

REALBOOK NEWS

for adults helping children
learn English as a foreign language

REALBOOK NEWS

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REALBOOK NEWS

now in its second issue is published twice a year in **May** and **November**.

REALBOOK NEWS

is a resource of information for parents, teachers, teacher trainers and administrators interested in introducing **REAL picture BOOKS** to **children learning English as their first or second foreign language.**

REAL picture BOOKS are written for children's enjoyment and enrichment with no specific language teaching aim. The language that accompanies the pictures is authentic to native English speaking children. **REAL picture BOOKS** reflect the culture of their authors, artists or photographers. Many stretch naturally across the curriculum. They can be used to introduce new language and ideas or to consolidate language introducing a new aspect and giving rise to creative ideas and activities.

REALBOOKS leave life-long impressions; they are what reading is really about. They give enjoyment and often fun, too!

REALBOOK NEWS includes:

- An editorial and a feature article
- lists of suitable and newly published Story Picture and Information Books
- information on how to use **REALBOOKS** based on experience

To obtain REALBOOK NEWS

Simply view or download issues from our website on www.realbooks.co.uk

If you do not have internet access add your name to the mailing list by contacting the Editor, Opal Dunn, at the above address. Copies are distributed free of charge.

Response to REALBOOK NEWS continues to be enthusiastic -

'it's practical'

'the information is straight forward and just what I need'

'the ideas for follow-up are creative - my children loved making the puppet show'.

After my lecture for MELTA in Munich, Germany in March an experienced teacher of young learners came up to me and said **'I had never thought of using REALBOOKs as part of my lesson. The way you read Colin West's 'Have you seen the crocodile?'** made me feel **I must have a go with my kids.'**

To get information about **REALBOOKs** to more parents and teachers working with young learners of English as a foreign or additional language

REALBOOKs now has its own **WEBSITE**

<http://www.realbooks.co.uk>

The site features:

- suitable **REALBOOKs** for beginners
- collecting **REALBOOKs**
- using **REALBOOKs**
- issues of **REALBOOK NEWS**

DOWNLOAD any material you want so that you can browse through it at leisure. Why not use it as material for workshops on using **REALBOOKs** as part of the curriculum in your school.

Issue 3 has divided into 2 - The version for people working with young learners of English and the version for people working with young learners of French.

Availability of suitable **REALBOOKs** still remains a problem.

I am at present working on making some **START-up-PACKS** for parents and teachers wanting to begin using **REALBOOKs**. More about that in **Issue 4 November 1998**.

SELECTING REALBOOKS. - *a skilled task?*

In the beginning stages of learning English young foreign learners need to understand the language in REAL picture BOOKS. Although they may gain a great deal of satisfaction from the pictures, if they do not understand, and cannot eventually use, some of the language in the text, they may give up saying 'English is too difficult.' Success is vital in the early stages of learning as it motivates.

Success depends on REALBOOKS having the right text for the language learning level of the children. Books I select for beginners have short texts usually in spoken form. Many texts repeat language naturally throughout the story. After several exposures to these refrains children pick them as blocks of 'prefabricated' language. 'Where's the ...' 'Have you seen.....?' 'I'm sorry. I'm busy.' These chunks of language often take them beyond the set curriculum content, but, if it is natural spoken language, you can find ways of using them within the lesson.

Many children's Picture Books are naturally cross-curricular. For example count all the activities in **The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle.**

- natural history - the life cycle - egg, caterpillar, cocoon and butterfly
day and night - the moon/ the sun
a plant - a leaf
- plurals and classifiers for food
- colours
- days of the week

A word of warning; don't be tempted to introduce this book too early in your programme. For many children just beginning English there is too much in this book - for some there are new concepts as well as new language to go with them. The cute story with bold illustrations and ingenious cut-outs keep them happy. But for many children this is not sufficient; they worry because they can't use all the language. Some switch off and don't try to understand more than they get from the pictures. If these children had started off with stories containing less text and fewer concepts, they would easily pick up the language. This would give them confidence as well as expectations that they were going to understand REALBOOKS and eventually read them.

It is important to try and match the language content of REALBOOKS to the language learning level of children. For this reason I classify books for beginners into 3 sections.

Beginners 1a Post Beginners 1b Early Readers 2

A story is successful when children gradually begin to complete the end of sentences or phrases themselves - filling up the pauses you leave as you read aloud. This leads on to them picking-up all the language of the story. If the story is right for their developmental level, you'll find they soon know it off by heart - something that doesn't happen so easily with language in the text book unless it is a song or rhyme.

SONG Picture BOOKS - a quick way to pick up and enjoy English?

Most of us sing at home or at school with our children and they soon pick up the words. Often without realising it they move from completing lines of songs to singing a line by themselves and then the whole song. Like rhymes, it is a quick way to pick up a lot of English and have fun at the same time.

However it is difficult for children to transpose sung language to spoken language. Apart from using a different part of the voice sometimes the patterns of language have been distorted to fit the music. I always remember a child who just couldn't make the change to spoken 'How are you today?', The link between the tune and words were so strong she just couldn't separate them.

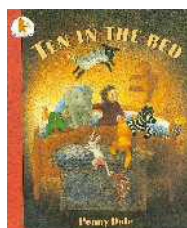
The following **SONG Picture BOOKS** might help children get used to transposing songs to spoken language.

Once they know the songs they will be able to read the books quite easily but still present them carefully as the pictures are full of extra experiences.

For Beginners 1a and Post Beginners 1b

Ten-in-the-bed Penny Dale

Walker Books ISBN 0-7445-1340-5 £4.99



This is the song we all know and may be you have already sung it with actions like:

10 fingers up to - *There were ten in the bed*

One little finger up - *And the little one said*

Both hands together rolling over twice - *Roll over. Roll over. So they all rolled over*

Holding up one finger that falls out - *And one fell out*

Next verse you hold up 9 fingers as now - *There were 9 in the bed. And the little one said, Roll over. Roll over. So they all rolled and one fell out.....*

The language is simple to understand and children love the actions which give them a chance to let off a little steam - especially the boys! Once they know the song introduce them to the book. The ten in the bed are rather different. Who are they? And as they fall out they all make a different sound

Hedgehog went	BUMP
Zebra	OUCH
Ted	THUMP
Croc	THUD

Bear SLAM and so on until *There was one in the bed and the little one said, 'I'm cold and I miss you.'* So what happened?

You may find it easier to present half the song in the book introducing 5 animals and their noises saving the rest for a second presentation. Of course it would be easier if they already knew the names of all or most of the animals that were in the bed.

Ten out of bed Penny Dale
Walker ISBN 0-7445-4383-5 £4.99

A follow on from **Ten-in-the-bed**.
Same song, same characters in the lively illustrations that match the imaginative activities different for each verse.

*There were tree out of bed
and the little one said,
'Let's play.'
And Zebra said, 'Let's play **camping**.'*

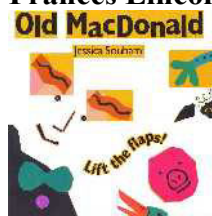
*So three played camping
until Zebra fell asleep.*

Other verses introduce, *Let's play **flying, seashores, monsters, theatres etc***
Each spread is so richly illustrated that there is a lot to talk about. For this reason it may be better to introduce spreads one by one until towards the end of the story, which is different from the song.

The Usborne CHILDREN'S SONGBOOK
Usborne ISBN 0-7460-2982-9 £8.99

For those of you wanting the music to **Ten-in-the-bed** or **Ten out of bed** see page 10 in the **Usborne CHILDREN'S SONGBOOK**. This collection of 35 well-known songs includes music for piano, keyboard, recorder, flute, violin and guitar. A useful reference books for school staff-room libraries or for sing-alongs at home.

Old MacDonald Jessica Souhami Level 1a
Frances Lincoln ISBN-0-7112-1086-1 £4.99

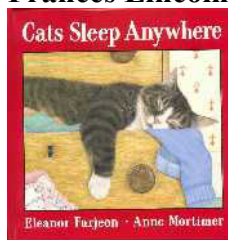


A novelty book based on the song Old MacDonald.
All the words remain more or less faithful to the original except for one big surprise. The bold colourful illustrations with further visual surprises under the flaps present the song in a more

contemporary way that should fire children's imagination. You and the children will see a modern OLD MACDONALD who rides a plane and whose pig rides in a baby's pram. One class made their own illustrated list of animals on a farm and each child drew one of them riding in a vehicle After reading this book several times, children seemed to have plenty of their own ideas. It gave me a chance to find out how they were thinking and give them some language of their own as I talked with each one of them about their pictures.

Music for **OLD MacDonald** can be found in the **Usborne CHILDREN's SONGBOOK** on page 14

**Cats Sleep Anywhere Eleanor Farjeon Ill Anne Mortimer Level 1b
Frances Lincoln ISBN 0-7112-1073-X £8.99**



Eleanor Farjeon's famous poem has been sensitively illustrated by Anne Mortimer. Spread by spread detailed illustrations introduce you to different cats sleeping all over the place.

**Cats sleep anywhere,
Any table,
Any chair,
Top of piano,
Window ledge,
In the middle,
On the edge,
Open drawer,
Empty shoe,
Anybody's lap will do,
Fitted in a cardboard box,
In the cupboard
With your frocks.....**

Each illustration is full of cultural content, many with humour that endears anyone, child or adult, to each contented pussy-cat. The short rhyming phrases are quickly picked up. It is ideal for choral speaking - a forgotten art which children love. A class I worked with soon substituted dogs for the cats and although it didn't work quite so well, they were pleased. It also helped us to find out who had a pet at home. One child made her own book using photos of her pet hamster around which she drew the background to fit the words of the poem.

This poem soon becomes part of children's bank of language which they know by heart. Like some Nursery Rhymes, it is likely to remain in deep memory for life, How many of us learned it as a child and can still say it more or less perfectly.

Is Anyone Home? Ron Maris Level 1a
Picture Puffins ISBN 0-14-050643-8 £4.99

The story of a little boy who goes to find his Grandpa and his Grandma with his friend, his black and white dog. Delicate detailed illustrations take us through the garden opening doors (half pages) to see who is behind them.

I know who lives here. Open the door. **Hello, silly hens.**
I know who's behind this door. Open the door. **Hello, cats.**
Who is in the workshop? Open the door. **Hello, Grandpa.**

Finally the boy and his dog reach the door to the house.

Is anyone home? Open the door. **Hello, Grandma.**

The final page shows animals he has met in the garden together with him and his dog in Grandma's kitchen.

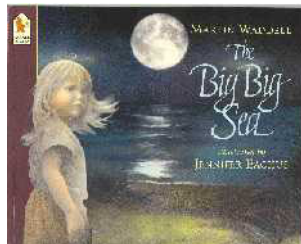
We've all come to see you.

There is useful language for transfer in this story like *Here we are/I know /We can go right in/Who is in /I know whose this is/*

Some of it can be used as a base to which other language can be added. *Is anyone home?/Is anyone there?/Is anyone here?*

The pictures are culturally based. which makes their content interesting and even different for some children. Children I worked with brought in photos of their Grandpa and Grandma to show me how different they looked from the ones in the story. Some made cards for them saying *Hello Grandpa* and *Hello Grandma* writing inside *I've come to see you* drawing a picture of themselves.

The Big Big Sea Martin Waddell Ill Jennifer Eachus Level 2
Walker ISBN 0-7445-4723-7 £4.99



A memorable experience for anyone of any age who reads this moving, simply told story.

Mum said, 'Let's go!'
So we went

A mother and her daughter go for
a magical moonlight walk to the sea shore.

**And I ran and Mum ran.
We ran and we ran
straight through the puddles
and out to the sea.**

The exquisite, sensitive art work touches the senses so much that you can hear the waves, see the moonlight and even feel the sand in your toes. At the end of the adventure mother and daughter snuggle up together in front of their fire at home eating hot buttered toast. An experience to which most children and parents can relate.

**I'll always remember
just Mum and me
and the night that we walked
by the big big sea.**

For me this is a picture book that **I will always remember**. It's like a dream experience. Each time I read it to children, I am taken on the walk..... I hope I manage to take the children with me for it's about a quality of life not found in Theme Parks.