

TWiTCH

Talk With
Tales For
Children

How to plan for TWiTCH using different books

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TWiTCH

Talk With Tales for Children

One-page
summary

Using picture books to have good conversations with children.

Watch this video for an overview: [TWiTCH In Action](#)

- Tune in (listen carefully) to what children say.
- Show genuine interest (giving attention to the child).
- Invite children to say more (elaborate on their ideas). *Tell us a bit more about that.*
- Give children time to respond.

**I model
language!**



WEEK 1: Enjoy reading the story every day, and ask:

Monday	<i>What can you see on this page?</i>
Tuesday	<i>Who is in the story?</i>
Wednesday	<i>What happened first? Then...? At the end?</i>
Thursday	<i>What is your favourite part of the story?</i>
Friday	At the end of the story, ask: <i>And then what happened? Or, What do you think _____ did next?</i>

WEEK 2: Developing thinking and language (do at least 3 sessions)

Thinking games – for example:

Good/bad: *Would it be good or bad to eat someone else's porridge? Good, because you're really hungry! Bad, because it's not yours!*

Would you rather...?: *Would you rather sleep in a big bed or a small bed? (Goldilocks) Would you rather be a goat or a troll? (Billy Goats Gruff)*

Think about characters using one key focus word:

e.g. kind, naughty, brave, sensible, clever, cheeky

Was the hare kind?

Was Goldilocks brave?

Was Jack naughty?

There isn't a single correct answer – encourage children to give reasons.

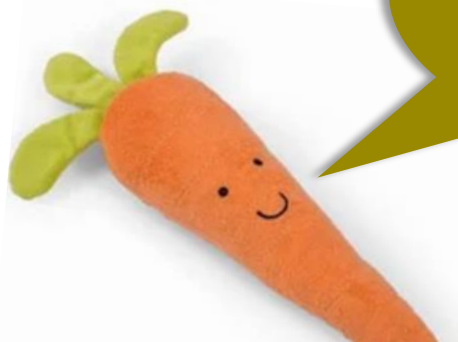
Use Rabbit to model language.

Re-read the story as many times as you want to.

WEEK 3: Bring the story into provision

And repeat some activities with focus children.

**I'm passed
around to help
with turn-taking!**



KEY QUESTIONS WHEN SELECTING A PICTURE BOOK

Language

- ★ Does the book expose children to rich, varied vocabulary?
- ★ Does it include repetition or rhythm?
- ★ Are there opportunities for children to join in (e.g. repeated phrases or rhymes)?
- ★ Are the sentence structures clear and age-appropriate, while still offering a challenge?

Thinking skills

- ★ Does the story prompt thinking, predicting or problem-solving?
- ★ Does the book present choices and consequences?
- ★ Might the children relate the story to their own experiences or feelings?
- ★ Are there opportunities for discussion about kindness, fairness, friendship or other big ideas?

Practical considerations

- ★ Is the length suitable? (i.e. not too long)
- ★ Is the book inclusive in terms of representation (e.g. ethnicity, gender)?
- ★ Does it reflect children's lives — or introduce them to something new in a safe way?

BIG IDEAS

Focus in on one big idea for each book that you choose. For example,

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| ★ Kindness | ★ Patience | ★ Trust |
| ★ Friendship | ★ Respect | ★ Belonging |
| ★ Sharing | ★ Caring | ★ Change |
| ★ Honesty | ★ Helpfulness | ★ Family |
| ★ Bravery | ★ Forgiveness | ★ Feelings |
| ★ Love | ★ Courage | ★ Choices |
| ★ Fairness | ★ Generosity | |

EXAMPLE PICTURE BOOKS & BIG IDEAS

Sometimes it's worth thinking about the big idea that you want to focus on and then choose a relevant book. There are hundreds of picture books and it's up to you which ones you choose. Here are a few examples to give you a flavour. Make sure you read them carefully and decide if they're appropriate for your context:

Kindness

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? – Carol McCloud
Kind – Alison Green & Axel Scheffler
The Smartest Giant in Town – Julia Donaldson
The Boy with Flowers in His Hair – Jarvis

Belonging

Something Else – Kathryn Cave
The Ugly Duckling

Caring

The Invisible String – Patrice Karst
Owl Babies – Martin Waddell
Bear Feels Sick – Karma Wilson
While We Can't Hug – Eoin McLaughlin
The Elves and the Shoemaker

Respect

Do Unto Otters – Laurie Keller
The Golden Rule – Ilene Cooper
Rude Cakes – Rowboat Watkins
How Do Dinosaurs Show Good Manners? – Jane Yolen
The Ugly Duckling

Honesty

David Gets in Trouble – David Shannon

Sharing

The Rainbow Fish – Marcus Pfister

Bravery

Jabari Jumps – Gaia Cornwall
The Koala Who Could – Rachel Bright

Family

Owl Babies – Martin Waddell
Alfie Gets in First – Shirley Hughes

Choices

Maybe... – Chris Haughton
What Should Danny Do? – Adir & Ganit Levy
You Choose – Pippa Goodhart
Not Now, Bernard – David McKee
Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Courage

When Dinosaurs Walked the Earth – Sean Taylor & Zehra Hicks
Max the Brave – Ed Vere
Scaredy Squirrel – Mélanie Watt
The Three Little Pigs

Fairness

It's Mine! – Leo Lionni
That's Not Fair! – Amy Krouse Rosenthal
One – Kathryn Otoshi
The Day the Crayons Quit – Drew Daywalt
Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Patience

Waiting – Kevin Henkes
Please, Mr. Panda – Steve Antony
Waiting Is Not Easy! – Mo Willems
Lola Plants a Garden – Anna McQuinn
The Little Red Hen
The Hare and the Tortoise

Change

The Tiny Seed – Eric Carle
Croc and Bird – Alexis Deacon
Seasons – Blexbolex
Little Tree – Loren Long

Helpfulness

The Little Red Hen
The Bear Who Shared – Catherine Rayner
I'm Helping! – Loryn Brantz
What If Everybody Did That? – Ellen Javernick

Feelings

The Colour Monster – Anna Llenas

Love

Guess How Much I Love You – Sam McBratney

Confidence

Big – Vashti Harrison

Empathy

The Rabbit listened – Corrie Doerrfeld

WEEK 2 THINKING GAMES: EXAMPLES FOR DIFFERENT STORIES

Good / Bad

Cinderella

Is it good or bad to wear glass slippers? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... they're sparkly!* or *Bad because... they might break!*)

Being kind even when others are not: good idea / bad idea?

Waiting for someone else to solve your problems: good idea / bad idea?

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Eating lots of food in one day: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... you get to taste lots of yummy things!* or *Bad because... you might get a tummy ache!*)

Changing into something new: good idea / bad idea?

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Being wild and loud sometimes: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... it's fun to play and be silly!* or *Bad because... it might scare other people.*)

Staying calm and quiet all the time: good idea / bad idea?

Handa's Surprise by Eileen Browne

Carrying a basket of fruit on your head: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... you can carry lots of fruit!* or *Bad because... it might fall off!*)

The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister

Sharing your shiny scales: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... sharing makes your friends feel happy!* or *Bad because... you might not have any scales left!*)

Sharing your favourite things: good idea / bad idea?

Keeping all your shiny things to yourself: good idea / bad idea?

The Princess and the Pea

Saying how you really feel: good idea / bad idea?

Pretending to be someone else: good idea / bad idea?

The Ugly Duckling

Being different from others: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... you get to be special!* or *Bad because... someone might be mean to you.*)

Being yourself, even if others don't understand: good idea / bad idea?

Trying to be like everyone else: good idea / bad idea?

Rapunzel

Having very long hair: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... you can have lots of hairstyles!* or *Bad because... it might get take ages to brush!*)

Exploring new places: good idea / bad idea?

Staying safe in one place: good idea / bad idea?

The Owl Babies by Martin Waddell

Waiting quietly for your family to come home: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... you stay safe.* or *Bad because... you might feel lonely.*)

Not Now, Bernard by David McKee

Asking for help when you feel scared: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... someone can make you feel better.* or *Bad because... it's good to be brave sometimes!*)

Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae

Trying to dance even if you're not very good: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... it's fun to try new things!* or *Bad because... you might fall over!*)

The Tiger Who Came to Tea by Judith Kerr

Having a surprise visitor for tea: good idea / bad idea? (Children / Rabbit might say: *Good because... it's exciting to make new friends!* or *Bad because... they might eat all your food!*)

***Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise**

Saying goodnight to everything before bed: good idea / bad idea?

Going to bed when you're not sleepy: good idea / bad idea?

The Three Little Pigs

Building a house quickly: good idea / bad idea?

Taking your time to build something strong: good idea / bad idea?

***Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson**

Always sharing your things with new friends: good idea / bad idea?

Not letting anyone join your group: good idea / bad idea?

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Telling stories that are not true: good idea / bad idea?

Always telling the truth: good idea / bad idea?

Sleeping Beauty

Taking a long nap: good idea / bad idea?

Staying awake all day and night: good idea / bad idea?

Hansel and Gretel

Leaving a trail to find your way: good idea / bad idea?

Going into a house that looks yummy: good idea / bad idea?

***We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen**

Going on an adventure even if it's a little scary: good idea / bad idea?

Staying inside where it's safe: good idea / bad idea?

Would you rather...?

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle**

Would you rather eat lots of yummy fruit or just one big leaf?

Would you rather be a tiny caterpillar or a beautiful butterfly?

***Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak**

Would you rather roar like a wild thing or dance like a wild thing?

Would you rather have a wild adventure or stay cozy at home?

Rapunzel

Would you rather have very long hair or a magic tower?

Would you rather live in a castle or in a forest?

Cinderella

Would you rather have a magic pumpkin carriage or a sparkly ball gown?

Would you rather go to a big party or stay home with your family?

The Hare and the Tortoise

Would you rather be fast like the hare or slow and steady like the tortoise?

***The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister**

Would you rather have shiny, sparkly scales or colourful, soft fins?

Would you rather share your toys or keep them all to yourself?

Hansel and Gretel

Would you rather find a gingerbread house or a forest made of sweets?

Would you rather leave a trail of stones or breadcrumbs?

Sleeping Beauty

Would you rather take a long nap or stay awake all day?

Would you rather meet a fairy godmother or a magical prince?

The Princess and the Pea

Would you rather sleep on lots of soft mattresses or just one comfy bed?

Would you rather be a princess or a knight?

Always / sometimes / never

Is it okay to take things from someone else's house?

(Jack and the Beanstalk)

Do animals in stories talk?

Do people keep their promises?

Do pigs / animals live in houses? (Three Little Pigs)

Agree / disagree

or Thumbs up / Thumbs down or Yes / No (and Why do you think that?)

Hansel and Gretel

It's okay to eat a house made of sweets.

The children were very clever.

Thumbelina

Being small can be special.

Animals can be good friends.

The Emperor's New Clothes

It's okay to say when something looks silly.

Fancy clothes are always the best.

The Gingerbread Man

The Gingerbread Man should have stayed at home.

Foxes are always tricky.

The Three Little Pigs

Straw is a good house-building material.

The wolf was just trying to make friends.

Fair / not fair

(What do you think? Was that fair or not fair? Why?)

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle**

The caterpillar ate lots of food that wasn't his. Fair or not fair?

***The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson**

The mouse tricked all the animals. Fair or not fair?

The Gruffalo wanted to eat the mouse. Fair or not fair?

***Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell**

The owl babies were left alone at night. Fair or not fair?

***Stick Man* by Julia Donaldson**

People kept taking Stick Man away from his family. Fair or not fair?

The ordering game

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle**

Put the foods he ate in order from healthiest to least healthy.

***We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen**

Put the places they go through in order from easiest to hardest to walk in.

Odd One Out

Three objects or pictures. *Which one is the odd one out?*

Why do you think so?

Could someone else have a different answer?

Encourage multiple possible answers — it's about reasoning, not just the 'right' one!

PLANNING EXAMPLE 1:

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

Big idea: **patience**

WEEK 1: Enjoy reading the story every day

Day 1: Overview of the story	Day 2: Characters	Day 3: Sequencing	Day 4: Listening to and enjoying the story	Day 5: Predicting
<p><i>What can you see on this page?</i></p> <p>Show the book cover. <i>I wonder what this story is about...</i></p> <p>Read the story aloud.</p> <p>Occasionally ask questions, for example <i>What is happening here?</i></p> <p>At the end: <i>What happened in the story? Who won the race?</i></p>	<p><i>Who is in the story?</i></p> <p>Talk about the hare and the tortoise. <i>What do they look like? How do they behave?</i></p> <p><i>What do you think about the hare? What about the tortoise?</i></p> <p>Re-read parts of the story or look closely at the pictures focusing on characters.</p>	<p><i>What happened first? Then...? At the end?</i></p> <p>Use pictures or props to help children put the story in order.</p> <p>Use retelling words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First...</i> • <i>Then...</i> • <i>Next...</i> • <i>Finally...</i> <p>Act out the race.</p>	<p><i>Which is your favourite part of the story?</i></p>	<p>Look at the end of the story:</p> <p><i>And then what happened?</i></p> <p>Or, <i>What do you think the hare did next?</i></p>

WEEK 2: Developing thinking and language

Day 1: Introduce <i>Would you rather...</i> ?	Day 2: Apply to the story	Day 3: Think about characters using one key focus word
<p>Start simple – ask a few of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would you rather eat an apple or an orange?</i> • <i>Would you rather eat a strawberry or a banana?</i> • <i>Would you rather play with a ball or a doll?</i> • <i>Would you rather jump or run?</i> • <i>Would you rather sing or dance?</i> • <i>Would you rather wear red or blue?</i> • <i>Would you rather have a dog or a cat?</i> • <i>Would you rather ride a car or a truck?</i> • <i>Would you rather sleep or play?</i> • <i>Would you rather be big or small?</i> <p>If you have time, read the story again.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Would you rather be fast like the hare or slow and steady like the tortoise?</i> • <i>Would you rather race a friend or race by yourself?</i> • <i>Would you rather take a nap during a race or keep running?</i> • <i>Would you rather win a race or have fun playing?</i> • <i>Would you rather be quiet and patient or loud and quick?</i> <p>Encourage children to explain their choices.</p> <p>Repeat answers: <i>Did you say...?</i></p> <p>Ask for reasons: <i>Why?</i></p> <p>If you have time, read the story again.</p>	<p>Was the tortoise patient? Was the hare patient?</p> <p>Note: There isn't a single correct answer – encourage children to give reasons. Use Rabbit to model ideas and language – for example:</p> <p>Was the tortoise patient?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes, the tortoise was patient because he kept going slowly and didn't get upset.</i> • <i>Yes, he waited and didn't rush.</i> • <i>Yes, he didn't hurry and kept trying.</i> • <i>Yes, he stayed calm and didn't give up.</i> • <i>Yes, he waited for his turn to win.</i> <p>Was the hare patient?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No, the hare was not patient because he ran fast and didn't wait.</i> • <i>No, he was in a hurry and didn't stay still.</i> • <i>No, he was not patient—he laughed and didn't take the race seriously.</i> • <i>No, he stopped and rested instead of finishing.</i> • <i>No, he wanted to win quickly and didn't wait his turn.</i>

WEEK 3: Bring the story into provision

Suggestions:

Small world play: Set up a play area with tortoise and hare toys or figures. Encourage children to retell the story using the toys.

Shared drawing/writing: Invite children to draw scenes or characters from the story and tell you about their ideas for you to write down.

Role play: Encourage children to act out the story in small groups, focusing on taking turns and using words and phrases from the story.

Retelling: Use picture cards or puppets to help children retell the story in their own words.

Movement game: Organise a simple race game to talk about being steady and patient versus being fast.

Also repeat some activities from Week 1 & 2 with focus children.

PLANNING EXAMPLE 2:

THE UGLY DUCKLING

Big idea: kindness

WEEK 1: Enjoy reading the story every day

Day 1: Overview of the story	Day 2: Characters	Day 3: Sequencing	Day 4: Listening to and enjoying the story	Day 5: Predicting
<p><i>What can you see on this page?</i></p> <p>Show the book cover. <i>I wonder what this story is about...</i></p> <p>Read the story aloud.</p> <p>Occasionally ask questions, for example - <i>What is happening here?</i></p> <p>At the end: <i>What happened in the story? What happened to the duckling?</i></p>	<p><i>Who is in the story?</i></p> <p>Talk about the animals. <i>What do they look like? How do they behave?</i></p> <p><i>Were they kind or unkind?</i></p> <p><i>How did the ugly duckling feel?</i></p> <p>Re-read parts of the story or look closely at the pictures focusing on characters.</p>	<p><i>What happened first? Then..? At the end?</i></p> <p>Use pictures or props to help children put the story in order.</p> <p>Use retelling words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First...</i> • <i>Then...</i> • <i>Next...</i> • <i>Finally...</i> <p>Act out the other ducklings being unkind.</p>	<p><i>Which is your favourite part of the story?</i></p>	<p>Look at the end of the story:</p> <p><i>And then what happened?</i></p> <p>Or, <i>What do you think happened after the duckling turned into a swan?</i></p>

WEEK 2: Developing thinking and language

Day 1: Introduce Agree/disagree?	Day 2: Apply to the story	Day 3: Think about characters using one key focus word
<p>Practise Agree/Disagree – thumbs up for 'agree' and thumbs down for 'disagree' (simplify to Yes/No if needed).</p> <p>Say some simple statements to the children and they practise putting thumbs up for Yes! (Agree) and thumbs down for No! (Disagree).</p> <p>Use props to support understanding.</p> <p>Example agree/disagree questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is a dog</i> [holding up toy dog or toy cat]. • <i>This is yellow</i> [holding up a yellow cube or a blue cube]. • <i>Cake is yummy / healthy.</i> • <i>Bananas are yummy / healthy.</i> • <i>A dog can fly.</i> • <i>We wear shoes on our feet.</i> • <i>Bananas are purple.</i> • <i>Fish live in the water.</i> • <i>It's nice to help a friend.</i> • <i>Ice cream is the best food.</i> • <i>Getting muddy is fun.</i> • <i>Loud noises are exciting.</i> • <i>It's fun to tidy up.</i> • <i>Broccoli is tasty.</i> • <i>Sharing is easy.</i> • <i>Rainy days are great.</i> • <i>Cats are better than dogs.</i> • <i>It's nice when it's very quiet.</i> <p>These statements are not related to the story but are simple and fun; children can practise choosing to agree/disagree and can sometimes give reasons.</p> <p>If you have time, read the story again.</p>	<p>Play Agree/Disagree again, but this time use some statements related to <i>The Ugly Duckling</i>, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's okay to laugh at someone who looks different.</i> • <i>Everyone should be kind to others.</i> • <i>The duckling was sad because others were mean.</i> • <i>The Ugly Duckling was ugly.</i> <p>Children respond with thumbs up/down or yes/no.</p> <p>Ask: <i>Why do you think that?</i></p> <p>Use Rabbit to model various reasons.</p> <p>If you have time, read the story again.</p>	<p>Choose one of these words to focus on: kind, brave, gentle.</p> <p>Ask: <i>Was the ugly duckling kind/brave/gentle? Why?</i></p> <p>If any of the children are struggling to give reasons, use Rabbit to model some. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He didn't hurt others, even when they were mean to him.</i> • <i>The other animals teased him, but he never hit or shouted.</i> • <i>He just wanted to find a place where he belonged.</i> • <i>He wasn't trying to cause trouble; he just wanted to be loved and safe.</i> • <i>When he became a swan, he didn't laugh at anyone.</i> • <i>Even though he was beautiful in the end, he stayed gentle and friendly.</i> <p>If you have time, read the story again.</p>

WEEK 3: Bring the story into provision

Suggestions:

Small world play

- Set up a pond scene with ducks, swans, other animals
- Include the book in the area
- Encourage children to retell the story through play

Shared drawing and writing

- Ask children to draw their favourite part or character
- Scribe their words or phrases about the story on large paper
- Prompt them to describe how the duckling felt at the beginning and the end

Water tray – sensory storytelling

- Add floating duck/swan toys to water tray
- Use this area to retell the story

Role play or puppet area

- Provide puppets or masks of the characters
- Encourage children to act out the story

Also repeat some activities from Week 1 & 2 with focus children.

PLANNING TEMPLATE

Big idea:

WEEK 1: Enjoy reading the story every day

Day 1: Overview of the story	Day 2: Characters	Day 3: Sequencing	Day 4: Listening to and enjoying the story	Day 5: Predicting
<p><i>What can you see on this page?</i></p> <p>Show the book cover. <i>I wonder what this story is about...</i></p> <p>Read the story aloud.</p> <p>Occasionally ask questions:</p> <p>At the end: <i>What happened in the story?</i></p>	<p><i>Who is in the story?</i></p> <p>Talk about the characters.</p> <p>Re-read parts of the story or look closely at the pictures focusing on characters.</p>	<p><i>What happened first? Then..? At the end?</i></p> <p>Use pictures or props to help children put the story in order.</p> <p>Use retelling words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First...</i> • <i>Then...</i> • <i>Next...</i> • <i>Finally...</i> 	<p><i>Which is your favourite part of the story?</i></p>	<p>Look at the end of the story:</p> <p><i>And then what might have happened?</i></p>

WEEK 2: Developing thinking and language

[illegible]

WEEK 3: Bring the story into provision

Activities:

Also repeat some activities from Week 1 & 2 with focus children.

Connect with us



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SCAN ME

FIND OUT
MORE



twitch@shu.ac.uk

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**
Knowledge Applied

