Find the missing piece:** A picture is drawn but parts of it have been removed, deleted. The missing pieces are in a jumble to the side of the page. The task is to find what pieces go where.
- **List making:** Listing your favorite things, your least favorite things, etc. These are thematic and sometimes funny list-making activities.
- **Mandala:** a round-shaped, intricate drawing to be colored that if spun around itself tricks the eye and reveals another image.
- **Mazes:** You must find your way through the labyrinth, either from the outside in, or the inside out.
- **Shadow recognition:** A picture is presented, and on the side are a series of shadows. You must identify the shadow image by finding it in the picture.
- **Sudoku:** The task is to place numbers 1-9 in the empty boxes so that these numbers are represented only once within every sub-box, every column and row and diagonal line.
- **Wordsearch:** a jumble of letters. The task is to find the words hidden amongst them, running in any direction.

ART BOOK

This is a type of pictorial reference book, a book about an artist's work and sometimes their personal life.

BOOK APP

This is when a storybook ebook is made considerably more interactive. With the touch and swipe of a finger, a child can make character images move, or play a story-related, in-book game, or listen to a song, or listen to the narrator telling the story. The Book App essentially makes it possible to make a story fully gamified. It's a cross between books and interactive games.

[Nosy Crow](#) is a highly respected children's book publisher [who also publishes Book Apps](#).

BOOK ART

Book Art is for any age group, but typically adults. The focus here is on *art* so that the images are typically thematic and usually without words - and even if there are words, there is no story at all. When words are used, it is to underscore the metaphor or symbolism of having written words on or with the images, not to create a story.

Sometimes Book Art can even be a Concept Book for adults, for example: an ABC book of nudes. What really distinguishes Book Art from any other kind of book with pictures is that it is always handmade. Sometimes it is a one-of-a-kind, sometimes a limited edition.

BATH BOOK

This is essentially a specialized baby or toddler book made out of non-toxic plastic sewn and padded so that it can be safely taken into the bath. These can be picture books or illustrated stories.

BOARD BOOK

This is a picture book *or* an illustrated storybook printed on a thick paperboard (typically 40pt cardstock, laminated). These are more tear-resistant and often used for pre-readers. Newer variants of board books are pull-the-flap and peek-a-boo board books, designs borrowed from pop-up book traditions.

CHAPBOOK

This is a small pamphlet or booklet of about 16 pages, stapled together with a paper cover. Most often, chapbooks are filled with poetry and a few pictures. Sometimes, chapbooks contain short stories (like [flash fiction or drabbles](#)).

CHAPTER BOOK

These are the first type of novel a child will read, meant for kids in second and third grade. They are large print short novels with three to five illustrations in every chapter - usually about ten chapters per book. Chapter books are also characteristic in that the chapters end in a cliffhanger so that young readers will want to keep going with the story. Chapter books are usually no more than 1200 words, though there are exceptions.

For [details on how to structure a chapter book, go HERE](#).

COFFEE TABLE BOOK

Many coffee table books are really just larger, more expensive picture books. It's for adults, so you can look at it with a cup of coffee (or something stronger) rather than a glass of juice. Sometimes these are extra-large resources, sometimes pure art. As a Print-On-Demand coffee table book, even a personal remembrance is now possible.

COLORING BOOK

Coloring books are just that: books you can color-in yourself, any way you want. Most often, these are fun images that can be taken separately from each other - in that there is no storyline. However, coloring books with a story you can follow are becoming more popular.

COMIC BOOK

Comic Books started in the 1930s. Sometimes called a Comic Magazine, this is a form of illustrated storytelling that uses strictly defined panels along with overlaying text written in speech balloons, captions and sound effects like “KAPOW!” to convey a story.

The artwork is done in a specialized traditional manner, usually by two or three different people: penciller, inkist and colourist.

EBOOK (for KIDS)

Ebooks aren't just for novels. There are also plenty of illustrated storybooks now available as ebooks. Some parents prefer ebooks and apps to printed books because an ebook reader takes up less space than a library and ebooks generally cost less than printed editions.

It is doubtful though that books will cease to be available in print, simply because tangibility matters. For little fingers, learning to carefully turn pages develops fine-motor skills. For more mature readers, the enjoyment of a real book is experientially different from holding a small monitor.

When it comes to full-color stories heavy in artwork, most people do prefer a solid book they can hold in their hands.

GRAPHIC NOVEL

This is a far too loosely defined term. It was first used in 1964 to describe a lengthy dramatic story that utilized a traditional comic book format but at a greater, more in-depth length. However, it is also used to describe comic book anthologies - and even popular collections - that are bound together.

One could also argue though that the term *comic book* is perhaps a misnomer, because most comic books today are not comical at all, but rather dramatic (or even tragic) stories with epic consequences.

ILLUSTRATED NOVEL

An adult novel that is so popular it is re-released with artwork: an illustrated novel. Not to be confused with a graphic novel, which has a more symbiotic relationship between words and images. Think of *The Lord of the Rings* with lush artwork (the original wasn't illustrated), or the stories written by Mark Twain - now commonly released fully illustrated.

ILLUSTRATED STORYBOOK

What constitutes an illustrated storybook and what differentiates it from a picture book is a matter of contention. In many cases, these two terms are treated as if interchangeable. Sometimes the picture book is thought to be a story with pictures, where the text is key - but then where does that leave the illustrated storybook?

So with this disclaimer, I'm going to tell you what I think the difference is. I'm basing this on what I see over and over in today's market.

An Illustrated Storybook is one that is illustrated in some kind of manner (be it painting, photography, collage, illustration, etc.) to accompany and strengthen the written story. This can be for any age group and any demographic. What's key is that the artwork and the story have a synergy to them (see sample, below).

This is not a story interrupted by images or a collection of images interrupted by words. It requires *both* to tell the full story.

For details on what an illustrated story requires, read [10 Must Haves for a Solid Illustrated Storybook](#).

For insights on what an author/illustrator does, read GSB's [Special Interview with Lita Judge](#).

INDEPENDENT READER (a.k.a. An *I Can Read* Book)

Independent Readers (UK and Australia) or [I Can Read Books](#) (US and Canada) are essentially the visual book format that bridges a storybook and a chapter book. The text is very large print, always in present tense, and very simple for youngsters to read.

These are for kids who are anxious to start reading on their own but might not be able to handle a chapter book just yet.

Sometimes, these types of books are written with phonics in mind, but that's really a decision that's specific to certain publishers and what they want to offer in their catalogue.

INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK (a.k.a. Indestructibles™)

[Indestructibles™](#) are a brand new type of book for babies. It's a Trademarked format published by [Workman Publishing](#). I don't know what the material is, but they look like sturdy paper books, very simple. This is not a board book and it's clear that they don't have any kind of shiny finish on them.

These books are rip-proof, tear-proof and non-toxic. So it's safe for a baby to use this book as a teething tool (which, let's face it - they always teeth on their books). Here is a video that demonstrates this brand new type of book:

[YouTube Video](#)

Thanks go to **Valerie Doherty** for letting me know about these!

LIFT-THE-FLAP BOOK

Sometimes called pull-the-flap, these are board books that have an added interactivity feature: a flap that

a child must find and then open (without ripping it). Underneath there is a surprise image to discover. These books are really good learning tools and often very sweet, but they do get ruined pretty quickly.

MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL (a.k.a. MG Novel)

These are novels for kids in the middle grades (3rd-5th), typically aged 8-12. For readers, it's the step after chapter books and before YA novels. Stylistically and thematically, these books are fun, though they do venture into more serious topics as well.

For insight on what an MG Novelist does, read GSB's [Interview with MG Novelist Shelley Tougas](#).

For details on [How to Write an MG Novel, go HERE](#).

NON-FICTION COMICS

These are comic book styled history lessons. They're usually really bad... but not always. Some are award winners.

PEEK-A-BOO BOOK

This is a board book with special cut-outs in some of the pages so that what is underneath on the next page peeks through the hole. Little kids love these, and inevitably use the peek-a-boo hole to stick their little fingers through it and turn the pages from there.

PICTORIAL REFERENCE BOOK

This is any kind of Non-fiction reference heavy on pictures. While these are generally thought to be travel books heavy on photography, it is actually any kind of informational reference that uses a lot of images. Atlases, anatomy books, interior design and pattern books - these are just a few examples of pictorial references.

PICTURE BOOK

Please see "Illustrated Storybook" above. Then read here.

Picture Book is a term that is today typically used in one of two ways:

1. A story that includes images.
2. A book typically for pre-readers with art or pictures and that most of the time does not have a story - meaning it might have words, but not to convey any kind of plot or character. These are very often baby's first picture dictionary or a [Concept Book](#). Picture Books are often available as

hardbound, softbound or board books.

POP-UP BOOK

Sometimes called pop-ups or movable books, these are the three dimensional, interactive illustrated books designed by Paper Engineers. They are the immediate favorite and the inevitably ruined book. (We tell ourselves that pop-up books are for kids, but really I think they're for adults.) Pop-ups are whimsical and coveted collector's items, involving various different types of movement and pop-up styles.

There are special types of pop-up book features, with special names:

- **Flaps** are just as described, a flap (sometimes difficult to find) that you can open like a door.
- **Pull-tabs** are tabs that stick out from the side (very easy to spot) and when you pull it, this changes the image - sometimes by flipping it around or by revealing something else that was previously hidden.
- **Pull-downs** open downwards to reveal several layers of images that work together to create an image with depth.
- **Pop-outs** are images that pop-out from the page, to the reader when the page is turned.
- **Transformations:** when an image is transformed by the pulling of a tab or turning of a page, so that through vertical slats, another image replaces it.
- **Tunnel Books** (or **peepshows**): a very artistic and difficult type of feature, where openings in each page allow you to see through to the back of the book, *but* also where the exposed sides and edges of each cut-through page actually work together to reveal a new image.
- **Volvelles** transform an image similarly to a Transformation feature, but in a circular form with pinwheel-shaped slats.

RAG BOOK

Another name for a cloth book, these are books that are typically released as board books and are now coming onto the market as washable Rag Books. These sometimes have squeakers sewn into the book or crinkly pages.

What makes rag books particularly attractive to parents is that they are washable, easy to repair with a needle and thread, and they aren't covered with a toxic lamination (which babies eat when they're teething).

SILENT BOOK

Silent books, sometimes called Wordless Books, are actually stories without any text. To be clear, these are quite different from any other kind of illustrated book, because these absolutely must have a clear plot. If it doesn't have a plot, it isn't a silent book (it has to be something else on this list).

TANK?BON

This is also a widely-defined term, but it is essentially a Japanese graphic novel that uses Manga-styled artwork. Tank?bon books can be about anything at all, including beauty tips. They can also be any size of book, everything from a pocket-size to a large format book.

There are certain specific types of Tank?bon books, and they have special names.

- **Aiz?ban** is a high quality collector's special edition Tank?bon with added specials.
- **Bunkoban** is a Tank?bon in Bunko format, which means A6 (105 × 148 mm, or 4.13 × 5.83 inch).
- **Kanzenban** is another kind of high quality special edition that is an A5 (148 × 210 mm, or 5.83 × 8.27 inch) size. Dragon Ball Tank?bon are often released as a Kanzenban edition.
- **Shins?ban** is a Waidoban edition with special new features added.
- **S?sh?hen** is a special format developed by the publisher Shueisha. These are a B5 (176 × 250 mm, or 6.93 × 9.84 inch) size and are thicker volumes so that more chapters can fit in it than in a typical Tank?bon.
- **Waidoban**, or **Wide-Ban**, is larger than a typical Tank?bon but of a regular quality, not a collector's item.

WIMMELBOOK

There are some great books that have no words at all, where the story is shown purely with pictures that are *packed with little details that we're meant to discover*: that's a wimmelbook, sometimes called a Look-a-book. In some cases, it's like an impressively fun art portfolio because the books are so big - sometimes with fold-out pages.

But wimmelbooks are different from silent books. Wimmelbooks do not necessarily have a story to them, and much of the fun is really about spotting all the amazing details.

These can be great teaching tools because you can use them to get kids talking about what is in the picture. Wimmelbooks can be fun, inspiring and even moving if the artist has actually built a storyline.

YA NOVEL

YA stands for Young Adult, and it really is just that. These are novels for teenagers, and every chapter starts with a small illustration. Sometimes random full-page illustrations will also be inserted into the book.

YA novels are always about teenaged characters dealing with the social situations they face day-to-day, but often in an other-worldly situation. [The Hunger Games](#) and [Divergent](#) are today's most popular examples of YA novels. The [length of YA novels](#) varies somewhat, but many are 50-75 pages long.

Keep creating, no matter what.

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