

# An Overview of Children's Story Book Illustration

Aman Uniyal<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Mandakini<sup>2</sup>, Antima Chamoli<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student, Department of Visual Arts, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Visual Arts, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun

<sup>3</sup>Humanities & Social Sciences, Graphic Era Deemed to be University, Dehradun

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## ABSTRACT

The focus of this research revolves around story books for children and the illustrations present in them. The different story books aimed at different age groups of children were studied, and the relationship between text and illustrations in these books was discovered to be different for different age groups. The evolution of storybooks for children throughout history was also studied to find out the changes that happened in illustration styles and texts. The new interactive type of storybook and its role in the overall development of children were also uncovered. The study closely observe the linkage of visual narratives and the pictorial approach towards the understanding of a subject with fun and entertainment. As the visual elements are the key to develop interest among onlookers and targeted audience. The image and illustrated forms give a way to channelize the imagination with a perception of reality. Thus some of illustrations have been discussed in this study with a through understating of visual content.

## Keywords:

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## INTRODUCTION

Art is a very important part of the life of any growing child simply because of the positive effects it can have on a child's mind, especially in the area of learning. Therefore art elements are an abundant part of their everyday life, from toys to books, Parent's make sure that their child is performing some kind of art-related activity while growing up. Children's story books are filled with drawings and illustrations to help them learn and understand better. They engage a child's attention and imagination while telling them a story narrated by their guardians. These story books for children have a market of their own and they would be incomplete without their pictures. The visuals have a different kind of impact on the minds of children as they usually pay more attention on the illustrated images than the content. Even the content gives a kind of remembrance to them about the subject. They memorize and open up through their imagination which can also help in the enhancement of creativity. This study is based on a thorough review of all such images and also based on some experiences through designing the illustrations for books.

## The Impact of Illustrations on the Minds of Children

If we question a child about art, they would typically respond that creating art is simply enjoyable or

something they do for joy. Kids are natural scribblers; they can scribble on any surface they choose with any pencil, crayon, or other marking implement. They frequently use smooth, plain walls instead of paper as their canvas for their works of art. But what good are all these illogical lines doing for a kid? These lines are assisting the child in developing their fine motor skills, which will improve their hand-eye coordination and allow them to accomplish more difficult and correct movements, such as writing legibly, in the future.

Additionally, they will grow and change the more they engage in artistic pursuits. Additionally, creativity and problem-solving skills are believed to be improved by art. Therefore, engaging in art-related activities is crucial to a child's healthy upbringing. Children are inspired to use their imaginations when given a novel project concept, but it also strengthens their ability to reason logically. Children can develop their creative thinking through painting, work through artistic challenges and mistakes, and have fun while learning. Art is a fantastic instrument for this. Also encouraging self-expression is art. It serves as a means by which kids can express feelings or experiences that they cannot vocally express. And they will grow more as they engage in artistic pursuits. It's also recognized that creativity and problem-solving skills are enhanced by the arts. Therefore, activities including art are crucial to a child's healthy upbringing. A creative idea for an art project encourages kids to engage their imaginations while also strengthening their ability to reason. Children can produce fully original ideas with the use of art, and they can also use it to solve issues and learn from mistakes while having fun. Self-expression is also encouraged through art. It is a means by which kids express feelings or experiences that they are unable to express vocally.

### **Evolution in Children's Literature through Visualization**

There was a time when the stories that children knew were told to them by their adults through the word of mouths. These stories were told to tell them about the world and its wonders and dangers. These stories were often cautionary tales about things that they were supposed to stay away from, like of dangerous wild animals and creatures. There were also stories taught them values and told them what to do and what not to do. Let's take a look in the history of children story book illustration. Children's literature grew from stories passed down orally from generation to generation. Irish folk tales can be traced back as early as 400 BCE, while the earliest written folk tales are arguably the Pachatantra, from India, which were written around 200 AD. The earliest version of Aesop's Fables appeared on papyrus scrolls around 400 AD (Master, 2012).

Children's chapbooks, which were generally folded rather than stitched together, were the first illustrated books for children. They typically had basic woodcut illustrations to accompany their content, which were either popular songs, folk stories, or religious passages.

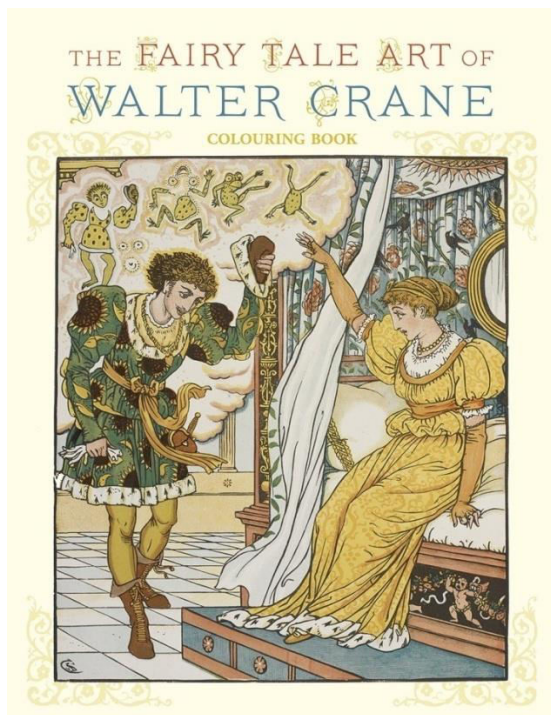
Meanwhile, the concept of childhood was changing during the 1600s. Children were viewed as unique creatures with their own needs and limitations, rather than as little adults. As a result, publishers throughout Europe began creating novels exclusively for children. Although various collections of fairy tales were published with varying degrees of success, the goals of these writings remained typically educational.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the tendency to illustrate children's books

prevailed, and children's literature rose in popularity.

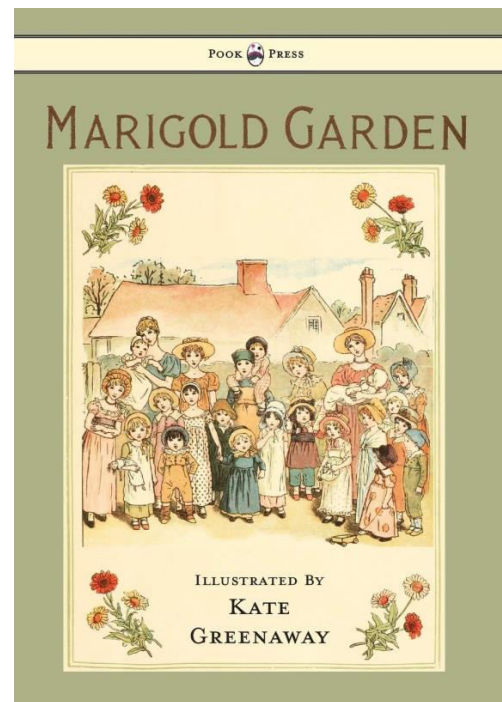
In the 1920s, books could be mass-produced in colour, and literacy became prevalent enough to make children's picture books a separate industry.

Illustrations for children's books typically enhance or explain the text, but in the late nineteenth century, three artistic giants, Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway, and Randolph Caldecott, gave illustrations a new dimension. They created a picture book with equal attention to interconnected text and illustration. Crane's nursery-song prints in *Baby's Bouquet* (1908) blend gentle colours with a strong structure. Greenaway's (1878) *Under the Window* is complemented by beautiful garden colours. Caldecott's nursery books from the 1870s and 1880s exhibited harmonious linear composition and warm colour (Encyclopedia, 2019).



*Fig.1 Book Cover Illustration by Walter Crane*

**Source:** <https://www.amazon.com/Fairy-Tale-Art-Walter-Crane/dp/0764981447>



*Fig.2 Book Cover Illustration by Kate Greenaway*

**Source:** <https://www.amazon.in/Marigold-Garden-Kate-Greenaway/dp/1447438043>

# WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE



## STORY AND PICTURES BY MAURICE SENDAK

*Fig.3 Book cover for "Where the wild things are"*

**Source:** [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/19543.Where\\_the\\_Wild\\_Things\\_Are](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/19543.Where_the_Wild_Things_Are)

Several rarely used processes were introduced throughout the 1960s, and colour printing was much improved. Fantastic imagery blossomed when drawing was liberated from the limits of realistic representation. Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" (1963), presented a strange and dangerous world of make-believe monsters, this was a landmark among illustrated books of the 1960s.

A new type of picture book arose in the mid-1960s, with the images dominating the narrative. Consider Ben Montresor's Cinderella illustrations (1965). Children's book illustration had evolved into an aesthetic feast of extraordinary diversity and richness by the 1970s, expressing a particularly inventive range of individual ingenuity. The 1980s and 1990s also produced a number of outstanding illustrators (Encyclopedia, 2019).

These days, story books are targeted at different age groups of children and have different styles for each age group. For older children, the books have fewer pictures and more written content, and for younger children, the books are more picture-dependent, meaning they contain more pictures and less text. The style of illustrations also differs with the age group; as kids grow, they like more refined illustrations. Some story books aimed at children belonging to the age group 3-6 years have evolved beyond just text and pictures and can also have interactive sounds integrated into the book itself.

Story books are very important for kids, parents should introduce their children to story books early on as they are a very important part in their development. They capture a child's attention and helps them discover new things and experiences. It makes them wonder, and process new information in a fun and simplified manner which has been made especially for them to understand. These books are tailored for the kids to understand and hence have a simplified version of everything without diverting their attention with any complications and are kept short and easy to read. Reading storybooks is a very rewarding learning and bonding activity that parents can do with their children. In this process children can also learn new words and their meanings that they will add to their vocabulary. With the right type of storybook, a child can also learn about moral values and the general understanding of right and wrong. A child can understand the concept of a dragon and a knight with a storybook and with pictures, they can also see them. The illustration in children's story books are there to captivate their attention, while at the same time inform them about how they look. As children grow up, the complexity of their story books grow with them. Younger children have shorter storybooks with just some sentences telling the whole story with the help of large pictures showing them the visual information related to the text, but as they grow a little older, the number of sentences per story increases, and books tend to become more text focused. The art becomes more defined with more details, unlike the ones which are playfully colored for younger children. All this change is because of the growing ability of a growing child to understand and learn more complex things due to increased comprehensibility.

Children may require more than just symbolic understanding to successfully communicate complicated knowledge and ideas. Children must recall specifics about the animal's appearance and activate a representation of the species in the book in order to accurately apply the label to the real-world animal while learning fundamental information like the name of a novel animal from a picture book. Children must also be able to understand the abstract aspects of the illustrated example and apply these to new situations in order to transmit more complicated concepts, such as the ability of animals (generally) to employ colour camouflage to hide from predators. Children must be able to understand the abstract relational structure between the two domains in order to transfer conceptual information from one domain to another—in this case, from the picture book to the real world (Strouse, Nyhout, Ganea, 2018).

After going through a bunch of story books made for kids, certain similarities came up in how the pictures and covers were illustrated. Most books had cartoonish, simplified, rounded and organic characters colored with crayons or grainy texture. The artists had made use of shape language to depict different characters with different personalities. Main characters are mainly depicted with circular shapes and features as circular shapes make the character look soft and friendly. Antagonists or evil characters are drawn using more pointy shapes like triangles and they make the character look sinister. Bigger, stronger, and bulky characters are made using squares. Colour Theory is also utilized in a smart way to show relationships between characters. For example, friends are shown with colours that lie close to each other on the colour wheel and antagonists can have complimentary colours to that of the protagonist. Different colours are also used to show different personalities of characters.

Some of the storybooks aimed at young children have fun, interactive elements in them. In such

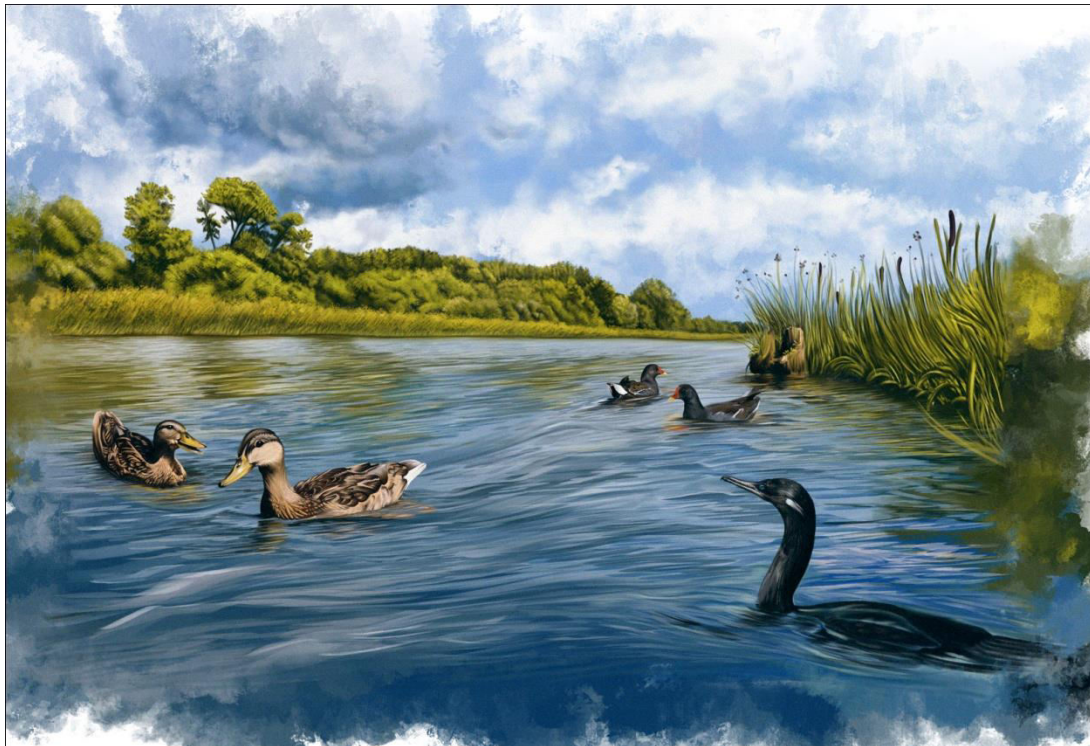
books, elements like a ribbon bookmark are combined with the already existing illustrations present in the book to solve problems needed to advance the story. For example, one such book is *Hungry Bunny* by Claudia Rueda. This book is about a hungry bunny and its quest for acquiring food. On its way the bunny faces some challenges and politely asks for help from the reader. Such books help kids develop problem-solving abilities and enhance their creativity, while at the same time having a fun learning experience.



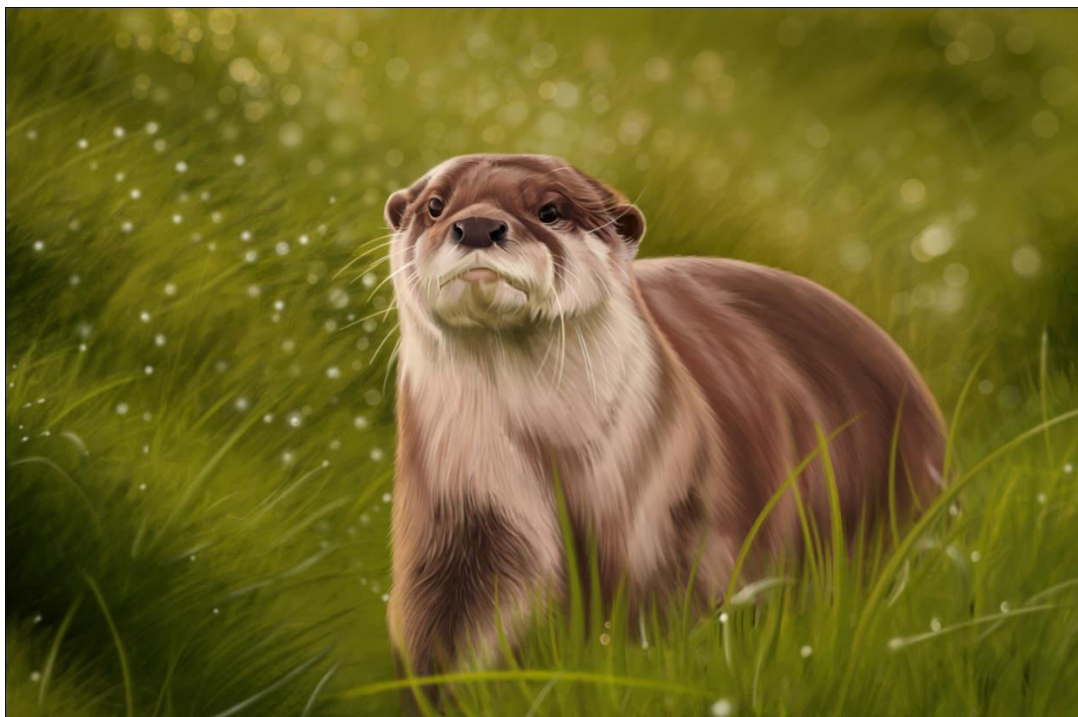
***Fig.4 A page from the Hungry Bunny***

**Source :** <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/37975398-hungry-bunny>

Educational picture books are also very popular among people of all ages as they help them discover new things that they were unaware of. These picturebooks provide people with knowledge and visuals related to the subject. Below are pictures from one such picture book that I had the privilege of working on I had the privilege of working on a children's educational story book which would teach them about the wildlife present around the Ganges River, especially birds and aquatic species. The purpose of the book was to make them aware of species and the river too. Today's generation takes their surroundings for granted and are not aware of the environment, especially the river and the aquatic species. This book will hopefully make them more aware and more responsible towards aquatic species and rivers in general.



*Fig.5 Bird Illustration, created by author for an upcoming story book*



*Fig.6 Otter Illustration, created by author for an upcoming story book*

The projects which we have gone through with the writer, are focusing the one particular things how

we can make the image interesting and attractive for the children. Additionally, it should go with the story line. The cute and funny faces usually created with notable gestures so that the fear can be transformed into amusement. Likewise the animated movie characters and mascots the form of birds and animals have been turned with a touch of aesthetics to generate the appropriate feelings towards the content but with the help of illustrations.

## Conclusion

Stories have always been a very central part of children's life. They have evolved into the bright, vibrant, illustrious books that we know today. They help young kids learn new experiences, concepts and values. The illustrations inside them help kids comprehend what is written with just one simple look. Illustrations act as a supportive element in most books by increasing the understanding of the texts. Illustrations used in children's storybooks also have different styles as per the targeted age groups. Younger kids are presented simpler illustrations and as they grow their taste changes towards more detailed illustrations with stronger art fundamentals. The artists make smart use of shape and colour theory to represent characters and environment and to bring out certain emotions as per the requirements. It is a great addition in the enhancement of their creative and imaginative skills too. The visual and narrative become a unique combination of learning as where words ends up, images creates understanding in multiple ways. They also develop curiosity because the image of an imagined things through animated approaches can create larger impact. They learn through entertainment and that is major purpose of such illustrations.

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