

WTheck is a Familiar Sequence Book?

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/wtheck-familiar-sequence-book/>

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This article is about a special type of storybook with a predictive structure, called a Familiar Sequence Book. I'm going to explain what it is, what it isn't, and why it's such a great book type.

Familiar Sequence books are extremely popular amongst kids because they're fun.

Find out here why teachers love them too! This is a special kind of Predictable Book.

Artwork by Arthur Rackham.

If you're looking for a simple storybook formula that supports story theme and language development, you really can't go wrong with a Familiar Sequence book.

There are exactly 7 types of Predictable Books and a Familiar Sequence book is one of them.

The 7 Types of Predictable Story Structures are:

1. **Chain or Circular** (Example: **Chalk** by Bill Thomson)
2. **Cumulative** (Example: **Stuck** by Oliver Jeffers.)
3. **Pattern** (Example: **Duck! Rabbit!** by Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tom Lichtenheld)
4. **Question and Answer** (Example: **Not a Stick** by Antoinette Portis)
5. **Repetition** (Example: **Cookie's Week** by Cindy Ward and Tomie dePaola)
6. **Rhyme** (Example: **Rhyming Dust Bunnies** by Jan Thomas)

7. Familiar Sequence (Example: **Opposites** by Sandra Boynton)

What a Predictable Story Is

What all predictable stories have in common is that they have a storytelling pattern. **The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly** is a classic, well-known predictable story. It's repetitive, and so we're able to guess what happens next.

If you can predict some part of what will happen on the next page, that's a Predictable Story. This is one of the rare situations when a predictable plot is actually REALLY GOOD!

Aren't *all* Predictable Books *also* Familiar Sequence Stories?

No, they're not the same. This is a common misperception, and you'll find many online resources that list all predictable book formats under Familiar Sequence.

A Familiar Sequence is a type of Predictable Book. But there are 6 other types of Predictable Books.

So what's a Familiar Sequence Story?

Any story involving a sequence that unfolds in order, typically with numbers or the alphabet.

The Hungry Caterpillar, when you really look at it, is a familiar sequence story. Kids are able to guess the number of things the caterpillar will eat next, because of the increase in numbers (and the holes on each page).

That's essentially what distinguishes a Familiar Sequence book from all the other Predictable Story Structures. The sequence is down to numbers, or the alphabet, days of the week, months of the year, the seasons, and opposites – anything that is about a subject that comes in an ordered sequence. That's a Familiar Sequence Story.

Why Familiar Sequence Stories Are Beloved

Teachers love the repetitive format, the sequence of information little kids need to learn, and when it rhymes, they love that even more.

Kids enjoy these books too, especially if they're funny and there's something they can point at or clap with. They don't even realize that their minds are being exercised. It's just play.

The story becomes play when they can guess what's coming next. So deductive reasoning and memory are being exercised here, along with language development. If the kids can repeat a phrase, or call out the next thing (a number, a day, etc.), then that prompts an oral response.

Is a Familiar Sequence Story the same as a Concept Book?

Not necessarily. A [concept book is a broad genre](#), and does not have to involve any storyline at all. A familiar sequence book isn't a genre, it's a specific form of story structure – and it can be a type of concept book. But it could easily crossover into another genre as well.

An ABC book, for example, is a concept book. But that doesn't mean it's a familiar sequence book. Most ABC books don't have any kind of story. They're more like a list, going from A to Z.

A familiar sequence book always has a storyline – it has a plot, with [rising action](#), a climax and a [real ending](#). In fact, **all predictable books must have a storyline.**

Great *Familiar Sequence* Books

Here are some fun familiar sequence books I like, but please keep in mind these are just the ones I could immediately think of – this isn't a Best Of or anything like that, just a solid list of good books.

The Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Opposites by Sandra Boynton

A Kitten's Year by Nancy Raines Day and Anne Mortimer

Monday is One Day by Author A. Levine and Julian Hector

Today is Monday by Eric Carle

How Many Mice? by Michael Garland

Raindrop, Plop! by Wendy Cheyette Lewison and Pamela Paparone

Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang

Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak

What About You?

Have you written a familiar sequence book? Tell us about it! If you're thinking of writing one, share that too. Write below, let me know - or, as ever, send me an email.

Keep creating, no matter what.

This entry is part of the series

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