

Wordless Books



At Chestnut Lane we are fortunate enough to have a large selection of wordless books. Wordless books do not have words, instead they have pictures to help you tell the story.

Wordless books are fantastic for the development of **imagination**, **language**, **expression**, **narratives** and much more.

Wordless books are also very **flexible**.

You might choose to focus on **one page** of the book and discuss everything that is happening on that page.

You might choose to focus on **one character** and what they do throughout the story.

You might choose to just look at the **setting** in the story before reading.

There is **no one right way** to read a wordless book.



How do you read a book without words?

Look at the pictures

Describe what you can see in the picture. Who is there? Where are they? What are they doing?
Interpret the pictures in your own way.

Imagination and Descriptive Language

“The beautiful red butterfly floated down!”

“The old man frowned with his bushy eyebrows.”

“The boys gasped as they saw the ginormous castle with guards everywhere.”

Storytelling Language

“Once upon a time in a far off land...”

“He said ‘Stop doing that!’”

“But! Shhhh. She stopped and listened very carefully!”

Make it up!

The reader gets to choose what story they tell. The child might make up a back story for the characters, or might give the story a different ending!





Questions are Key



prediction

having a guess

interpreting front page
and title

developing ideas

“What do you think will happen in the story?”

“Who do you think this story will be about?”

adding dialogue

develop empathy

expression

“What do you think [the character] is saying? How are they feeling?”

“What might happen next?”

“Why did...?” (reasons for a character’s actions)

reasoning skills

“Have you ever...?”

linking to own experiences

using own words

developing characters

summarising

“What happened in the story we just read?”

“Can you tell me your favourite part of the story?”

“How could the story have ended differently?”

extending vocabulary

giving opinions

develop patterns of language

language skills

Below is an example of an adult reading a wordless book with a child.

Questioning is a key part of reading wordless books with children, particularly if they are not confident with freely using storytelling language.



prompting the child with a simple question

Adult: What has happened in the story?

Child: The chalk drawings came to life! The butterflies are flying up into the sky.

interpreting information from picture

extending child's thinking

Adult: Wow! How do you think that happened?

Child: I don't know...maybe magic!

child using their imagination

Adult: It must be magic! That's a great idea. How do you think the children are feeling?

praising child and reminding them that there is no wrong answer

child has made up names for characters and interpreting facial expressions

Child: The boy.... Jack is watching the butterflies fly and are looking at where they are going and he is feeling really happy. Those girls.... Emma and Wendy are so excited because what they drew on the floor have come to life! At the weekend me and my sister drew chalk pictures on the pavement. But they didn't come to life.

child linking to own life experiences



Here is an example of reading a wordless book with a child who is more confident with the language. In this story telling the adult is a scaffold to extend the child's thinking.

child using storytelling language

<i>Child:</i> Once upon a time there was a little girl who opened a magic red door and walked into a forest. She looked all around her and saw the pretty lights in the trees.
<i>Adult:</i> Have you ever seen anything like that?
<i>Child:</i> No! Not in a forest. But it kind of looks like Christmas lights!
<i>Adult:</i> It does, doesn't it! What do you think the girl is going to do?
<i>Child:</i> She is going to go and explore and she's going to meet a new friend.
<i>Adult:</i> Who will this friend be?
<i>Child:</i> Well...it will be a wolf but it won't really be her friend because it's a bad wolf. A big bad wolf and he's going to try and trick her into doing something naughty but she won't do it because she will realise that he's bad and not good.

adult linking to child's experiences to extend thinking

reminding child there is no wrong answer

prompting and extending thinking

child links to something they've seen

question to encourage prediction

child predicting

child doesn't know what will happen in story but uses knowledge of other stories to influence telling

