



Kerr-Kneale Productions Ltd (1968)

Storytime

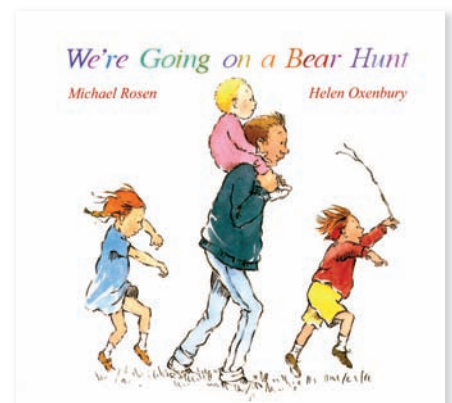


Picture books are an endless source of inspiration for early learning opportunities. **Alison Davies** begins a new series with three classics that can span the EYFS...

There's nothing quite like the joy of sharing a picture book. The vibrant images enhance the words and inspire children's imaginations. The pages are set out to catch the eye, with the perfect balance of narrative and design to stimulate the mind. The tales are cleverly written to appeal, with a mix of repetitive phrases and sing-song rhymes, and they're a great way to introduce new vocabulary. But there's a lot more to picture books than first meets the eye. They can be used as tools for learning, and as a springboard into creative activities that cover a wide range of learning and development aims. It doesn't matter what type of book you have - a basic board book, a classic tale, or something more modern - you can always give it a new twist and use it as the starting point for some creative fun.

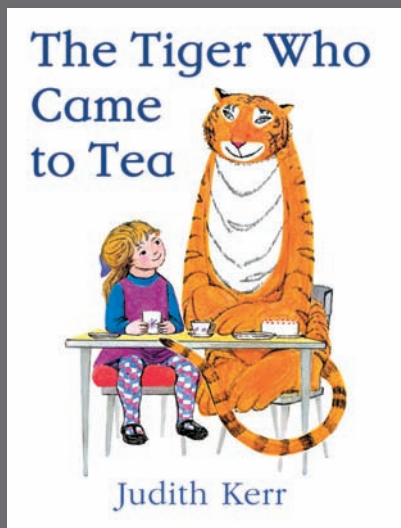
The classics

Some books are timeless. They stand out because they dare to be different or they conjure something special in our minds. These classic picture books are still popular today but we sometimes ignore them, choosing a more up to date option because we think that children might get more from it. These tales may appear dated in our eyes because they've been around for a long time, but there's a reason for that. So dig out your favourites and dust them down. Take a new approach and use your imagination. Before you know it, you'll have fallen in love with them all over again! Here are three to consider...



We're Going On a Bear Hunt
(Michael Rosen & Helen Oxenbury,
Walker Books)

First published in 1989, this adventure story is about a family going on a bear hunt. The clever use of language gives the book pace and provides the opportunity to explore interesting sounding words.



The Tiger Who Came to Tea
(Judith Kerr, HarperCollins Children's Books)

This delightful picture book about a tiger coming to tea and eating and drinking the house bare has a simple storyline that children and babies will love.

Tiger food fun (0-2 years)

At the end of the book Sophie goes shopping with her mum and buys a tin of tiger food. Ask the children what this might be made of, for example, ice cream, jelly, bananas, chocolate, biscuits. Then make

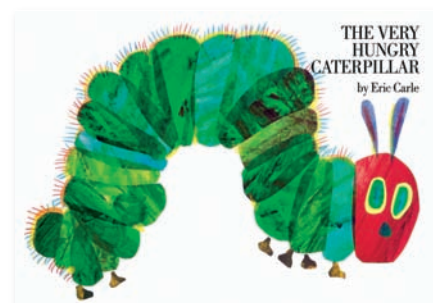
up a rhyme and keep adding ingredients. So you might say "Tiger food is very sweet, it's made of all the things they eat". Then list the ingredients, each time adding something new. Finally, get the children to pretend that they're stirring all the ingredients together in a giant bowl. So you might say, "We stir to the right, three times... one, two, three. We stir to the left three times... one, two, three. We stir in the middle three times... one, two, three. Then we clap our hands three times... one, two, three! And the tiger food is ready for his tea!"

Stars and stripes (2-3 years)

Trace some tiger shapes on paper and ask the children to decorate them. They can draw in stripes, or they might want to experiment with other patterns and shapes, like dots, zigzags or stars. Encourage them to use different colours and create their own magical tiger to stand out from the crowd!

Who's at the door? (4-5 years)

Ask the children who they'd like to invite to tea. Would they invite the tiger, and if not, why? Perhaps they'd choose a different animal or creature? What if they could invite another character from a picture book? Ask them to have a go at drawing their guest. Then go around the group using a simple rhyme that they can join in with, and encourage them to share their pictures. So you might say, "Knock, knock, knock. Who's at the door? One, two, three, let's open it and see!"



The Very Hungry Caterpillar
(Eric Carle, Puffin)

This tactile book (perfect for little fingers to explore) tells the story of a caterpillar munching his way through different foods, until he turns into a butterfly.

Caterpillar Trail (0-2 years)

Create a caterpillar trail with the space you have. Mark out the shape of a giant caterpillar on the floor and encourage the children to wriggle their way along it. When they reach the end of the trail, they transform into a beautiful butterfly and fly away. Put some music on and encourage them to dance like a butterfly on the wind!

Counting Shapes (2-3 years)

On paper cut out butterfly shapes and fold down the centre. Get the children to use finger paints and create a pretty pattern on one side, then fold the wings together so that the pattern is repeated on the other wing. Younger children will enjoy trying to colour in the butterfly shapes. Take various lengths of string and tape the butterflies to each one, and then hang them from the ceiling. Encourage the children to count out loud the number of butterflies on each string. Play around with the numbers by adding or removing butterflies.

Butterfly, flutterby! (4-5 years)

Have fun playing with the words 'butterfly' and 'caterpillar'. Think about the sounds and also the way the creatures move. So you might say, "Butterfly, flutterby, floaterby, fly!" or "Caterpillar, paterpillar, tapperpillar". Come up with actions to go with your nonsensical words, then repeat the rhymes and actions, speeding things up each time. Introduce other insects like spiders, ants, ladybirds and beetles, and come up with similar word-based rhymes.

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Muddy boots (0-2 years)

As you read the story encourage little ones to join in with some of the phrases. For example, as the family trail through the mud they make a noise 'squelch squerch!' Try to come up with other pairs of interesting words to describe the mud. So you might have 'splodge splatt' or 'split splot'. Encourage the children to think about the appearance of the mud, how it feels and how it smells. How would they move through it in their Wellington boots? Get the group up on their feet acting out each section, making noises and movements.

Teddy tea party (2-3 years)

The story finishes with the children hiding under the bed clothes and the bear outside. This might seem scary, but you can turn the situation around and ask the children to think about the bear and what he's feeling. Perhaps he's a friendly bear who wants to play with the children? Encourage them to come up with a new ending for the book.

What would happen if the children let the bear in? What type of games would they play? Perhaps they'd have a bear tea party. What would the bear eat?

Ask them to draw a picture to describe what happens next, or take it a step further and make the scenario real by having your own bear tea party. Get the children to bring in their teddy bears. Play 'bear' games such as pass the teddy bear. Each time the music stops, whoever gets the bear must make bear noises and actions.

Animal safari (4-5 years)

Create your own bear hunt. Hide teddy bears and/or pictures of bears around the room. Include other animals too. The children must find as many bears as they can. They can also collect the other animals for extra points. At the end of the game make a point of counting together the number of bears collected, and talking about the other animals - the type of noises they'd make, where they'd live, how they'd move.

find out more

Alison Davies is a creative practitioner and author. Her new book, *Festivals to Inspire and Engage Young Children: A Month-by-Month Guide*, published by Routledge, is available now. Her other titles include *Reading to your baby*, published by Carroll & Brown, and *Read me a story*, published by Bloomsbury.