Picture storybooks for speech communications curriculum and extracurricular activities: An annotated bibliography

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High school speech instructors frequently use picture storybooks in their curriculum. Picture storybooks differ from illustrated storybooks and picture books because they are the only type of the three that includes a balanced union between text and illustrations. An observation made at a high school speech contest in Iowa was the impetus for the formation of a bibliography of picture storybooks suitable for speech contest work. The researcher located, read, annotated, and categorized books reviewed in The Horn Book Magazine between 1989 and 1992. Of the 497 books read, 363 formed a bibliography of picture storybooks divided among these categories: dramatic acting; humorous acting; poetry, dramatic; poetry, humorous; poetry, seriocomic; prose, dramatic; prose, humorous; prose, seriocomic; storytelling, dramatic; storytelling, humorous; and storytelling, seriocomic. The suitability of many titles for speech communications coursework was expected; the difficulty of locating the books was not.
Picture Storybooks for Speech Communications Curriculum and Extracurricular Activities: An Annotated Bibliography

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Division of Library Science

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Chapter 1
Introduction

As the United States nears the end of the twentieth century, it finds itself the only remaining superpower. However, its $4 trillion debt, declining economic base, trade deficit, urban unrest, racial divisions, health-care crisis, and decline in educational achievements have precluded any complacent self-congratulations about the victory of democracy over communism or other forms of totalitarianism. These internal problems have also forced the country to look inward at its crumbling infrastructure, at its ethics and morals, at its reliance upon the family as the backbone of the society, and at its institutions, especially public education.

Seeking a scapegoat, many inside and outside the public school system have placed much of the blame concerning America's ills onto the schools. They argue that American schools have yielded a generation of young people who cannot compete in a global marketplace, do not possess the thinking or technical skills to find employment, and fail to hold the interpersonal skills to succeed in personal or professional relationships. During much of the 1980s, the criticisms were myriad. The most noteworthy was A Nation at Risk, produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). Warranted or not, such reports focused on education as an instrument of societal change.

In response, educators have worked feverishly to raise educational standards and scores, to infuse new models of teaching, and to salvage professional prestige. Within the last decade, these educators have experimented with school restructuring, shared decision-making, new technologies, whole-language
programs, mastery teaching, mastery learning, critical thinking skills, cooperative learning, outcomes-based education, and a host of related programs and novel changes. Such innovations have raised an awareness about renewal and flexibility within educational programs. As the country faces a new century and a new millennium, educators are poised to meet the era with a far-reaching vision.

Within schools, educational demands have also led to a restructuring of library media programs. Once a warehouse of books, school libraries—now library media centers—include computer programs, CD-ROM and CD-I technologies, laser disks, online computer searching and media production. The school librarian is now a library media specialist; and library skills instruction no longer means only teaching how to use the card catalog, but also informing students how to do information searches and to construct statements incorporating Boolean logic. Even traditional formats within a school library media center have changed. Magazines are available in full-text on CD-ROM disks; encyclopedias and indexes are available online; and books commonly appear on audio cassettes.

One traditional item, however, has seen little change. Although now available as audio recordings and, in some cases, as CD-ROM products, picture storybooks have largely remained as they were 25 years ago. Picture storybooks may have become more like art books or the oversized coffee table book because of the emphasis on sophisticated illustrations. Even so, the format and the purpose remain virtually unaltered. This is not to say that educators have not expanded their uses of picture storybooks. In fact, they have.
A perusal of educational indexes shows that picture storybooks have found their way into art instruction, reading and writing programs, adult literacy programs, and the instruction of literary elements at a secondary level. However, few, if any, journal articles have addressed the burgeoning potential of picture storybooks in speech communications. If they are using these books for classroom work, few secondary speech teachers have described their experiences or have researched in picture storybooks as a source for speech coursework. While reading and writing teachers praise picture storybooks, speech teachers are silent.

Public librarians have long used picture storybooks as a source for storytelling. Captain Kangaroo read picture storybooks to his audience, and some public television broadcasts today feature Reading Rainbow selections. Other than those examples, probably few of us can name situations in which a public presenter utilized a picture storybook to communicate orally with her or his audience.

Problem

This research grew out of an observation made during a state individual high school speech contest in Jewell, Iowa, in March 1992. Of the 66 entries in a performance center that featured storytelling, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* was told as a story nine times. Versions of other familiar picture books such as *Owl Moon, Corduroy, Love You Forever, Little Miss Naughty, Clown of God, The Little Engine That Could, "Stand Back," Said the Elephant, "I'm Going to Sneeze!," Horton Hears a Who, The Paper Bag Princess* and *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day* also appeared frequently. The remaining entries
were primarily versions of fairy tales or folktales, most likely illustrated picture book versions. Specifically, of the 66 entries listed in the state program for that center, 30 could be easily identified as titles of children's picture books. That number represents 45% of all selections. Because 14 did not include selection titles and because this researcher did not know whether other titles represented picture storybooks, the actual percentage of contestants who used picture books as a source at that contest may have been higher.

As a speech category for the Iowa High School Speech Association (IHSSA), storytelling by-laws state that "stories may be taken from any source, e.g. children's literature, science fiction, classical literature, fables, mythology, etc." (Constitution and By-laws, 1992, p. 40). If a story may come from any source, one may ask why so many come from children's literature, especially the picture storybook. What is the allure of such items? If education is in such flux, why do traditional picture storybooks hold such an interest?

Storytelling was not the only category in which high school contestants relied on picture storybooks. In poetry, entries included The Lorax and Horton Hatches the Egg. In prose, Faithful Elephants and The Velveteen Rabbit were among the entries. In humorous acting, The True Story of the Three Little Pigs, Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day, and Jack and the Beanstalk appeared as selections. Finally, in literary program, an event that combines poetry and prose, this researcher knows that picture storybooks are often a source.

One could argue that it is not the student contestants who make the final
choice of speech materials. Often the speech coach guides the student into the choice; for the student, however, this verb could be better understood as *shoves*. Even then, why are picture storybooks a favorite? An assumption is that speech coaches, who typically are secondary English teachers, enjoy the word play, the cadences of the language, the brevity of the stories, the simplicity of most plots, the ability of the stories to appeal to a variety of ages, and the utter abandon of creativity. Another assumption concerns the recency of the material. Speech coaches and judges are constantly searching for new material. A recurring request at speech conventions and contests is suggestions for new material, a call which library media specialists would do well to heed and nurture. Because clever, well-written picture storybooks appear constantly, their recency and originality help fill an ongoing demand for competition and coursework.

Interest in using picture books at a secondary level is incontestable, as the number of entries at the speech contest proved. Barbara Elleman (1983), a book editor, suggested that picture storybooks have value through the eighth grade: "with a proper appeal to their egos, ('these books need a more sophisticated reading than the format calls for'), junior high students can become as excited about picture books as six-year-olds" (p. 292). Because "the picture book experience can have great intellectual and emotional depth" (Campbell, 1980, p.136), using picture storybooks with high school students is a logical extension. "Unfortunately there is a tendency nowadays to relegate this ancient and honorable form [the picture storybook] to a readership of the very young, the preliterate, and the wealthy but shallow" (p. 136).
The key is the way the instructor handles the picture storybook. As Peggy Sharp (1981), an instructor at the School of Education at Portland State University, has stated, "an adult literacy program based on reading of children's books can emphasize learners' roles as competent parents, rather than their roles as deficient readers" (p. 216). If the instructor is careless or arrogant, the picture storybook will not serve its purpose in either speech competition or speech coursework. Students in this setting will feel resentment. However, "picture books, in the hands of skilled language arts teachers, are a medium for all ages" (Danielson, 1992, p. 652).

Purpose of the Study

Because picture storybooks do reside on the shelves in high school library media centers—and because secondary instructors are using them for diverse purposes, the worth of picture storybooks in a high school setting is unarguable. They motivate because "they are both beautiful and charming while they present human experiences in microcosm....They give opportunities for integrating reading and writing and for developing even high school students' vocabularies" (Danielson, 1992, p. 652). In Iowa, few speech coaches would deny the worth of picture books in their extracurricular programs and their contest planning. Adaptations of works for children have even won top honors in all-state competitions. For example, the top-named readers theatre production for the entire state in 1992 was an adaptation of James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl. Although this book is not a picture storybook—but a story written for upper elementary students, this honor verifies the usefulness and the pervasiveness of
children's materials in speech communications.

This paper's hypothesis resulted from the assumption that picture storybooks possess characteristics that transcend age and speak of the human experience through language, simplicity, and a directness that other materials cannot. The goal of the study is to show secondary speech instructors and coaches how picture books, typically designed for children, can enrich or expand speech communication activities. Reading and literature teachers have already discovered their worth. Speech teachers could benefit as well.

This study examines a selected population of original picture storybooks to determine whether they include the traits or characteristics suggested by the by-laws of the Iowa High School Speech Association. If a picture storybook includes the necessary elements to make it appropriate for a category used by the association, it has been placed in an annotated bibliography. This annotated bibliography is a resource for speech instructors and extracurricular speech coaches when working in the classroom or in contest work with secondary students, especially those in high schools. The emphasis of the annotated bibliography is oral interpretation, storytelling, and acting. This annotated bibliography includes categories of the Iowa High School Speech Association, but only those general ones that educators teach nationwide. Even though all schools do not include each of these areas in their speech curriculum, many do; larger schools even teach them as separate courses. Categories such as literary program, which are completely peculiar to the Iowa association, have not been included. The goal was to form a bibliography that serves
all speech instructors, regardless of location.

**Operational Definitions**

The following definitions come from various sources pertinent to this study. They were not adapted for any special needs of this study. The assumption was that their usefulness in other settings should prove equally valuable in this research.

Sources for the definitions follow each.

**Fairy tale.** The fairy tale is a narrative in prose about the fortunes and misfortunes of a hero or heroine who, having experienced various adventures of a more or less supernatural kind lives happily ever after. Magic, charms, disguise and spells are some of the major ingredients of such stories, which are often subtle in their interpretation of human nature and psychology (Cuddon, 1977, p. 253).

**Folktale.** Folktales are legends, fables, tall stories, shaggy dog stories, fairy stories, ghost stories, stories of giants and saints, devils and spirits; husband and wife tales; master and man tales; and what are known as 'rhozzums', short humorous tales, often about local characters (Cuddon, 1977, p. 269).

**Illustrated story book.** An illustrated story book is a story in which the text alone makes sense. The illustrations are not integral to the basic meaning of the story and most likely serve only to repeat particular details of an occasional key sentence between intervening pages of text (Hall, 1990, p. 11).

**Literary program.** A literary program is an oral presentation that must consist of a poem(s) and prose which develop(s) a common theme (message) (Judges Manual, 1992, p. 8).

**Oral interpretation.** Oral interpretation is a presentation that involves effective vocal techniques along with facial expression(s) and controlled bodily reactions to the text (Judges Manual, 1992, p. 7).
Parody. Parody is the imitative use of the words, style, attitude, tone and ideas of an author in such a way as to make them ridiculous. This is usually achieved by exaggerating certain traits, using more or less the same technique as the cartoon caricaturist. In fact, a kind of satirical mimicry (Cuddon, 1977, p. 472).

Picture book. The picture book is a blend of text and illustration in which two elements are of equal importance and "work together to produce an artistic unit stronger than either the words or the pictures would be alone." The picture book doesn't contain a story line demonstrating a recognizable problem, conflict, and resolution (Hall, 1990, pp. 11, 12).

Picture storybook. The picture storybook is a blend of text and illustration in which the two elements are of equal importance and "work together to produce an artistic unit stronger than either the words or the pictures would be alone." In addition, the picture storybook must also attend to the creation of character, place, and action (Hall, 1990, pp. 11-12).


Storytelling. Storytelling is the art of sharing an original or published narrative with a listener (Judges Manual, 1992, p. 11).

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to books found in the public libraries in these Iowa communities: Ames, Ankeny, Cedar Falls, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Humboldt, Sioux Center, Waterloo, and West Des Moines. The researcher also used the Donald O. Rod Library at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI); he also ordered books through interlibrary loan in Fort Dodge and Humboldt and through the UNI library.
Within recent years, various library and educational journals have addressed picture storybooks in terms of their functionality and curricular importance to both elementary and secondary instructors. Because of the increasing awareness about picture storybooks as a means to enrich the materials already available to teachers, a review of the literature identified the elements within picture storybooks that differentiate them from other literary sources so that they can serve a special place within the curriculum. The marriage between words and pictures gives the picture storybook a unique place among literary genres. Although simple in design and format, its ability to stimulate the higher thought processes and to elicit evaluative responses and creative reactions give the picture storybook an unequalled power in reaching students at all age levels.

The Picture Book as a Genre

Authors of journal articles and children's literature books have long strived to identify picture storybooks as a unique genre. The goal was to differentiate them from other children's publications such as illustrated storybooks and picture books. These authors sought to list those traits that render a written work a picture storybook. To that end, they succeeded and created a definition that found general agreement. Their interest in creating an identity for picture books probably stemmed from "the movement toward literature-based reading programs in the
elementary grades" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 290). Known popularly as whole-language instruction, this movement "is instruction in which the teacher reads aloud to the students regularly and teaches reading through story and literature instead of through predigested basal materials with controlled vocabulary" (Vail, 1991, p. 22). In moving away from basal readers, instructors undoubtedly needed to define limitations for reading materials, especially picture storybooks. The result was an emphasis upon the characteristics of picture storybooks.

In format, the picture book typically has a "short length (generally 32 pages), [a] small amount of text (or no text), and reliance on pictures [to] help fledgling readers...comprehend a storyline" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 290). Russell (1991) similarly wrote: "picture-books are typically brief--most are designed to be read in a single sitting, with 2,000 words being an average length. The vocabulary must not be so difficult as to discourage the child, and yet it must not condescend, either" (p. 29). Additionally, they are often oversized, hardbound to provide durability, and colorful. A serif typeface is usually 12 point or larger.

Aware of today's marketplace, publishers have broadened the appeal of picture storybooks to young adults and adults. "While many picture books, certainly, are geared to a primary audience, a growing number have a broad appeal. A more mature audience will enjoy the themes, concerns, and the sense of humor in many of these books" (Chatton, 1990, p. 16). These publishers have also issued works that look and function as a book for children but actually target teenagers and adults or target all ages and groups. As Chatton explained, "Often called folios
because they are oversized and stored in a separate area [in a public library], these include works such as photoessays, coffee table books, and fantasy picture books for adults" (p. 16).

The reading level of the typical storybook is "at least third grade" (Huck, as cited in Hunt & Reuter, 1978, p. 23). As a result, these books "are generally read to children. They are written for the young child's interest and appreciation level, not his reading ability level" (pp. 23-24). To test Huck's findings, Hunt and Reuter conducted a study of 52 picture books and easy readers chosen randomly from approximately 3,400 books. "Books in the sample were then analyzed for readability level with Fry's readability graph (Fry 1968) based on sentence and word length (no account taken of frequency of vocabulary used)" (p. 26). The results of their study showed that "readability levels of the 52 books ranged from grades one through seven, with the largest number of books (15) written at the first grade level, and the number of books per grade level decreasing, predictably, as grade level increased" (p. 26). They also discovered that "half of the sample was indexed at third grade level or above" (p. 26). The results showed that, indeed, illustrated storybooks include a range of reading levels. "Thus, different types of books and book-related experiences are appropriate for children at different ages and stages of development" (Norton, 1991, p. 167). Not directed solely at the primary grades, some of these books contain text best understood by middle school and junior high students. The assumption follows, then, that a range of levels of meaning should also entice high school students and adults.
In 1980, Uri Shulevitz provided probably the definitive explanation of the differences among picture books, illustrated storybooks and picture storybooks. He wrote: "in a true picture book [defined in this study as a picture storybook], words cannot stand on their own; without pictures, the meaning of the story will be unclear. The pictures provide information not contained in the words" (p. 100). Shulevitz further clarified the differences between picture books and picture storybooks by distinguishing between their utilization of elements: "unlike a storybook, which expresses sight and sound through words, a picture book separates the two, representing the sight by a picture and the sound by words" (p. 101). However, Shulevitz's best explanation of the difference concluded his discussion. He wrote, "In summary, the meaning of words in a picture book is unclear or incomplete without the pictures. A true picture book cannot be read to children over the radio, for example, because it wouldn't be understood" (p. 101).

The reverse of Shulevitz's radio comparison helps round out, or complete, the definition: "in a well-written picture storybook, the text and narrative complement each other, so children cannot deduce the whole story merely by viewing the pictures. The illustrations are integral to the story line: they enhance the actions, settings, and characterizations" (Norton, 1991, pp. 187-188). That is, to understand a picture storybook fully, one cannot look solely at the pictures to understand the story, nor can an individual only read (or listen to) the text. The reader must experience both to grasp the full message of the author.

Shulevitz's (1980) definition of picture storybooks is the standard, as this
description by Lorraine (1977) attests: "a picture book must function rather than merely be pretty. It must communicate, whatever phrases you use to define it. The artwork must convey the idea of the book" (p. 145). This definition by Russell (1991) also echoes Shulevitz's definition:

The picture-book [defined in this study as a picture storybook] is best defined as a book in which the text and pictures are equally important, as opposed to an illustrated book [defined in this study as an illustrated story book] in which the text is primary....in a true picture-book, the pictures tell the story along with the text, and the result can be described as a happy marriage between the text and pictures. (p. 25)

However, Russell's definition introduces another variable into the discussion: books that are heavily illustrated, even though the illustrations do not add significantly to the meaning of the story or to its understanding. Familiar examples are illustrated folktales in which the tales predate the illustrations. Often, the illustrations in these books are embellishments or an accompaniment; they do not add, in essence, to the reader’s understanding. Although these books are picture storybooks in format, in concept and principle they are illustrated story books.

Susan Hall (1990) honed the differences among these three types of children’s books. As she explained, picture storybooks are an extension of the other two types of books. Picture books have pictures and text, an integration of the pictures and the text, but no true storyline with characters. Illustrated story books have pictures and text, a storyline with characters, but no integration of the pictures and the text. Picture storybooks have pictures and text, an integration of the pictures and the text, and a storyline with characters.
The importance and the implication of Hall's defining distinction lie in the unity of the finished product, which creates the artistry and literary uniqueness of the picture storybook. As a result, one can assume that if a perfect picture storybook exists, it is a consummate blending of text, illustrations, and other books elements, each of which contributes to a story's meaning. That is, it is "a totality that integrates all the designed parts in a sequence in which the relationships among them...are crucial to understanding the book" (Marantz & Marantz, 1988, p. xii).

Hall's discussion of distinguishing characteristics supersedes an earlier list of characteristics for picture storybooks, forwarded by Mary Lou White (cited by Hall, 1986). White listed nine characteristics, here presented in abbreviated form. The picture storybook must be an imaginative product, a single story, and an original creation. Required are a plot, an illustration on every other page, and a union of pictures and text. Finally, it is directed towards the primary grades, has no vocabulary restrictions, and is written in prose.

Some of the above requirements obviously invite debate. This researcher can envision a book with few, if any, pictures; instead, words or graphics elements are the illustrative matter. If White's definition is to be adopted strictly, this book is not a picture storybook. This criterion, thus, is arguable. Another debatable requirement is that the general interest level be pre-school to grade three. As already discussed, "Older students can also benefit using picture books in their courses" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 290). The age requirement precludes the appeal and functionality of picture storybooks with adults. Finally, many noteworthy
picture storybooks are in poetic form. If in every other sense, a poetic book is a picture storybook, it technically is not a picture storybook according to White's definition. An example is the many books of Dr. Seuss. Because they rely on heroic couplets, they are, consequently, exempt from consideration. As with the illustration and age requirements, the demand that the book be in prose form reflects a needless limitation that excludes more deserving books than the stipulation effectively eliminates.

White's requirement that picture storybooks be written as prose invites further consideration of poem picture books as a special type of picture storybook. Within the past ten years an increasing number of picture books are poem picture books. Examples are Lewis Carroll's *Jabberwocky* (1989), illustrated by Graeme Base; *Heartland* (1988), written by Diane Siebert and illustrated by Wendell Minor; and Robert Frost's *Birches* (1988), illustrated by Ed Young.

Purists such as poet Myra Cohn Livingston (1989) have argued that illustrated poem picture books deprive the child of the experience of creating mental images. As she wrote, "Nancy Palmer's review of *Birches*...is an apt illustration of the reason why we are seeing the demise of the imagination in so many children today" (p. 60). Even though some poetry is not suited for illustration, publishers see poem picture books as a profitable variation of the picture storybook and will, undoubtedly, continue to publish them, despite outcries such as this from Livingston: "To provide children with pictures for all things is to contribute to the atrophy of the imagination, and that is what causes 'contradiction' or 'confusion'" (p. 60).
Such poem picture books fall into two categories. The first is books that illustrate familiar, previously published poems pertinent to juvenile audiences, including such poems by Carroll, Frost, and Edward Lear. The second is books that illustrate original poems such as those by Siebert, Alfred Lobel, and Jeffers. Although anyone could argue that these books do not qualify as picture storybooks because they do not reflect an interaction between words and text or fail to contain a narrative, these same people would be pedantic and reactionary if they are to argue against Heartland's status as a picture storybook or as an effective instrument in the language arts curriculum. As Glazer and Lamme (1990) wrote, "In this tribute to the American Midwest, lyric descriptions are enhanced by the strong realistic portrayals of fields and farms, of the towns and the people....The land and its people come alive through art as well as words" (p. 104).

An observation that this need to create a definition is heavily an American concern concludes this discussion about picture storybooks as a genre. According to Donnarae MacCann and Olga Richard (1973), American picture storybooks have their basis in two traditions, one from England and one from continental Europe, especially France. Because the art community in France has always viewed picture books as high art, equal to sculpture or paintings, numerous artists have served as illustrators, including Daumier, Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec and Matisse (pp. 11-12). In contrast, the earliest English picture books were illustrated story books, in which artists were hired to create drawings to accompany text (p. 12). They embellished; they did not collaborate.
Those divergent philosophies merged in the United States after World War I. Because so many artists from the European community left their native countries to reside in the United States, the American picture book became an amalgam of various ethnic styles. As MacCann and Richard explained, "this influx of talented refugees is probably the single most important circumstance in the history of the American picture book" (p. 16). The immigration of European artists into the United States after 1920 meant a blending of continental and English perspectives in children's literature in the United States. The British emphasis on books for children and the European interest in folk art, Impressionism and Expressionism merged (pp. 16-17). This "complex mix of converging and diverging ideas, of historical influences from many parts of the globe" (MacCann & Richard, 1990, p. 29) has, undoubtedly, contributed to American concerns with defining the picture storybook.

Curricular Use of Picture Storybooks in Secondary Schools

In secondary schools, picture storybooks remain largely an untapped resource. However, they have already proved their merit in isolated language arts classrooms where instructors have utilized them. For example, "sometimes the complexity of novels or short stories impedes students' learning of literary devices....In picture books, though, with their short text and illustrations to aid comprehension of plot, literary devices are easier to spot" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 293). The primary power of picture storybooks in English classrooms lies in their supplemental value for teachers "working with developmental readers and with linguistically and
culturally diverse students" (Danielson, 1992, p. 652). As the level of reading scores falters and the number of distinct American subcultures grows, picture storybooks benefit students functioning below grade level or struggling with a learning disability. Those students "comprehend the story easily and are relieved from spending intellectual energy cracking the code of a more complex selection" (Beckman & Diamond, 1984, p. 102).

An additional advantage of picture storybooks is that lower-level students appreciate them, especially for vocabulary development and enrichment. As Keith Polette (1989) explained, "The low-ability students are able to see specific and tangible results in their vocabulary development; they also find an activity which promotes thinking skills by allowing them to be successful in a nontraditional learning activity" (pp. 78-79). Conversely, picture storybooks are effective also with talented and gifted students, who "are challenged because they are forced to stop being merely consumers of content and must produce new and divergent 'products.' They stretch their minds and imaginations and simultaneously increase their storehouse of words" (p. 79). Others have concurred with this opinion: "discussing picture books also reminds students that reading is the process of receiving meaning not only from print, but also from experiences. This oral activity expands students' minds...and teaches them that nothing is off limits to learning" (Johnson-Weber, 1989, p. 219).

Neal and Moore (1992) assert that five principles underlie the usefulness of picture storybooks with secondary students: first, "themes of many picture books
have universal value and appeal for all age levels" (p. 290). Because picture books incorporate such themes as love, self-fulfillment, relationships, humor, and nostalgia (p. 290), they can reach high school students, not only elementary and middle school students. Three other principles are these:

Some of the best picture books may have been missed when students were young or may have been published since...Many issues raised demand a maturity...that young children do not possess....Our visually oriented society has conditioned students to employ pictures as comprehension aids. (p. 290)

Finally, "the short format facilitates incorporating picture books into lessons" (p. 290). Many secondary schools, still on traditional scheduling, have divided their days into periods that typically run 40 to 45 minutes. Because of its length, the picture storybook works well within that time limit. As a result, "picture books can be used to introduce a concept" (p. 291) within a class period or "absorbed in one listening" (Sitarz, 1990, p. 2), and the teacher can expand upon the idea later. "Or, picture books can be read for the simple narration and then turned into another form" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 291).

The last of the five points finds support with other educators. Beckman and Diamond (1984) also found the picture storybook ideal because its length is well suited to the schedule of secondary schools: "because the books are so short an entire experience can fit into a single class period. Students can be led to create hypotheses and outcomes which will give teachers a chance to evaluate abilities in understanding relationships and predicting conclusions" (p. 102). Keith Polette (1989) noted:
In this age of push-button access to instant information and entertainment via the television set, this lack of interest in the written word is perhaps not surprising, especially when one realizes that the vast majority of television programming is geared to a sixth-grade level. (p. 78)

This factor makes the picture storybook ideal. Its simplicity and directness allow teachers to work "with individuals or small groups to help students not only in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, but also in thinking" (Beckman & Diamond, 1984, p. 102). Or, as Jalongo (1988) stated, the picture book helps learners "develop socially, personally, intellectually, culturally, and aesthetically" (p. 1).

High school teachers have also used picture storybooks in other curricular areas. For example, in social studies classes, "culture, prejudice, the work ethic, class structure, and fame are some of the concepts explored" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 293) through picture storybooks in a unit entitled "People." Additionally, because many historical figures are the focus of picture storybooks, students gain a broader understanding of those people through a unique interpretation. Themes such as war, global relations, patriotism, demographics, and immigration also recur in picture storybooks and may become units of study (p. 294).

In adult literacy programs, picture storybooks "are not presented as reading materials suitable for their own beginning reading, but rather as resources they can use as concerned parents wanting to enrich their children's learning experiences" (Sharp, 1991, p. 217). By appealing to these learners' roles as parents, Sharp discovered that storybooks do not compromise the integrity of the adults in the program. Instead, "adults can be encouraged to read picture books, discuss them
with other learners, ask questions, and then take the books home to read with their children" (p. 217).

In art instruction at a secondary level, "the study and creation of picture books provided the necessary avenue to cross over age as well as subject matter barriers" (Coultrap, 1985, p. 35). By emphasizing interpretation and evaluation, Coultrap was able to create two-member learning teams, each comprised of one elementary and one secondary student. Each member of each team wrote a story and submitted it to the partner for illustration, thus requiring the partner to interpret the story in order to illustrate it. Both were also required to evaluate the efforts of the other. Picture storybooks also have other uses in art instruction. For example, "picture books in art classes are a rich teaching resource for promoting students' understanding of artistic elements" (Neal & Moore, 1992, p. 295). They can also serve in historical studies; a unit on a particular style, medium, or technique; or a discussion of the relationship between art and text (p. 295).

The recurring theme in library and reading journals is the ability of the picture storybook to reach beyond the primary grades, an audience for whom they were only partially intended. As Rovenger (1987) stated, "Many times perfectly marvelous books never reach their potential audiences because of format, age category labeling...that suggest only a younger audience. Too often we allow a book to remain a prisoner in the straight jacket of its classification" (p. 38). In fact, few could argue that primary-age children can understand, let alone appreciate, the irony, the twisted point of view, and the understatement of The True Story of the
Three Little Pigs. Those elements speak more directly to an audience of adults and young adults.

The artistry of Graeme Base, Stephen Gammell, Maurice Sendak, Lane Smith, Chris Van Allsburg, and David Wiesner may be the catalyst that has raised the craftsmanship of picture storybooks to a level of sophistication that speaks to audiences far beyond the primary grades. As Lorraine (1977) wrote, "The books are more refined, more elegant if you will..." (p. 145). The result is a functionality few teachers imagined twenty years ago: "it would indeed be a pity not to share these wonderful books with as wide an audience as possible" (Rovenger, 1987, p. 39), especially one that includes teachers and parents, adults and teenagers. Their practicality could reach throughout all of society and have a far-reaching impact.

Nancy Polette (1981) even argued that the picture storybook as a literary form has the power to influence society. As she stated, "all free societies value the growth and development of the communication skills of their peoples" (p. 46). However, our society so highly prefers mass technological networks, which simplify language and communication, that the integrity of the communicative act in our society has been jeopardized. If we wish to maintain literacy, eliminate passivity, and develop the abilities to think creatively and to communicate effectively in our citizenry, "we must make the alternatives very attractive" (p. 46). Polette proposed picture storybooks as one means, for they "serve as powerful and effective models in developing communication skills with gifted students" (p. 47).

Wherever one looks in library literature, the praises of picture storybooks
abound. No one denies their effectiveness with secondary students. Rovenger (1987) saw them as an important means of discussing mature themes: "there are those picture books which, while remaining relevant to children, give interpretation to these issues that are particularly intriguing to adult readers" (p. 39). Elleman (1983) stated that they may have more value than the books actually written for that age group: "short, they can be read aloud in their entirety; simple, they are understandable as a story; and illustrated, they contain pictures which expand the text, helping to clarify specific ideas" (p. 292). According to Carroll (1991), any student at any age can enjoy projects involved with picture storybooks: "adolescents as well as preschoolers enjoyed the activities and keepsakes inspired by a picture or storybook" (p. 3). And Sullivan (1992) found that picture storybooks serve well as sources for storytelling, "and any reasonable observer knows that storytelling appeals to adults as well" (p. 32).

In conclusion, Patricia J. Cianciolo (1990) described in *Picture Books for Children* a number of trends in children's publishing, especially as they concern picture storybooks. One of the major trends analyzed is the proliferation of picture books for older readers through ages eighteen and nineteen. Cianciolo cited satire, irony, cultural allusions, idioms, impressionism, expressionism, and visual puns as the reasons why these books appeal to this extended audience. She added: "both text and pictures offer a complexity of meanings that are obviously for older and accomplished readers" (p. 5). She did not perceive these books as diluted literature or as gimmicks but as tools "that appeal to the interests of adolescents and challenge
them cognitively and affectively" (pp. 4-5). They are more than simple stories or diversions; they are the means of meeting student needs, enriching thought processes, and transforming lives.

**Picture Storybooks in the Speech Curriculum**

Researchers and speech educators have devoted little attention to children's literature as a source for speech communications. Few journal articles and even fewer texts describe a connection between picture storybooks and any form of speech coursework, whether interpretation, storytelling or acting. This is an unexpected situation, given the genealogy of picture storybooks. Their roots in folktales and fairy tales is common knowledge. The fact that these tales were part of the oral tradition of passing stories across the generations in pre-literate societies is also well understood. Why then has no one made the connection among the oral tradition, children's literature and the speech curriculum? Maybe researchers do not see a connection between picture storybooks and fairy tales; maybe they do not deem children's literature a legitimate source of study; or maybe they have not realized the power of picture storybooks. Whatever the reason, little literature reflects the connection between speech curriculum and this genre as a modern twist on the oral tradition.

Marantz and Marantz (1988) understood the relationship and wrote:

All picture books tell stories. And all stories began as things told by a storyteller. When transcribed onto the silent page the voice is lost and with it the idiosyncratic manner each teller has in making the story special. The illustrator replaces the speaker and the pictures become, symbolically, the voice that conveys some of the special qualities of meaning that language frequently cannot (p. xii).
In other words, the person who tells the story or relates the events of a picture storybook, in effect, becomes a live-action, three-dimensional substitute for the illustrations. The irony is that those illustrations were the printed substitute for the actions of the "first storytellers," who were part of the oral tradition. Thus, the voice and actions of contemporary speech performers and contestants have replaced book illustrations, which replaced the voice and the actions of the original storytellers. The cycle has come full circle.

Sierra (1990) also noted the tie between picture storybooks and contemporary speech work. In contrast to others who distinguish among traditional oral narration that rural people practice; nontraditional urban storytelling that teachers and librarians employ; and neo-traditional tale-telling that professionals perform (p. 41), she asserted that contemporary storytellers (and speech communicators) are actually continuing the art first begun in preliterate societies. They are not abandoning or altering it. Sierra cemented the connection through orality and literacy. Contemporary narrators may learn their stories from printed sources while the traditional storytellers learn their tales by hearing others. Even so, "orality and literacy play varying roles in the lives of both traditional and librarian-storytellers" (p. 45). As a result, the two groups have more similarities than differences. In fact, their similarities in learning and adapting stories reflect a larger social phenomenon between speakers and their audiences. Their similarity in learning and adapting stories "may indicate a fundamental simplicity in the way in which all humans process and share an extended narrative with an audience" (p. 47).
In naming the distinctions between picture storybooks and illustrated storybooks, Shulevitz (1980) emphasized the visual and the aural elements and used those to distinguish between the two types of books. The illustrated storybook "expresses sight and sound through words" (p. 101). In contrast, the interpreter of a picture storybook--the narrator, that is--allows the audience to "see the pictures and hear the words" (p. 101). Providing a foundation for Marantz and Marantz (1988), Shulevitz then wrote:

In other words, the picture book is a return to an original premise: to see and to hear directly, without the intermediary of the printed word. By representing visibly, instead of representing by words (describing), a picture book becomes naturally a dramatic experience: direct, immediate, vivid, moving. (p. 101)

Aware of the historical connection between the printed word and the oral narrative, Virgil D. Sessions and Jack B. Holland (1975) saw that "the limitless possibilities for the interpreter in the area of children's literature are often overlooked--or relegated to a secondary position" (p. 387). In fact, they called children's literature the best place to begin a study of oral interpretation, for in it they saw more potential in allowing the performer to "get out of oneself" (p. 387). It is the place to learn the essentials of characterization, movement, and contrast.

The strength of children's stories for speech communication lies in rhymes, dialogue, exaggeration, the rate and the pace of the narrative, characterization, the contrast of good and evil, and the moral lesson of fables. "In short, you will exaggerate the literary qualities to achieve the necessary response..." (pp. 387-388); however, they cautioned not to "produce an aura of superiority and talk down to
your audience" (p. 388). Instead, "concern yourself with the material and its demands," for the audience "sees you as a storyteller bringing to life real beings" (p. 403).

The characteristics that Sessions and Holland listed as the essentials of picture storybooks for good speech communication recur in modified form as the principles of oral interpretation for other speech educators. Brooks, Bahn, and Okey (1967), for example, listed language; rhythm, meter, and rhyme; tempo and pausing; and characterization as the essentials of telling/interpreting poetry (pp. 235-259). Their emphasis was similar to Sessions and Holland's on rhymes, dialogue and exaggeration. No one should think, however, that poetry or poetic narratives are the sole interest of either team of communications educators.

Brooks et al. (1967) included four general principles of interpretation, which apply equally to poetry, prose, and drama. Those four essentials were the focus of attention to create audience interest; clear understanding of the narrative through careful analysis and emotional delivery; imaginative richness to elicit the audience's creative responsiveness; and recall and transference to create a bond with the audience (pp. 55-73). With proper training, each of these is achievable in the interpretation of any picture storybook, poetic or prose.

Lee and Gura (1982) listed action and plot; point of view; setting; character; and dialogue as the principles of narrating prose (pp. 178-192). They named the stanza; the line--with prosody; cadences; and rhyme as the foundations of poetry (pp. 369-384). Their lists rival that of Brooks et al. (1967). And like Brooks et al., they,
too, described fundamental devices that could apply to any literary genre, including poem picture books, illustrated fairy tales, and picture storybooks. Those devices are climax, "a high point of logical development or of emotional impact" (Lee & Gura, p. 21); persona, "the speaker, the one who relates the experience in a piece of literature" (p. 23); and locus, "the physical and psychological position of the persona in relation to the experience" (p. 24). They also named intrinsic factors such as unity, "the combining and ordering of all the parts that make up the whole" (p. 27); harmony, "the appropriate adjustment of parts to one another to form a satisfying whole" (p. 27); variety, the situation when "two things of the same general kind differ from each other" (p. 28); contrast, "the opposition or differences between associated things" (p. 28); balance, "the intensity or the proportion of content on either side of the point at which the entire selection seems to pivot and change direction" (p. 29); fulcrum, which is poetic balance; and rhythm, "the relationship between stressed and unstressed syllables" (p. 30).

As a whole, the principles that Lee and Gura described parallel those of Brooks et al. (1967) and those of Sessions and Holland (1975). Some of those recurring essentials are rhymes, characterization and persona, and dialogue and language. Sessions and Holland saw those elements as the foundation of the interpretation of children’s literature, especially picture storybooks. The other teams were not so specific as to mention picture storybooks; but one may presume their lists of interpretative fundamentals would include picture storybooks since such books comprise a distinct literary genre.
In their analysis of the oral interpretation of children's literature, Gamble and Gamble (1976) discussed similar interpretative essentials. For example, they stressed the importance of imagery and characterization: "a good children's story contains unique or memorable characters with whom the youngsters can identify" (p. 197). They also mentioned the importance of a plot and the language. They suggested: "give emphasis to the dynamic nature of the action in the story, the unique qualities of the characters, and the rhythmic, phonetic, and descriptive qualities of the writing" (p. 201). Although Gamble and Gamble did not highlight the narrator's persona in their discussion, they stressed the elements that promote the creation of a locus. That is, "your reading should work to allow them to feel the atmosphere of the selection, appreciate the action, and become acquainted and involved with the characters" (p. 204). And, like Sessions and Holland (1975), they were aware of the power of exaggeration in narration and speech communications. As they have stated, "Broaden and exaggerate your response to the literature. Really mimic the voice of each character in the selection" (Sessions & Holland, p. 201).

Marantz and Marantz (1988) reiterated the importance of the narrator/interpreter when discussing the choice of materials for purchase, curricular support or use in a speech communications program: "in evaluating picture books we attend to the qualities of that symbolic voice just as we attend to the 'interpretation' by the vocalist or group of yet another performance of a popular musical composition" (p. xiii). No one can ever think of a picture storybook in isolation. The power of these books lies in the strength of the narrator, the reader,
the actor, the interpreter, the storyteller, the contestant, or the speech communicator. To that end, they are visual narratives; and "as a visual narrative one should expect to find humor, pathos, excitement, mystery, beauty, repulsion—the expressive content that one picks up a book to get" (p. xiv).

**Summary of Literature Review**

The picture storybook is a distinct genre. Because of its growing functionality in schools, its proponents have sought to identify its uniqueness as a literary genre. They have also sought to distinguish it from similar items such as the concept book, the alphabet book and the folktale. However, their primary interest has focused on its differences from picture books and illustrated story books.

The picture storybook combines elements from both of its cousins. Like the picture book, it has both pictures and text—and a union between those items. However, unlike the picture book, which has no storyline or characters, the picture storybook includes narration, plot, and characters engaged in the action. Like the illustrated story book, the picture storybook has words, pictures, and a storyline. However, unlike the illustrated story book, which does not include a union between the text and the pictures, the picture storybook incorporates a marriage between words and illustrations.

This definition precludes concern with picture books in poetic form. It also ignores many of the prescriptive requirements of earlier definitions. Gone are the stipulations about illustrations on every other page, a prose format, and the reading level falling somewhere between pre-school and grade three. It is the last of these
discarded stipulations that has had the most impact for educators, especially at the secondary level. English instructors use picture storybooks to reach lower-level students and to stretch the creativity of upper-level students. The appeal of these books to language arts teachers is the variety of themes and length. However, other instructors have also used picture storybooks in secondary classrooms. They include social studies, adult literacy and art teachers.

The increasing sophistication of picture storybooks accounts, in part, for their presence in secondary classrooms. They have also spread into junior and senior high schools because they contain themes and wordplay that only young adults and adults could fully appreciate. Finally, they appeal to a generation reared on the flashing images of rock videos, of advertisements that include more style than substance, and of technologies that demand passivity.

Although few researchers have reported their findings about or successes with picture books in a secondary speech curriculum, several have noted the link among the oral tradition, picture storybooks, and modern speech communications work that incorporates children's literature. Because these books promote the language, the characterization and the dialogue that storytellers and oral interpreters often employ when delivering their tales to an audience, their importance in speech communications coursework and competition is incontestable. Even the experts in oral interpretation who do not promote picture storybooks list among the fundamentals of narration the same elements that one frequently finds in picture storybooks, further securing the need of placing of these "little jewels of literature"
Chapter 3
Methodology

Five steps comprised the formation of an annotated bibliography of picture
storybooks appropriate to secondary speech communications curriculum and
extracurricular activities. They were (a) selecting the speech categories in which
speech students are routinely involved in coursework and in speech competition;
(b) defining those categories; (c) listing the distinguishing characteristics of materials
suitable for use in that category; (d) matching picture storybooks from a named
population to the speech categories, based on the distinguishing characteristics; and
(e) determining which category was the most appropriate to place a picture
storybook if it contained the characteristics for more than one speech area. These
five steps were sequential, although the latter ones were performed simultaneously.
The first three steps, completed in that exact order, composed the pre-research
planning and are detailed in this chapter. That is, these measures preceded the
actual data gathering. The last two steps, which were completed together,
constituted the research study itself.

Selection of Speech Categories

Because the types of speech coursework and speech competition vary from
state to state, from school district to school district, and from classroom to classroom,
speech textbooks focus on larger issues. They discuss general categories rather than
specific ones. Thus, one may find chapters on the interpretation of poetry and prose,
not on the interpretation of light verse, first-person narratives, or story poems. Chapters may discuss general group interpretation but rarely remark upon the specific areas of readers theatre, chamber theatre, or choral reading. Nor are chapters so specific as to explain how to build an interpretative program, to arrange materials, to write introductions for pieces to be interpreted, or to position and control the body during storytelling. At best, most textbooks provide only a basic introduction to speech activities for secondary students. Specifics are not necessary or even desired.

Because most high school textbooks speak generally and because the intent of the annotated bibliography is practicality, the selection of speech categories approximated those of the Iowa High School Speech Association, the primary difference being the addition of subdivisions. In building this annotated bibliography, this researcher compiled a list of just-published and relatively new titles that colleagues, especially in Iowa, can, should, and will use in their speech curriculum. Pragmatism thus dictated an adoption of the categories of the state's speech association.

During the 1992-1993 school year, the Iowa High School Speech Association provided 14 individual and eight group events in which member schools entered participants, other than debate and student congress. Because the focus of this research was not group speech activities, debate, student congress, and the eight group events were not under consideration in developing an annotated bibliography. Besides, picture storybooks are not long enough to sustain a program
of 20 or 30 minutes. Nor was this researcher comfortable with violating the fair use provision of the copyright law. Using picture storybooks for group activities introduces legal and ethical questions, which were best precluded by eliminating those eight group events from consideration for this study.

In five of the 14 individual events, entrants must use materials other than picture storybooks for presentation. Public address demands a prewritten speech or an editorial for memorization; extemporaneous speaking stipulates using a topic from a provided list; radio news announcing requires using a packet of radio copy; in book reviewing, participants must read a book from a predetermined list; and in improvisation, students must use situations, characters, and settings issued from the state office. Of the remaining nine categories, picture storybooks could be used as the topic of discussion in three of the platform-speaking areas: after-dinner speaking, original oratory, and expository address. However, the discussion of picture storybooks in these categories is questionable, for such a topic is not their intent. Nor would the speaker be using the author's words in a particular book as the basis of the speech. Thus, these three categories were not used in forming the annotated bibliography.

The remaining six individual speech categories invited the use of picture storybooks. Three of them are interpretative in nature; two are acting events; and the last is storytelling. They are interpretative reading--poetry, interpretative reading--prose, literary program, humorous acting, dramatic acting, and storytelling. Although these events are peculiar to Iowa's speech association, certain general
category types were drawn from the six.

The interpretation of prose and the interpretation of poetry were kept as separate categories to allow the inclusion of picture storybooks written as poetry and those that are poem picture books or poetic ABC books and to differentiate them from stories written without poetic language considerations. Because literary program is primarily a combination of the interpretation of poetry and prose, it was discarded. The humorous and dramatic acting categories remained separate, although the sole difference between the two, as noted in the by-laws (1992), is whether the intention is seriousness or humor. Combining them as one made little sense if a notation must be made within each bibliographic entry concerning the dramatic intent of the piece. Finally, the storytelling category remained separate because of its uniqueness and connection to the oral tradition.

These, then, were the five general categories against which picture storybooks were checked: interpretative reading, poetry; interpretative reading, prose; humorous acting; dramatic acting; and storytelling. Balance of listings for each category was not expected or proposed. If the intention of the annotated bibliography is practicality, forcing an equal number of picture storybooks into each area undermined the purpose. These categories were then subdivided: poetry, prose, and storytelling. Because so many titles qualified for these three categories, the resulting lists would have been too unwieldy to be of use for speech instructors. Dividing each category into three parts that reflected the intent of the selections was necessary; thus, each category now features these subgroupings: humorous,
dramatic, and seriocomic (a blend of the humorous and the serious). Practicality was again the overriding concern.

Definitions for and Characteristics of Speech Categories

Defining the five general categories would prove difficult if one used only the speech association's manual, Constitution and By-Laws Casebook (1992), which does not include any specific definitions for any of the events. Instead, it describes regulations concerning length of performance, materials appropriate to the category, preparation and presentation rules, timing procedures, judging criteria and clarification questions. Nowhere can one find definitions for the events. That fact was, in part, that very reason why a judge certification committee of the association produced the Judges Manual (1992). Definitions for and discussions about the categories give judges a clearer understanding of each event, the rationale for its inclusion as a category, and the criteria which they were to use in evaluating a presentation. This judging manual thus served as the basis for the definitions of the speech events and for the identification of distinguishing characteristics that comprise the latter part of this section.

Below are the definitions and the rationales for the five general speech categories under investigation in this research study:

**Dramatic Acting**

**Definition:** Dramatic acting is a memorized presentation of a scene(s) with primarily a serious tone.

**Rationale:** Dramatic acting encourages students to analyze and develop a believable character (Judges Manual, 1992, p. 6).
Humorous Acting

**Definition:** Humorous acting is a memorized presentation of a scene(s) with primarily a humorous tone.

**Rationale:** Humorous acting encourages students to analyze and develop a believable character (*Judges Manual*, p. 6).

Interpretative Reading, Poetry

**Definition:** Poetry is the oral interpretation of a selection/selections of poetic material chosen by the contestant.

**Rationale:** Interpretation of poetry encourages comprehension, appreciation, and analysis of poetry, demonstrating the ability to evoke an audience reaction through interpretation (*Judges Manual*, p. 7).

Interpretative Reading, Prose

**Definition:** Prose is the oral interpretation of a selection/selections of prose material chosen by the contestant.

**Rationale:** Interpretation of prose encourages comprehension, appreciation, and analysis of prose, demonstrating the ability to evoke an audience reaction through interpretation (*Judges Manual*, p. 7).

Storytelling

**Definition:** Storytelling is the art of sharing an original or published narrative with a listener.

**Rationale:** Storytelling encourages the student to condense and recreate a story and effectively share it with an audience (*Judges Manual*, p. 11).

Definitions and rationale statements are helpful, but do not provide the criteria for determining which picture storybooks are most appropriate for each speech category. A list of characteristics assisted in classifying the books. If a picture storybook possessed a majority of the characteristics of a specific speech event, it was placed in that category within the bibliography. These distinguishing characteristics came from both the *Judges Manual* (1992) and the *Constitution By-laws and Casebook* (1992). If a picture storybook had more than half of the listed characteristics or criteria or was able to contribute through a performer to more than half of them, it was considered for that category. Below are those criteria, culled...
from both the manual and the by-laws:

**Dramatic Acting:** choice of material
- analysis of material
- assimilation of material
- projection of thought and emotion
- use of bodily activity
- vocal technique
- portrayal of character(s)
- establishment of a serious tone

**Humorous Acting:** choice of material
- analysis of material
- projection of thought and emotion
- use of bodily activity
- vocal technique
- portrayal of character(s)
- establishment of a humorous tone

**Interpretative Reading, Poetry:** choice of material
- arrangement of material
- projection of thought
- projection of emotion
- control of bodily activity
- rhythm
- pronunciation
- voice control
- facial gestures
- reflection of tone and intent of selection

**Interpretative Reading, Prose:** choice of material
- arrangement of material
- projection of emotion
- control of bodily activity
- pronunciation
- voice control
- facial gestures
- reflection of tone and intent of selection

**Storytelling:** ability to recreate author's story
- inclusion of narration/narrator
- creation of a storyline
- high energy level
- enjoyment in telling the story
appropriate facial gestures
appropriate bodily movement
interpretation of story, not performance of it

Matching Picture Storybooks to Speech Categories

The first half of the correlation process was establishing a list of speech category characteristics against which picture storybooks were evaluated. Deciding the sample population of picture storybooks was the second. Those picture storybooks reviewed in The Horn Book Magazine from 1989 through 1992 comprised that population. Because recency is important to speech coaches and judges, the study included books from the most recent four years.

Although this researcher is more familiar with The Book Report, Booklist, School Library Journal, and VOYA as reviewing sources, Horn Book was the source list. Focusing primarily on the upper elementary and secondary grades, The Book Report and VOYA do not contain reviews of picture storybooks. Booklist (1992) divides reviews according to the suggested age level—books for the young, books for middle readers, and books for older readers. School Library Journal (1992) divides its reviews also by the age levels appropriate for the book—preschool and primary, grades three through six, and junior high and up. Neither specializes in picture books, picture storybooks or any other specific type of children's literature.

Horn Book (1992), in contrast, includes a reviewing section devoted to picture storybooks. It is the only widely circulated reviewing periodical to do so, even though it, too, groups reviews according to age level, such as books for younger readers, ages five to eight. Horn Book's uniqueness in separating reviews for
picture books from those for other books made it invaluable for this research study. By labelling books as picture books, the editors of *Horn Book* assisted this researcher by saving countless hours in locating and reading books inappropriate and irrelevant to this study. Picture storybooks are the focus of *Horn Book*. Additionally, *Horn Book* reviewers read all published picture storybooks and include reviews of only those books with high literary quality. For these reasons, it was the most logical reviewing source.

*Horn Book* reviewed an average of 24 titles per issue in 1989 with a total of 148 for the year. The number of titles reviewed in each of that year's issues ranged from 15 to 40. In 1992 the magazine reviewed 94 books, the least being five in one issue and the most being 22. As evidenced, the number of titles reviewed each year varies. The number of books reviewed in *Horn Book* from 1989 through 1992 was 497. Of those, 363 appear in the annotated bibliography. The remainder, 134, appear in an appendix of titles considered but deemed unsuitable for this study (see Appendix B).

In some instances, a picture storybook was suitable for more than one speech category. If so, it was placed in the category where it matched the highest percentage of characteristics. In case the book matched the same percentage of characteristics of two or more categories, it was placed in interpretative reading (poetry or prose) if the author had emphasized word play or if the author had given special attention to the arrangement of the material. It was placed in humorous or dramatic acting if the author had emphasized characterization. It was placed in storytelling if the author
had stressed narration. If the researcher was still perplexed about categorizing the book after considering these emphases, common sense guided the decision.

For each picture storybook analyzed, the researcher kept a checklist of speech categories and characteristics as they were listed above in the definitions section. The reverse side of each checklist form had blanks available to record bibliographic information, a five- to six-line summary, and notations concerning its placement in a particular speech category (see Appendix A). As the researcher read each picture storybook, he completed the checklist form. If a book contained a particular element or was noted as having the potential of manifesting that element through an oral presentation, the element was marked. After reading the book, the researcher completed the reverse side of the checklist and tabulated the results from the checklist. The sheets were arranged in a binder that designated the five categories and the subdivisions for poetry, prose, and storytelling. Each sheet went into the section for which the picture storybook had the highest percentage of matches.

The information from these checklists constituted the annotated bibliography. Arranged alphabetically by author's last name within each of the five general categories, the entry for each picture storybook contained these four elements: bibliographic data, a five- to six-line summary of the plot, notations discussing the book's characteristics that make it suitable for speech communications, and suggestions of other speech categories for which the picture storybook could be used. When this study is published, the listing of titles, that is, actual cross-references, will occur within those categories. The five categories and
their subdivisions were arranged alphabetically.

Attached to the annotated bibliography are two supplements. The first is a list of titles found by the researcher as best suited for speech communications coursework. The second supplement is a publishers directory. All publishers cited in the annotated bibliography are included. This directory lists publishers alphabetically and includes each publisher's address and telephone number. Because the goal is practicality, the directory enables speech instructors or their library media specialists to contact publishers about the availability or purchase of specific picture storybooks.

Suitability of Titles

Because the annotated bibliography lists for speech instructors and speech coaches picture storybooks that they can use in speech communications coursework and extracurricular activities, the list contains only picture storybooks reviewed in Horn Book. However, the term picture storybook elicits different responses and definitions from different people. For some it could mean a tale from Dr. Seuss or an illustrated fairy tale by Susan Jeffers. For others it could be a nursery rhyme book or a concept book. Some may see a picture storybook as a collection of stories by one author such as Roald Dahl or an alphabet book such as Animalia by Graeme Base. Because of the diversity of books on the market and the confusion to speech instructors that could result from the inclusion of all children's materials, many so-called picture storybooks were not included within this study.

Not appropriate to this study were the following types of books, as defined by
Donna E. Norton (1991) in Through the Eyes of a Child: An Introduction to Children's Literature. Books that are anthologies of works from different authors or collections of the works of one author were not part of this study because their primary purpose is not the telling of a story through narrative, language, and plot. Rather, the emphasis is on the author(s) and the relationship among the different tales or poems within the collection. Mother Goose collections are an example. Similarly, books that illustrate nursery rhymes or folktales from other lands were not considered because the text is usually not sustained to maintain any type of oral interpretation or storytelling presentation.

Toy books, "including board books, pop-up books, flap books, cloth books, and plastic books" (p. 173), were not included in the bibliography because their emphasis is often upon developing vocabularies, counting, and identifying colors. Related to toy books are alphabet books that "help children identify familiar objects, as well as letters and sounds" (p. 175); counting books, which "develop one-to-one correspondence and ability to count sequentially from one through ten" (p. 179); and concept books, which "rely on well-chosen illustrations to help children grasp both relatively easy concepts, such as red and circle, and more abstract concepts" (p. 181). None of these types of books have the depth and breadth of narrative and language to be of use to speech teachers.

Wordless books that depend upon illustrations to tell the whole story without words or almost none (p. 183), such as Tuesday by David Wiesner, serve little purpose in speech instruction except in storytelling. Even there, the story
proves too short or superficial to be of value to a storyteller. Additional types of books not included in the study were books lacking literary merit; books with simplistic plots; self-help and informational books such as Dinosaurs Alive and Well! A Guide to Good Health because of a lack of usefulness in speech communications work; and beginning reader books because the emphasis is not primarily on narration.

A last category of picture storybook not to be considered in this study were fairy tales and folktales. Although this researcher realizes that illustrated versions of the tales from the Grimm brothers and Hans Christian Anderson qualify as picture storybooks, they, typically, are not original works. Nor are folktales that highlight American heroes such as Paul Bunyan. The illustrations are new, but the tales themselves are old. Because speech communication teachers seek, as stated, new material, these older tales would not help speech teachers adapt original picture storybooks for speech communication coursework or extracurricular activities. Furthermore, they were not, in a strict sense, picture storybooks. In many cases, the stories are centuries old. The present illustrator has merely added new artwork to modernize or translate the tale to reflect her or his understanding of the story. For that reason, the unique marriage of words and text did not occur, as demanded by true picture storybooks.

The only type of folktale or fairy tale included in this study were those picture storybooks that are parodies, modern textual adaptations, or spoofs of the old tales. Because they depend heavily on the originality of the author and a true blend of
words and pictures, they were included in the annotated bibliography. Two examples of such books are *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* and *The Frog Prince Continued*, both written by Jon Scieszka.

Picture storybooks included in this study were narratives that relate a story either in prose or poetry formats. Most stories had an exposition, a conflict, and a denouement; some were episodic or cumulative so that they built to a climax; others were primarily mood pieces that told of events, but the events themselves did not lead the audience to a conclusion or a climax. Those that fit these definitions were included in the bibliography; those that did not were excluded.

The exceptions to this exclusion were original poem picture books and ABC books written as poetry. Although poem picture books lack a storyline in the traditional sense, they serve speech instructors well in such areas as the interpretation of poetry and literary programs. No ABC books were originally intended to be included in the study; however, the caliber of many of the books and the fact that many have been written as inventive stories or as whimsical poems meant they could not be excluded.
Chapter 4

Picture Storybooks for Speech Communications Coursework:
An Annotated Bibliography

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Dramatic Acting


During WW II, the mother of Henry, Will, and the narrator plans to retire from housework to work in a munitions plant. Because the father wants the children to help while he is away at war, they help with many household chores. At story's end, the children hope they're ready to assume the household responsibilities when Mama retires.

Notation:
This is an exceptionally sophisticated tale that will appeal readily to adults. It is an effective story that is also a lesson about the war.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A boy and an elderly friend, Mother Tipton, cross the bay in her rowboat. The tide comes in, and the bay fogs over. The ducks in the boat, the pets of Mother Tipton, pull the boat to safety on Charles Island. All spend the night there, and in the morning a sailor finds them and returns them home. Mother Tipton and the sailor later marry.

Notation:
Although this is a long story, it is engaging. It could be used in various categories. It includes dialogue, subtle characterization, excellent pacing, and dramatic tension.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

Grandma lives in a bad neighborhood of the city. She and her grandson, the narrator, share many enjoyable activities. Grandma warns her grandson not to go to her basement because a bear lives there. One evening, his curiosity compels the boy to go down the basement. There he sees a lifesize cardboard bear. He realizes the bear is his grandmother's gesture of protecting him, and he never goes there again.

Notation:  
The epiphany of the narrator seems somewhat unrealistic; even so, the relationship of the pair, the boy's fears, and the story's structure are all elements that make this story one worth telling.

Alternate categories:  
prose, storytelling


Andrew and his father live in the airport because they cannot afford an apartment. The boy's mother is dead, and his father is a janitor on the weekends. The daily goal is not to be noticed by security guards. One day a bird is caught in the airport and finally finds a way out. Andrew's hope is that they will eventually have enough money to afford their own apartment and to be free like the bird.

Notation:  
This is a powerful book with a moving message about the homeless. The first-person narration makes this book a necessity for any speech coursework.

Alternate categories:  
prose, storytelling

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A boy and his father visit the Vietnam Memorial to find the name of the boy's grandfather. They meet a veteran in a wheelchair, a couple in tears, a grandfather with his grandson, and a class of schoolgirls. They use a piece of paper and a pencil
to rub his grandfather's name onto the paper. They leave the boy's picture behind, and his father reassures his son that his grandfather will know him.

Notation:
Because it is episodic, this book lacks a traditional storyline with a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The narrative is moving and effective.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


The narrator awakens in the middle of the night when she hears her mother go outside. She and her little brother dress for the cold weather and follow. In the pasture they find Clover with her new lamb. The family carries the lamb to the barn, where the lamb mistakes the narrator for its mother. The family returns to the house, and the narrator waits in the moonlight for Flop-ear, another sheep, to have its lamb.

Notation:
Primarily a mood piece, this small tale describes part of the life process. It may lack a conflict, but it moves the audience effectively. The beauty of birth is the theme.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


When Annie is born, her grandfather begins writing to her, and Annie's mother replies, at first, for her. He sends cards with various scenes on them, explaining Annie's connection to each. His later letters speak more about history or famous people. Finally, Annie brings her letters to school for show and tell, thus creating interest in pen pals for others.

Notation:
The ending does not fulfill expectations; even so, it is a well-told tale that effectively
includes letters in the narrative. The emotions of the characters build gradually and gently as the letters continue.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A girl travels to northern Minnesota, where she fishes with peanut-butter-and-worm sandwiches, eats on the screen porch, swims like a dolphin, canoes, sees bull moose, waterskiis, listens for echoes of Native Americans as she walks in the woods, and memorizes all the scenes as she leaves so that she can remember the events while away.

Notation:
Because of the first-person narration, the book has much potential as an acting selection, although it lacks a linear storyline. It is primarily episodic.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Archie the cat follows his owner, a little girl, everywhere while she prepares for school. He waits for her while she is gone. After school, they go to the woods, where all the animals emerge. In the evening Archie leaves the house, and the girl follows. He disappears down a hole in the woods, where the girl finds many other cats. As she leaves the place, she knows she has seen the world through a cat's eyes.

Notation:
The themes are friendship and trust. The first-person narration gives the book an interesting perspective. Because of it, the book has various possibilities.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

Each summer, Donald and his family travel to Florida to see Bigmama, his grandmother. Once they arrive at the house, they check it to see whether anything has changed. There, they fetch water from the well, check for eggs, dig worms, fish, and enjoy family dinners. At night while looking at the stars, they think of the rest of the summer. Crews, the author, now looks at the stars and remembers his summers with Bigmama.

Notation:
The strength of the book is its insights into rural black life. Performers will need to evoke the feelings of nostalgia.

Alternate categories:
prose

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The narrator's grandfather works in the mines as a child, creates stories about coal mine peaches (plums), moves to the city, helps build the Brooklyn Bridge, then meets and marries Victoria. They are poor but have five children. To those children, he later tells stories about themselves when they were young. The narrator now visits and also hears tales about herself. She also hears stories about the coal mine peaches and believes the tales.

Notation:
The message of family love permeates the narrator's story. Because of the theme and the first-person narration, this is a highly usable tale for acting.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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Rosalba and her grandmother often visit places in the city, including the park. She imagines her grandmother and herself flying about the city, sailing over factories, sailboats, docks, the Statue of Liberty, and the airport. They descend to the city to buy...
refreshments and rest in the clouds. They fly over her father's business and return to the park for an adventure on the boats.

Notation:
This story is reminiscent of Tar Beach. It stresses escape from life's worries imaginatively. It is good for multicultural purposes because of the Hispanic emphasis.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Osa lives in an African village with her mother after her father was killed in a war. Osa begins questioning everything, fabricating stories, and believing her own stories. Eventually she becomes so proud because of the stories that other children will not associate with her. Eventually, her grandmother tells her a story about a proud girl who breaks all the eggs in the basket she carries because of vanity. Osa learns that the girl of the story is she and that she is no better than anyone.

Notation:
Osa's character change at the story's end comes quickly. It stretches credibility; however, the details about village life and the atmosphere created make this suitable for speech communications coursework.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Willie is bored on the farm during the winter, for all he can do is the chores. Because his sisters pester him, he wishes for excitement; however, his grandmother tells him not to wish for something he does not want to come true. That night the wood burning stove overheats and begins a fire. The family and the neighbors save the house and the furniture. When the fire is extinguished, Willie realizes that his sisters are brave and that he should not be too zealous with his wishes.
Notation:
The storyline is predictable, but it includes good dramatic build and tension. The falling action of the storyline allows for a satisfying observation and conclusion.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


In Beirut, Lebanon, Sami's family lives in the basement of his uncle's house because of the bombing. They remember the times when they were free, and now they look to the time when they can live openly. They tell stories in the basement; remember Sami's father, who died in a bomb blast; and listen to the radio--and to the explosions. When outside during the quiet times, they notice the rubble, see the greenery taking over, and observe the cafes open. They also remember the day when children marched to protest the fighting. In the meantime, they wait.

Notation:
This is a poignant multicultural story about the devastation of war on families. It has powerful first-person narration that blends history with personal testimony.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Jessica's best friend, Jason, is moving across town to another apartment. When Jessica visits him, his twin brothers hinder packing. At home, Jessica calls Jason to invite him for a party. Once there, Jason is not in the mood for fun. The children argue over minor differences but reconcile. Jessica writes a note saying no one can replace him. She stuffs it into one of his pockets so that he can read it after he will have moved tomorrow.

Notation:
The first-person narration reflects the turmoil in the girl's mind as much of her
security is eroding. The story is handled realistically, and the conclusion allows proper closure.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Fancy Aunt Jess is actually Becky's second cousin. When Becky visits Jess in Brooklyn, they ride the double-decker buses and the subway, go to the butcher shop, eat cookies while looking at the Brooklyn skyline, and talk about the goose bumps involved with love. At the synagogue, Becky sees a girl and a man sitting across the aisle. She later discovers that the man is the girl's uncle. The two adults meet; one event leads to another; and they marry.

Notation:
The story's weakness is uneven storytelling; its strengths are the development of setting, the interaction of characters with their environment, and good pacing.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Sarah and Susan visit Great-great aunt Flossie on Sunday afternoons. They look through and try on some of her hats, which allow her to remember her past. One helps her recall the big fire in Boston; another hearkens memories of the day when the soldiers return from World War II. A straw hat evokes memories of a time when a dog fetched it from a pond. Once they finish reminiscing, they join the girls' parents for crabcakes at a restaurant.

Notation:
This is a good multicultural story that demands a performer's ability to play various characters, including a girl and an old woman. The reminiscences make this a special tale.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

A small Eskimo girl asks her mother about the quality of her mother's love. She discovers that her mother loves her, even under these conditions: more than a whale loves its spout; till the stars become fish; and even if she breaks eggs, commits deliberate acts of destruction, sings with the wolves, or becomes a walrus or a polar bear. Her mother will love her forever.

Notation:
Its main strengths are its lyricism and multicultural approach. It has potential for speech communications because of the dialogue between the two characters.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Daniel spends much of his time with his uncle Tim at the antique store. One day Tim falls asleep while Daniel visits him, and Daniel learns his uncle has AIDS. Tim becomes so sick that he cannot walk himself to the restroom. After his dad reassures him about the illness and about visiting Tim, Daniel returns to play checkers. Tim later falls into a coma and dies. Now Daniel has the special items Tim willed him and fond memories of Tim.

Notation:
The first-person narration provides impact. It's a natural book for an actor wanting a challenging selection that will evoke strong emotion.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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Having finished the school year, a boy is eager to see his father, a fisherman. As he walks home, he sees many familiar and traditionally Asian sights. On his way
home, he decides not to be a schoolteacher, as his mother wants him to be, but a fisherman, as his father probably desires.

Notation:
The anticipation of seeing his father after he has been away at sea, the boy's contemplations, and his love for his parents are characteristics that give the book depth.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


The narrator's grandmother owns a white basket. In it she keeps everything from scissors and holly to plums and roses. When she moves to an apartment (before the narrator's birth), she loses the basket. Then she says she always kept thread, pictures, a list of friends, a pick--and anything else she cannot find--in it. After the grandmother dies, the daughter and the granddaughter find the basket. The narrator now has the basket and remembers her grandmother.

Notation:
At points the story is confusing because the audience is uncertain which generation is speaking, daughter or granddaughter. It is a touching tale about family, about heirlooms, and about memories. The narrator makes this a strong acting selection.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A boy's grandfather brings home a baby crow. Every day the boy says, "Hello, Crow." As the crow grows, it begins hiding household items, including spoons and an earring. One day the boy does not say hello, but he believes the crow says hello to him. The crow never says anything again and eventually flies away. Later the boy sees a talking crow on a trainer's shoulder at a circus and wonders whether it is the same bird. Today the boy is an old man and watches the sky for the crow.
Notation:
This is an almost magical tale about a boy and his desire to reach and be understood by an animal. It is at its best when the crow hides the items and the boy claims that it speaks. The ending is the weakness. It comes abruptly.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Edwin always has bit parts in the family productions at the Farm Theater. For the new play written by Bruno's father, however, Edwin is cast as the king. During rehearsals Bruno does well, but on opening night Edwin forgets his lines and runs from the theater. The family locates him and reassures him, even though he thinks he is under an evil spell. Bolstered, Bruno tries again, succeeds, and receives ten curtain calls.

Notation:
A bit predictable, the book runs the usual plotline of making a mistake, gaining new confidence, trying again, and succeeding. It is sturdy storytelling that is well paced but not totally original.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling.

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Mirette is the daughter of Madame Gateau, who owns a boardinghouse on English Street, where all the performers and actors reside in Paris. Mirette watches Bellini, a high-wire walker, practice behind the house and asks him to teach her how to walk on wires. He refuses, but she practices anyway. Eventually, he is impressed and agrees to teach her. She also asks to travel across Europe with him; he refuses because he has lost his nerve. That night, however, he crosses a wire because an agent has prompted him. He freezes midway, and Mirette rescues him. They later become a high-wire team.

Notation:
It is a tale that addresses self-confidence, trust, and friendship. To that end, it is

A narrator tells his two grandchildren about his youth when vendors would sell goods in the street. The most interesting is the potato man, who sells fruits and vegetables. Because he has lost an eye in the war, the children, including the narrator, torment him. The narrator's luck turns bad, as a result, because he is caught pulling pranks on three different occasions. Finally, he has enough and returns a stolen pomegranate. The potato man lets him keep it because of his changed heart.

Notation:
The story lacks dialogue that helps develop characterization. Its message about acceptance and kindness make it a tale worth telling.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A boy and his mother visit the boy's grandfather a year after his grandmother has died. The grandfather resists the requests of both daughter and grandson to move in with them. The boy and the man visit the fish store, the green grocer, and the public bath. Everywhere people speak to the grandfather as an old friend. The boy then realizes his grandfather is not alone after all.

Notation:
This book enlightens its audience about Japanese culture. The lesson learned about friendship and loneliness is subtle but effective for speech communications purposes.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

In Holland before World War II, Miriam's Jewish parents send her to live in the countryside with a farm family. She and the family's son, Nello, explore the canals; and the family shows her a cupboard hidden in the wall, where Miriam will hide if the Germans appear. Later Miriam chooses a rabbit from the family's cage, names it after her father, and cares for it. When she hears the secret signal that the German soldiers are approaching, she nearly does not make it to the cupboard because she cannot reach her rabbit. She does make it safely, and the Germans pass on.

Notation:
The story includes tension, characterization, and the exploration of human love, all themes appropriate for speech communications. The ending is anti-climactic, however, for the time of the soldiers' arrival could have been more dramatic.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


While Rose is sick in bed, she asks her mother to tell her various stories about her childhood in Jamaica, which include these: making rag dolls, receiving a broken chalk doll (a manufactured doll) from the family who employed her aunt, receiving two tablespoons of sweet milk in her tea, having a birthday party on three pennies, and receiving a pink taffeta dress made by her mother. The story ends as Rose and her mother make a rag doll.

Notation:
The story has slow pacing. Because the structure is episodic, it lacks the traditional plotline of beginning, middle and ending. Its strength is nostalgia.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


The narrator's great-grandmother, or Oma, lives with the girl's aunt and uncle. The
girl visits Oma in her dark room and listens to her speak in a foreign language. Because she does not understand Oma, she reinvents the story Oma tells: Oma's parents arrange a marriage for her to an oaf. On their wedding night, Oma escapes to an aunt, who comforts her. Oma is sent away for three years and returns to whispers and loneliness. Finally, a salesman meets her, and they marry. The narrator then thinks her story is probably the same as the one Oma has told her.

Notation:
The story is anti-climactic but imaginative, for it discusses an issue that appears infrequently in children's literature: language barriers. The book gains depth from the story-within-a-story framework. Its strength is its warmth and pacing; its weakness is the conclusion.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


When Jenny receives a letter from Maria, her friend who has moved away, she feels sad and writes her a letter. In it, she imagines sailing on a boat through New York harbor, past the Statue of Liberty, with the seagulls and the dolphins, along an ocean liner, through a chain of islands, through a storm, and to the pier where her friend Maria is. She closes the letter with a reassurance that she will some day really visit Maria.

Notation:
The story is primarily a series of events that Jenny describes she will overcome in order to reach Maria. It is effective because each event would demand a speaker's bodily movement, and the events are linked through the structure of a letter.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Luke is staying with his dad for the summer, but he is bored. One morning, Luke's dad takes him hiking to the mountains to find the lost lake he visited as a boy with Luke's grandfather. They locate the lake, which is now commercialized. They continue hiking, away from the area, and eventually locate an isolated lake. The hike and the camping experience draw the two closer.
Notation:
The bonding theme between a parent and a child makes for a usable and performable piece. The first-person narration makes this effective for dramatic acting.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


The hat of Jason's grandfather symbolizes him. Everything has happened to it: Jason has sat on it and flattened it; it has sat on a snowman's head; he has carried eggs in it--and broke one. Grandfather always tips his hat in greeting and says it was built to last. When Jason's grandfather dies, Jason receives the hat. Jason imitates him and knows he will wear the hat when he grows older.

Notation:
The story is episodic. The emphasis is on a series of events, rather than a build to a climactic moment. The framework would work well in speech communications.

Cross-reference:
prose, storytelling


It's 1915 in St. Louis. Tumpie scrounges for food and for coal for her family, and she listens to jazz. Her father Eddie, a musician, is long gone; and her stepfather Arthur is a curmudgeon. Tumpie wishes she could escape, especially from Arthur. One day the Medicine Man comes to town to sell cures; in the evening he sponsors a dancing contest that Tumpie wins. She now dreams of becoming a dancer, despite her mother's misgivings.

Notation:
Tumpie later becomes Josephine Baker. According to the author's information, this is a true story. Because the emphasis is on music, this is a good selection that
includes rhythms and tempo.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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A grandmother recalls her life in the steel towns as a child. The skies were always orange, and her father worked various shifts. It was a typical all-American town with baseball games and Fourth of July parades. The effects of the mills were everywhere because of the grit in the air, the skies filled with smoke, and the play areas that were slag piles. The mills have now closed, and the people have gone away. Only the memories linger.

Notation:
The first-person narration makes this an effective retrospective monologue. The contrast between the present and the past provides structure.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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The crew of the Rita Anne set sail. On their journey, they discover an uncharted island that lacks animal life and plants that bear fruit. They take a glowing rock from the island aboard ship. Because the crew are in awe of it, they gaze at it incessantly and lock themselves in with it when they discover the captain plans to discard it. Finally, the captain discovers that the crew have become apes, supposedly from the rock's influence. The storm hits, and the rock's influence diminishes. After the men return to normal, the captain burns the ship with the rock aboard.

Notation:
The story is written in diary form. For that reason it combines episodic and traditional narrative styles. The ending of the story would not create audience satisfaction.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

The book is a series of observations and reminiscences by Jenny about Martin Luther King, Jr., her classmate Judith, her dad's visit for her birthday, eating Sunday dinner at Grandma's house, her teacher, having a brother or a sister, caring for a girl being teased, a wedding, fishing, going to the circus, taking a bubble bath, baking chocolate cookies, waiting for Christmas, and praying for peace.

Notation:
Although the vignettes are unrelated and do not appear in sequential order, thematic threads interweave separate ideas. For example, family relationships, humor, the concept of charity, and nature are some of those issues.

Alternate categories:
prose


The emperor wishes to name one of his twin sons the next emperor. The warrior son travels to each of the five demons and steals part of their domains--water, earth, winds, clouds, and fire. The wise son cleans the mess the warrior son leaves behind each time and receives a gift from each demon because of his work. The warrior son would receive the title, but each demon's army assembles to kill him. The wise son disperses the armies, saves the warrior, and receives the title.

Notation:
The contrast between the two brothers, the build to the climax, and the satisfying conclusion make this a powerful dramatic selection.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


During World War II, a family sends its father off to war. While the father is away, the boy in the family, Michael, teaches the girl, his cousin, a secret while on the
beach. The secret is perspective. In other words, items at a distance are smaller than those that are closer. When her father returns two years later with an injured arm, he says to her that she is so much bigger. She says she is because he is so much closer.

Notation:
The story touches the heart. It is well framed: the father leaves, the girl learns a lesson, the father returns, and the girl applies the lesson to her relationship with him.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Life in the Swift River towns is peaceful. Then, because Boston needs water, the towns agree to move to allow the area to become the Quabbin Reservoir. The people first empty the cemeteries, then clear the trees, bulldoze buildings, move other buildings, and allow the valley to be levelled. Waters rise and fill the valley over the next seven years. Years later, the narrator returns there by boat, remembers the places, then lets them go.

Notation:
This tale lacks action that would certainly create more interest; even so, it is a powerful narrative about loss, memory, and growth.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A Blackfeet (Piegan) warrior tells his children how he has become known as He-who-loves-horses. One day three travellers, Kutani Indians, arrive at the camp on horses. All are sick. The Blackfeet in the camp are afraid because they see horses, which they call sky dogs, for the first time. The two male travellers die, and one sky dog runs away. The Blackfeet treat the horses like dogs—literally. The warrior, then a child, befriends a horse and learns much. The Kutani woman becomes his mother, and his reputation grows.
Notation:
The first-person perspective adds depth to the story and enriches it with many of the narrator's emotions: fear, wonder, pride, and wisdom.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

Humorous Acting


Mucky Moose smells terrible because he wallows in the swamp each day, attracting birds, frogs and skunks as his friends. The wolf tries to attack Mucky to eat him, but the wolf faints because of Mucky's Smell. He later tries to use a clothespin on his nose, but he removes it when Mucky outsmarts him—then he faints. Finally, the wolf tries a gas mask, but Mucky again outwits him. Embarrassed, the wolf becomes a guide wolf for the blind, and Mucky remains in the forest.

Notation:
This is a silly animal tale that uses repetition and dialogue effectively. Both elements create humor. Also, both will showcase a performer's talents.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


When Sarah's mother goes adventuring, Sarah is never far behind to save her from trouble: from the hungry lions in the Jaba-Jaba Jungle, from the flash flood in the Ropacactus Canyon, from the rattlesnakes while she is floating down the Rattlesnake River, from the falling stones in the Dinosaur Rocks, from sinking in the Jellyfish Sea, from the snoring of bears in the Blackenbatty Caves, from the eyes and the voices in the Gonagetcha Forest.

Notation:
This is obviously a tale about the imagination and about a special relationship
between a mother and a daughter. Because of the imaginative element, this would be a highly usable tale in humorous acting or storytelling.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Berlioz the Bear is a musician who plays a double bass—but it has a buzz in it. Anyway, he and his friends load a wagon. When finished, they travel with a mule to a ball. They hit a hole in the road; the wagon stops; and the mule quits pulling. A chicken, a dog, a cat, a goat, a horse, and an ox try to help pull them out. Finally, the bee from inside the bass scares the mule into moving, and the musicians arrive on time at the ball.

Notation:
The repetition with the various animals helps build a climax. It has strong European folktale roots. The inclusion of the various animals should highlight a performer's ability to develop characters.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


When a little girl shops, plays with Fred, gardens, visits the beach, sees her grandmother, or goes to bed, she takes appropriate things along—but she always takes along her brown bear Barney. Her mom says she cannot take Barney to school, but the girl will try to have the final word.

Notation:
The story lacks a strong narrative; instead, it is episodic, building to the last entertaining idea.

Alternate categories:
prose

Henry and Rosie Wilson want to board a bus. When the driver mirthfully asks whether they know where they live, Henry gives his address as Gumbridge, a town in Australia, on the earth, in the solar system, in the Orion Arm of the Milky Way, which is part of a local group of galaxies, part of the Virgo Supercluster, in the universe. Henry says he does know where he lives and asks to board the bus.

Notation:
Because most of this book is Henry's bombastic narration about his location in the universe, the book would work as humorous acting because it is a lengthy monologue. The exaggeration creates the humor.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


The narrator spends the day at the home of his best friend Wilbur. An octopus serves as door host; a robot digs in the yard; and frogs have a dancing band. The family is searching for Grandpa and his false teeth. That evening they locate the teeth in a frog's mouth. They encounter a brain-augmenting machine, an anti-gravity device, a food-shooting cannon on the excursion. They then celebrate with a pillow fight and stories from outer space.

Notation:
The tale has a funky, surreal setting. If a performer is looking for a piece that combines elements from the past, the present, and the future, this is it.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A little girl wants to be a cowboy. She uses the merry-go-round, her blankets, a museum painting, a Saturday matinee, a mechanical horse, and a bannister in her imaginative play. She tries to obtain a horse through a lottery but loses. The story ends with a series of songs. Now a woman, she reminisces about her childhood.
Notation:
As delightful as the songs are, they replace storyline and, thus, create a division in the book. If a performer can overcome the divided ending, this selection will work.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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The narrator has two cats, Victoria and Ricky Rainbow. To rid herself of gophers in the garden, she gets a golden retriever, Julian. He chases away the gophers and everything else as well, including the cats. One day while playing with the narrator, Julian falls in a well. After the narrator rescues Julian, the dog never pesters her again. Later, after Julian locates Ricky Rainbow in a tree, the dog protects the cats so that they are a happy family.

Notation:
The adult narration makes this an unusual picture storybook. Because of its length, it provides ample material for performance; it may even need editing.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A family manages a fruit stand named after the family dog. They sell tomatoes to Mr. Tupper, lemons to Mrs. Crinch, strawberries to Joanna, flowers to an artist, blackberries to Mr. Vanderman—who invites the family over for his wife’s cobber, a pineapple to a woman in a large hat, coconuts to boys, and so on. They also serve lunch and sell lemonade to people coming from the beach.

Notation:
This story lacks a strong narrative. Instead, it is a mood piece about a store and its customers. Even though it includes first-person narration, it lacks dramatic tension.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

An extraterrestrial takes a wrong turn in the Milky Way and lands on earth. The extraterrestrial meets a boy in a field. They smile and become friends. They play until dark. Before the alien leaves, the boy asks for a trip around the earth in the spaceship. The boy gives the extraterrestrial a dandelion, and the creature leaves earth behind.

Notation:
The point of view of the alien gives the book a twist. The dandelion as a present adds humorous irony to the story's end.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Max and his grandma plan to visit the beach, but each time they start out, she returns home for ridiculous items such as a Monopoly game and bongo drums. When they finally arrive, they discover they have forgotten their bathing suits. Tomorrow when they visit the park, Grandma decides not to take so many items.

Notation:
The repetition of action leads to good internal climaxes and satisfying releases. The humor lies in the preposterous nature of the grandmother. It is fun because of the exaggeration and the lack of adult logic.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Claudia, a high school friend of Eva the Zombie, visits a house where various monsters live. In the morning she awakens Eva and the vampire to jog; in the afternoon she has Barnabas, a mummy, clean the garden. Because it is neat and tidy, Eva shrieks. She also redoes Eva's hair and cosmetics so that she looks human. Each time the vampire seeks revenge, it backfires. Then, when Claudia leaves, she horrifies the monsters one last time because they learn she has cleaned the house.
Notation:
This is a campy story that gains much of its humor from irony; that is, the meticulous human frightens the ghouls. The first-person narration of the vampire adds to the fun because the audience receives fun insights. Fans of Beetlejuice will enjoy this tale.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Sammy, who is continually harassed by Kevin at the park, speaks to his father about his inabilities to overcome a bully. Finally, Sammy overcomes his fears and challenges Kevin, who backs down.

Notation:
This is a classic story involving a bully. The repetition helps build internal climaxes and releases. It includes a satisfying conclusion.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A girl and her parents visit her grandparents on the farm. The sky looks like rain. The girl and her grandfather visit the goat, the horses, the ducks, the pigs, and the cows. Finally, the rain pours. The pair seek shelter from the rain and observe the places under the truck and under the awning that do not become wet. They then drink water from the sky.

Notation:
Because this is written as the grandfather's narrative, this could be used well as an acting selection. Its weakness is storyline; its strength is characterization.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

Kevin Spoon has everything—a VCR, a computer, a pool, a ten-speed bike, great clothes—everything except the doodle flute that Mason Mintz has. Mason will not sell or trade for the doodle flute. Since Kevin cannot find a doodle flute to buy, he finally "asks" Kevin for it. Once he has it, he does not know how to play it. So Kevin agrees to share ownership with Mason in exchange for teaching Kevin how to play.

Notation:
The conflict focuses on a difference of character types—the nonconformist and the materialist. It is clever but has a heavy emphasis on "message."

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A boy sees a spaceship land in his backyard. The spacemen disembark and ask him to join them for a ride. He first asks his mother for permission, but she is so involved in her weaving that she is unaware that she says "yes." They travel quickly and land on a planet. A talking rock tells them about a root beer stand. The spacemen try root beer floats, love the combination, drop the boy off at home, and hurry to their planet to tell everyone about root beer floats.

Notation:
The story rambles, but it does include many opportunities to incorporate blocking, some characterization, and exaggeration. Humorous, yes; magical, no.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


A boy imagines that a monster has eaten his dog Rusty and that he will hunt down the creature with its tracks. He enters a sewer pipe and imagines a dragon there. He heads to a construction tunnel and imagines a huge spider inside. He hikes to the woods and imagines a gorilla there. In each case he says he is not scared. Finally, he follows the tracks home and finds Rusty in his doghouse. There is no monster.
Notation:
Because of the first-person narration and openness for interpretation, this could as easily be a dramatic selection. Because this piece would allow the performer to assume the attitude of a child, it has much potential.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose, storytelling

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The wolf is making a birthday cake for his grandma, but he is out of sugar. He goes to the first pig's house, has a sneezing fit, blows the house down accidentally, sees the pig in the rubble, and decides not to waste good food. The same happens with the second pig. When he asks the third pig for sugar, the pig insults him. As a result, he tries to break down the door when the police arrive. The journalists jazz up the story, and now the wolf is in jail.

Notation:
This is a superb piece that never grows old. The twisted, ironic point of view make the book irresistible. It is full of exaggeration, puns, and the absurd.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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Emily and her grandma climb to the roof of her apartment building. While hanging clothes, Emily plays hide and seek. When the clothes are drying, they play statues, enjoy a picnic, and look over the edge of the building onto the people below. As they gather the dried laundry, Emily asks who else has helped with the laundry and then says she and Grandma are a team.

Notation:
An actor would find this selection a challenge because it lacks dramatic tension or conflict; instead, it explores identity and includes much potential for blocking.

Alternate categories:
prose

Frances knows a witch is hidden under the stairs leading to the basement, and the witch wants her. Nothing has worked to rid the house of the witch. She has used instructional books, a special witch's brew, the allure of a new broom, Halloween candy, and gifts with notes; but nothing works. When her mother asks her to retrieve a bag of plant food from the basement, she carries her stuffed elephant, drops it, rescues the elephant and, in so doing, realizes the witch has left.

Notation:
The story shifts in perspective from first-person to third-person to first-person. The first-person narration is fun and lighthearted, but the shift would create some problems in comprehension.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


As a boy, the author remembers waiting for July, when he would visit his grandparents' house near the beach. He recalls Grandma's kindnesses, the gossipy telephone operator, playing on the beach, practicing tennis, riding, biking, fishing, roasting marshmallows, pulling pranks, and riding in Mr. Harding's speedboat.

Notation:
This story is primarily episodic. Together, the events create a nostalgic reminiscence, but they lack connection. The emphasis is character, not story.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Amy and the narrator are staying with Grandma. Amy says it is okay to bounce on the bed, to swing on the curtains, to feed the dog beans and hot dogs, to draw and paint on the walls, and to pick flowers in the garden. The pair also play in the
garden, get muddy, and splash in the bathtub. When Grandma asks them to be good, Amy says they will be—and they are.

Notation:
The mischievous nature of children pervades the tale, adding much humor. The first-person narration makes it especially fitting for speech communications.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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A boy knows there is more to life. With the help of his friend, he begins attaching weather balloons to things he does not like, anything from his mother's purple dress to his teacher. That night he dreams about flying himself, and in the morning he travels through a storm, over fields of grain, and past cities. A seagull pecks his balloons; he falls but is saved by his mother's piano flying by. He lands on an island where everything else has landed. At tale's end, he considers going home because he is late for dinner.

Notation:
The book's ending is anti-climatic. The author appears to build to an ironic high point, but the conclusion does not fulfill the promise. The story explores the imagination well.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

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Everyone in the house is asleep except for the narrator, for it is the hour of the frog. A frog crawls through a hole in the living room wall, dances in the front hall, thumps to the kitchen, creates a pickle-and-fly sandwich, and climbs the stairs to the narrator's room. The frog tells the narrator she does not scare him when, in fact, she does. He thumps back to the hole and back to the swamp. The narrator cannot fall asleep but then thinks of breakfast...French toast, maple syrup, and flies...Zzzzz.
Notation:
The eerieness of the story and the fear of the girl would lend themselves well to speech communications. The performer would not only need to demonstrate the brazen attitude of the frog but the fear of the girl. It includes a dramatic build and an ironic ending.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling

Poetry, Dramatic


A family explores in the woods and discovers the remains of a house. They imagine the people who once lived there: the parents calling the children to supper, the boy scratching in the dirt, and the parents watching the rain. All that remains are bits and pieces such as a marble, a horseshoe, and a stretch of rope among the animals and the daffodils.

Notation:
The poem has an original and mesmerizing framework: it begins in the present, travels to the past, and returns to the present. The transitions work well, and the poem is lyrical.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Francis Drake grows up on the sea and becomes a ship's captain on his 27th trip. While in Mexico, the Spaniards attempt to overrun Drake's ship, but he prevails. In Panama he robs the Spaniards of their jewels. Eventually, he travels to South America, losing some of his ships. Queen Elizabeth asks Drake to defeat the Spaniards in Cadiz; he does. After months of rest, he and his crew defeat the Spanish Armada and now live on in fame.
Notation:
This historical narrative speaks of heroism, revenge, and rivalry. It is a tale told well that lures the audience with unforced rhymes.

Alternate categories: dramatic acting, storytelling


Johnny Appleseed begins his travels with the Goodwin family, with whom he has dinner. He speaks with them about his travels and heavily influences their child, Hannah. Over the years, Hannah hears stories of his travels and achievements. Many years later, Johnny returns to the Goodwins. Hannah thanks him; he says thanks are not necessary, and he travels onward. Hannah always remembers him and speaks to her children about Johnny Appleseed.

Notation:
Forced rhymes and sentiment are the poem's weaknesses. An interweaving of characters' lives and the historical context are its strengths.

Alternate categories: storytelling


A boy climbs out of bed and sees coyotes in the bushes. The boy calls out their ancient name, "Coyotl." He goes outside, beyond the garden wall, into the sagebrush, and beyond the swings and the slides. The boy calls their ancient name again and dances, plays, and sings with the coyotes. The coyotes tell of the Native Americans of the past and of the miners. The boy returns to his home and to his bed, and the audience realizes it is all a dream.

Notation:
The lyrical quality of the language gives the book a dreamlike feeling. It is a strong work that, if used correctly, would fit well into a literary program.

Alternate categories: storytelling

The narrator describes the area in which Grandpa's house is snuggled. The spirits are the mists. Between the slopes are alpine flowers. The boulders are quiet, but the narrator wonders whether they will roll. Also present are deer, a stream, and a road like an elastic stretched around the slopes. Sometimes the narrator and the grandfather travel the road and camp, feeling the breezes and warming their hands near a campfire.

Notation:
Although the book lacks a traditional plotline, it describes the events of a single day and, as a result, includes a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is primarily a mood piece that would work in several categories.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Each day a boy launches his paper boats. Each boat has the boy's name on it and shiuli flowers in it. He hopes someday that someone in another land will locate his boat. He wonders who sets the clouds sailing, just as he sets his boats sailing. Also, he dreams that the fairies of sleep are on the boats.

Notation:
The story is short but dreamlike and mesmerizing.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


A boy ventures into the woods and meets a Pan-like man who has eyes of glass, hair full of rotting leaves, rats' eyes in his hair, and teeth shining through the back of his head. He can sing backwards, draw dragons in the air, and catch a lark. He wants the boy to come with him into the woods to dance. The boy says his prayers and escapes when he sees the man's eyes turn red and his nails grow.
Notation:
This is not a tame tale. It is most suitable for mature audiences. The refrain is lulling and inviting.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

Poetry, Humorous


Through a series of questions, the reader discovers that kids are of all kinds, have different personalities, have various appearances, do different things, hide in many places, have many things in their pockets, make neat things from ordinary items, get scared of many things, have secrets and dream of having fantastic items.

Notation:
This poem would work well alone or as part of a literary program. The fun is the zany variety of items described about kids.

Alternate categories:

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A bothersome fly pesters the baby, dances on garbage, steals jelly, plays on the keys, nibbles on noodles, irks the parrot, snoozes on the quilt, sleeps on the underwear, dozes in the window, and sleeps on the table, where it is squished.

Notation:
Although this falls outside the original limitations of this study because it is an ABC book, it has enough poetic merit that it needs to be included. It also builds well to its climax. The only possible problem is that the pictures add so much humor, the poem may be diminished through interpretation.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

As a marching band approaches, its music increases. Then as the band leaves, its music dissipates in the distance. The audience hears the drums, the horns, the flutes, the brass, and the thunder. The audience also sees the festive colors.

Notation:
Because this is poem-like and emphasizes onomatopoeia and volume, this book is included in the study. Because the "poem" is directed towards preschoolers, it does not include great depth.

Alternate categories:
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A boy tells his mom he wants a pet. He does not want a plain one but one that gains attention. He mentions a gorilla, an electric eel, a flying fish, a camel, penguins, lizards, a snake, a hippo, a goat, a bat, a bullfrog, or a thing with six legs on its head. What he probably receives, though, is a goldfish that he can love.

Notation:
Because this poem primarily lists ideas, it lacks a strong narrative; however, it includes much humor because of exaggeration. For that reason it would work well.

Alternate categories:
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Jim, a taxi driver, adopts a stray dog and names him Maxi. He gives Maxi a home and drives with him in the front seat. Among their passengers are a Broadway singer, a woman about to give birth, and clowns. They go to the airport, and Maxi gets big tips for entertaining the passengers. At the end of each day, they return home after checking in at the station with the boss, Lou.
Notation:
This has an interesting perspective, that of a dog. The poetic language, realistic setting, and unusual point of view give the book an unusual appeal.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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Written in 13 couplets, this poem alphabet describes one item per letter of the alphabet. The items are apples, breakfast, cockatoos, ducks, an egg, fireworks, grandma, hair, illness, junk, kittens, legs, mud, a nose, an ostrich, a queen, roller skates, sisters, a tent, an umbrella, a vet, a watch, a jack-in-the-box, a yak, and a zipper.

Notation:
This would have limited speech communications applications by itself, but it could be used as a part of a larger poetic or literary program in which light verse is needed.

Alternate categories:
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Two people enter a house, where an organ is playing. They meet witches, ghosts, bats, a coffin upstairs, a mirror from which real ghouls are staring, a mummy, a skeleton, creepy things in the attic, a vampire in the bathtub, a werewolf, and Frankenstein's monster. The two escape the house, and the reader discovers that it is a father and a daughter who have travelled through a Halloween house.

Notation:
This is a delightful poem that celebrates Halloween. It asks the reader to guess the identity of the two journeying through the house and the reason why they stay there so long. The revelation at story's end is satisfying and provides closure.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

A boy climbs into bed to read his ten stuffed animals a story. They all start jumping; one by one, each bounces off and bumps its head. The boy puts each in the toybox as it bounces off, kisses each good night, and turns out the light.

Notation:
Even though this is primarily a counting book, it is written as poetry. The same stanza appears ten times in various stages; as a result, this book would have limited usability. For appropriate settings, it would be a delight.

Alternate categories:

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Written in poetic form, this is a sound poem that details the meanderings of a runaway wheel over the hills, through a church bazaar, over roads, and almost everywhere else imaginable until it returns to its owner.

Notation:
It is a study of language that would work mainly in a longer program focusing on language sounds.

Alternate categories:

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A cat is loose and is now prowling around the neighborhood, trying to capture a bird to eat for lunch. Because he is tired of canned food, he is looking for something "wild." His bell betrays him, and the birds fly away before he can capture them. As a result, he has only feathers for lunch.

Notation:
This book is a great deal of fun because of the good rhymes, but some of the magic
would probably be gone without the pictures. A skilled performer, however, could compensate for their absence.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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After Jessie's grandpa offers to buy her a pair of shoes, other family members decide to buy her matching clothing items until she stops them and asks for jeans instead.

Notation:
The internal build to the ironic ending makes this a highly functional piece. Light and humorous, it is much like a house-that-Jack-built poem. The comedy increases with each preposterous addition.

Alternate categories:
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Rosie Jones has a ranch and a group of wranglers to do the work. One day the group departs to see the Cherokee and leaves Mad McGhee to guard the cattle. Greasy Ben and his gang try to steal the cattle. The wranglers return to thwart the plot and chase the gang to their hideout in the mountains. Rather than attack, they pull Ben's shack into a pool with a rope. They take the gang to town and arrest them. Then they celebrate.

Notation:
It's a delight! No speech program should be without this book.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

A baby is born five minutes late and remains so for the rest of his life. He is late for shows, dinner, church, school, and planes and trains. He is late for his wedding, so his brother marries his fiancee. He discovers that Princess Carrie will be at the gate at 8:00 to find a mate. The guy oversleeps and arrives late. The other gents, 200 in all, tell him to leave, but Princess Carrie is mesmerized because she is also always five minutes late. They marry and decide they are not late. Others are always early.

Notation:
This story will make anyone laugh out loud. The humor and absurdity of the situation will make anyone appreciate this story of a person always short on luck.

Alternate categories:
humor, storytelling

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A baby pig, Tommy, is left at the grocery store. Other people find him and mistake him for a salami, meat, a potato, a bottle, a banana, a ruler, an ear of corn, a table, and a chair. Finally, Tommy's mommy returns to find him and take him home.

Notation:
It is a clever concept, although the repetition is more wearisome than it is enlightening. The story builds well to its last line.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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Many preparations continue all while Jake bakes a cake for a wedding reception. Clothes are made; champagne is imported; signs are made; the guests arrive; the soloist sings; the guests sigh; and the vows are exchanged all while Jake works on the cake.
Notation:
This poem is rather short. Also, the absence of a narrative and of dialogue limits its usability, although it has merit. The refrain, "while Jake baked the cake," is fun because it shows how complicated the job is. It is a nonstop endeavor!

Alternate categories:
storytelling


The knave of hearts steals the tarts from the Queen of Hearts. To find them, she asks Jack and Jill, Old King Cole, Old Mother Hubbard, Jack Sprat, Little Jack Horner, Little Bo Peep, Little Boy Blue, and the Man in the Moon. Each new character accompanies her on her journey until she discovers that he has given all the tarts away to the children of the woman who lives in a shoe.

Notation:
If the theme of one's program is variations of old nursery rhymes, this selection would work well. Otherwise, it is extremely brief to be of great value. It has an episodic structure, not a traditional narrative.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


A crocodile is resting in the water, waiting for a dinner. The ducks, the elephants, the monkeys, the birds, the lions, the bears, and the snakes all join in a dance and a party. The croc hears the party and smells dinner. The animals know he is coming, and the lion puts his throne in the croc's mouth as he snaps. The crocodile leaves.

Notation:
This includes an interesting blend of poetry and sound. The book is brief but useful as an exploration of onomatopoeia.

Alternate categories:

Mouse leaves her duties to go fishing, and she lands a huge one. Because it is so big, Mouse invites Squirrel and her friends. Squirrel invites Rabbit, who invites Badger, who invites Deer, who invites Bear, each claiming the fish caught is as big as himself or herself. When Mouse opens the door that night to let in her guests, she sees dozens of them, all of whom have been invited by others--so she orders pizza for all.

Notation:
Good rhythms are built into the story. The language flows like waves, with fun climaxes and releases. Fun rhymes occur throughout. Also, the humor makes this story endearing.

Alternate categories:


Because Lozo Brown has moved in next door, a little boy is afraid. He says he will not go to school or downtown; instead, he will stay in bed for three years. Lozo is large, and the boy imagines Lozo's tongue is green and rats live in Lozo's hair. The boy thinks he will fight and steal things. When the boy's mother wants him to play with Lozo, he tells her stories about him. He relents and meets Lozo, who is not anything that the boy has imagined. Lozo shares his things, and they have ice cream.

Notation:
The book is full of exaggeration and overstatement. The message about our imagination making us fearful gives this tale some flair. It is entirely suitable for any humorous event.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting

The goose escapes its pen, lets out the hens and eats their grain, lets out the sheep and scares them, lets out the ram that butted the Bixby's child, lets out the horse that gets into the house, and provokes the cows to break down their stall. The owners—the mother and the father—are upset. At night the children talk to their grandmother about the goose and dream of it.

Notation:
The strength of the poem is the refrain that runs throughout it. Its weaknesses are the lack of a sustained storyline and the lack of language play.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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When Rachel Fister finds a blister on her toe, her mother calls in a farmer, doctor, nurse, rabbi, maid, pastor, postman, priest, vicar, foreman, and policeman. These people call for plasters, broccoli, herbal remedies, tea, ice, heat, liquor, and prayer to care for the blister. Finally, they ask Queen Anne, who says, "Just use your lips," meaning to kiss the foot. When Rachel's mom kisses the foot, Rachel feels better.

Notation:
The poem has a wonderful build to a climactic last line. The poem includes rhymes and a natural speed that invites reader interest.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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A mail carrier attempts to deliver a letter to John Peck, but Peck has left for Idaho. Peck flies there, and the letter follows in a train. The mail deliverer in Boise attempts to deliver the letter, but John Peck has left for Zurich. The letter follows Peck to Zurich, but it misses him there because he has left for Brazil. In Brazil, the
carrier discovers Peck is back in New York. The letter finally catches up with Peck in New York, and Peck praises the mail service for its persistence.

Notation:
The peripatetic storyline makes the audience wonder where the events are headed next. It also has a satisfying conclusion. At a couple of points, the dialogue will need clarifying because the characters are not identified.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


A lady at the train station has several items and a Pekingese. She registers the items; the redcap loads them; and the woman leaves for a vacation. The problem is that she has left the dog behind. At Gissing, the railroad workers place a large stray dog with the lady's items to replace the Pekingese. The woman is upset, but the train conductor is convinced the pup grew up.

Notation:
The story builds well to the last line, which is the title. Even though the book was illustrated later—to match the translation, it is included in the study because of its clever language and storyline. The repetition of the list of items that the woman holds adds to the fun.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


All the letters of the alphabet climb to the top of the coconut tree. Once they are all in the tree, it falls over. The letters pick themselves up from the pile, one by one. That night the letter a climbs the tree again, daring anyone to follow.

Notation:
This story will surely make anyone laugh out loud. It will work as an individual
selection but better as part of a literary program because of its length.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Lady Bugatti hosts a dinner for various celebrity insects, besides you and me. Afterwards, they take a frog-chauffeured limousine to the theater. The show begins, but Lady Bugatti is missing from the box seat. Various creatures from the animal kingdom perform. Finally, Lady Bugatti appears on stage, not to perform, but to award the best performer award.

Notation:
The use of insects to tell the tale makes this usable as an individual poem or, better yet, as a part of a larger literary program.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Ten monsters want food in the house. Once the boy gives it to them, they only play with the food, making a mess. The boy becomes angry and kicks them outside. They leave through the chimney, and he gets the one apple muffin they missed.

Notation:
The selection could stand alone because it is long and funny enough, but it would probably be better as a part of a larger literary program involving monsters—or numbers.

Alternate categories:

The queen sends invitations to a ball and includes Engelbert the Elephant. He prepares by finding a costume and learning to dance. The townsfolk grow frantic when Engelbert arrives in town. Until he produces his invitation, the troops try to send him away. When he arrives at the ballroom, everyone is hysterical—until the queen stops everyone. Engelbert begins dancing, and everyone dances with him. After dinner, the queen chooses him for the last dance. All then dance to the jungle, where the ball guests dance with the animals.

Notation:
This is a delightful narrative written as poetry that is a must consideration. The poetry is not forced; instead, the narrative flows smoothly.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Addressed to a young man about to venture into the world, the poem discusses the achievements, the disappointments and failures, the choices, the stagnancy, the recoveries, the loneliness, the dangers, the balancing, and the ultimate successes found in life.

Notation:
At times repetitious, the poem has great possibilities for interpretation, for it includes good writing that lends to good presentations. Good rhythms and breaks are built into the wording.

Alternate categories:


When five sheep buy a birthday gift at a shop, they make a mess. When they try to
pay for the gift, they find they do not have enough money. They barter their wool for the gift.

Notation:
Because of the brevity of the poem, it would work best as part of a larger program.

Alternate categories:
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A boy says a wriggly mouse, a hissing cat, a messy dog, a slithering snake, a scratching bug, a splashing fish, a teasing monkey, a grumbling polar bear, a ravenous pig, and a clumsy lion are in the house. They all turn out to be the boy himself because he is all of those things—and the house is a zoo.

Notation:
The poem lacks a narrative; instead, it repeats the same stanza with varying words and ideas. It is a fun poem that would work well in a larger literary program about the imagination.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting

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A farm boy is told to care for the farm until his parents return at 2:00. The boy discovers flies in the sugarbowl, oats in the buttermilk, pigs in the parlor, cows in the kitchen, roosters in the pantry, and sheep in the bathtub. By this point, the boy has joined the romp and has helped create a mess in the house. At 1:45 all begin cleaning the house, knowing the boy's parents will arrive soon.

Notation:
The poem is short because it lacks a developed narrative and details. Even so, it would be a good selection for an interpreter because it demands energy and enthusiasm.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Poems in this collection describe these citizens from the village: the baker, the mailman, the bicyclist, the schoolteacher, a scarecrow, the town's chatterboxes, the laundress, the cattle herder, the gardener, the children at the pond, the natural history group, the owners of the general store, the pig farmer, the doctor, the tailor, Mr. Mandolini and his dancing bear, the jeweler, the cat lady, the blacksmith, and the skaters at the pond.

Notation:
The humorous observations about each character's quirks make the poems delightful. This book is included in the study, even though it does not meet all requirements of the study because individual poems could be grouped to create a strong selection.

Alternate categories:
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When a child cannot fall asleep while counting sheep, he counts rhinoceroses, giraffes, raccoons, dinosaurs, owls, cats, elephants, alligators, and ponies instead, all in ascending numerical order. Then he counts backwards and falls asleep.

Notation:
Although this primarily is a counting book that should not, technically, be included in this study, it has much potential because of its poetic format. The ascension and the descension round out the poem well. It is fun because of the language play. This would work well in a larger literary program.

Alternate categories:
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The ABCs are listed in rhyme through the activities of a typical day among the Pennsylvania Dutch. The words appear in alphabetical order, as follows: alarm, bacon, cow, dough, eggs, fences, geese, hay, iron, a jar, a kitten, a lane, a meadow, a neighbor, an oak, patches, quilts, a rope, sheep, a team, up, a valley, a window, Xs, yawns, and Zs.

Notation:
Although this is, essentially, an ABC book, it does have enough poetic spirit to make it suitable for poetic interpretation. A performer should enjoy creating the character of one of these rural people.

Alternate categories:
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The various animals in the jungle see a tiger but only catch a glimpse of a part of him. All are fearful of him. Eventually, the tiger looks in the pool and sees itself. The tiger looks at each of the animals and recognizes that the fish, the snake, the frogs, the bees, the monkeys, and the birds all have something in common, whether stripes, a tail, or green eyes. They are all beasts.

Notation:
Because it is poetic, this tale has potential; however, it is somewhat more instructional than entertaining. It includes a theme not readily usable in speech communications work.

Alternate categories:
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The various animals found in a backyard or a wooded area are described through the sounds of their movements. Caterpillars, hummingbirds, bees, birds, ants, snakes, beetles, toads, rabbits, fireflies, and bats are each part of this poem.
Notation:
Very short and simple, this poem is an exercise of sound. It is fun but probably too brief to stand alone; therefore, it needs to be part of a literary program, one possibly that analyzes sound.

Alternate categories:


A family travels to the beach. There, they play in the water, sail kites, play in the sand, eat, walk, and watch the Fourth of July fireworks.

Notation:
Although this is extremely brief, this book is a poem that effectively describes—in couplets—a day at the beach.

Alternate categories:


Each page reveals an item or a number of items. They are a sail, orange houses, girls with baskets of bread, four skipping boys, five blue doors, six wooden windows, seven men, eight pink clouds, nine steel drums, and ten boats. They appear in increasing numerical order.

Notation:
This book has extremely limited use because it is, primarily, a counting book. It appears here because it is written as poetry. Also, it evokes powerful images of the Caribbean in the process of instruction.

Alternate categories:

Nora misses a day at school, and a male friend bikes over, telling her that everyone has asked about her. Everyone at school, at the baseball game, on Mt. Pike, on the ocean floor, in different countries, and in the universe has wondered where she is. When she asks him why no one is there when they have all asked about her, they appear.

Notation:
The rhythm attracts the audience to imagine what could possibly top the last story the boy tells. This poem is too brief to stand alone, but it would work well in a larger literary program about friendship or exaggeration.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


A child asks a crow why it caws and jaws. It answers that it awakens its children, feeds the children, plays with them in the sky, calls to its children, and sings them to sleep.

Notation:
The simplicity works because it is reminiscent of a ballad; however, the brevity of the book makes it limited for classroom work.

Alternate categories:

Hayes, Sarah. *This Is the Bear and the Scary Night.* [illustrated by] Helen Craig.

A boy leaves his stuffed bear in the park. That night the bear is scared. An owl swoops down and picks up the bear, but it is unable to maintain a hold on it. The owl drops the bear into a pond. In the morning a musician fishes the bear from the pond, puts a blue sweater on him, and returns him to the park, where the boy finds him.
Notation:
The true union of words and pictures in this book would impede some understanding in speech communications work; however, the charming personality of the bear compensates for any weaknesses.

Cross-references:
storytelling


A typical day in an elementary school is described. Among the elements are these: show and tell, desks, friends, the alphabet, rhyme, the names of the students in the class, scissors, smocks, the librarian, the nurse, sandwiches, Matt's front tooth, recess, a fight, swings, storytime, a fire drill, writing, waiting for the bell, pencil cases, and going home.

Notation:
Although this poem lacks a narrative line and is, instead, primarily a listing of elements, it is fun and could work well in a literary program, especially about schools.

Alternate categories:
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An older brother speaks to his infant brother and takes him through a year, month by month, telling him what he will teach him, from taking naps to hide-and-seek, from falling leaves to blowing bubbles. The narrative climaxes with the infant's first birthday.

Notation:
This selection would work in a literary program that discusses one of these themes: growing up, brotherly love and protection, looking towards the future.

Alternate categories:
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When at home, a child has a regular routine, but at the sea he may be by himself, sit in the sand and sometimes go without clothes. Mama's busy at home, but at the sea she has time to chase waves, make castles, stroll, and go for rides. Papa's busy at home, but he plays with the child, stays up late, and watches fireworks at the sea.

Notation:
Although it lacks depth of analysis, it is an enjoyable observation of family life written in poetic form.

Alternate categories:
poetry

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A series of animals (and some humans) talk to their young, giving instructions. They are a swan, a robin, a frog, a rabbit, a rooster, a snake, a sparrow, a mare, a dog, a goose, a fly, a rat, a cat, a mouse, a deer, a fox, a crow, a dove, a firefly, a cricket, an owl, and a mother.

Notation:
The audience for this selection is the primary grades; however, it would work well in programs addressing these themes: parental instruction or language play.

Alternate categories:

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The reader is asked to imagine being in a jungle with its butterflies, jaguars, and monkeys; in an ocean with its anemones, seahorses and crabs; on an icecap with its penguins, caribou and whales; in the country with its cattle, turkeys, and sheepdogs; in the past with its triceratops and stegasaurs; on a safari with its crocodiles, leopards, and zebras; in Australia with its bandicoots and wombats; and in their own house.

Notation:
Because this is poetic, it would work well for speech communications; however, the
poem lacks a conclusion. For that reason, it cannot stand alone and needs to be part of a larger poetic or literary program.

Alternate categories:


A farmer awakens and feeds the animals, milks the cow, gathers eggs, and then goes indoors for breakfast. During the day he works in the fields and the garden. He also mends fences and then goes home to bed.

Notation:
The story is an exploration of sounds in near poetic form. It is a simple story, but it is replete with beautiful visual images and strategically placed onomatopoeia.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Charlie Parker plays be bop and the saxophone. Charles Parker does not play the trombone, but he does play the alto sax. The story then explores and exhibits typical be bop lyrics.

Notation:
Biographical in nature, this book is also musical. To that end, it is poetic and would work well in a longer program about music or lyrical language.

Alternate categories:


Jonathan and his mother take walks. They zigzag, take giant steps, take itsy-bitsy baby steps, take bunny steps and hop while they wriggle their noses and their ears,
run, go in slow motion, leap and do ballet steps, do crisscross steps, reggae, take backward steps, and then walk home.

Notation:
The playfulness of the language that describes the walking of the mother and the son would work wonderfully in some speech communications situations.

Alternate categories:

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All animals have a place. The bullfrog and the hippopotamus carry the lower notes; the dogs and the cats have the middle range; the honey bee hums, and the cricket fiddles along; the birds sing the high notes. The possum says little, and the porcupine talks to himself. Other animals such as the alligator, the hawk, the fox, and the bear fill in for a full sound.

Notation:
The concept would do well in a larger literary program. The joy expressed in the poem and the listing of the various animals make this poem a gem.

Alternate categories:

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A boy uses blocks to build a city by the sea that has a palace with a tower. The men on the vessels sing a sailor song; and the people in it are coming and going. The boy undoes his city with a blanket. He knows he will always remember it.

Notation:
This piece could hardly stand alone because of its length; however, it would work well in a literary program that address play or the imagination as themes.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Through repetition, the narrator asks where the monkey, the camel, the bear, the cat, and the other animals go at night. The audience discovers that all the animals are stuffed animals and go to the bed of a child at night, where they are safe.

Notation:
The conclusion includes a twist. It is a ballad--of sorts. Because of its brevity, it would best be part of a literary program.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Prose, Dramatic


Night settles over a village, which retires for the day. When the children are in bed, the Banshee searches for a lonely soul, but the mother holds its child, the blacksmith feeds his cat, the farmer is with his horse, the innkeeper watches his sleeping wife, and the dairy thinks of his cow. The Banshee turns away from each scene in sadness. In the morning, the Banshee is far away because it is light outside.

Notation:
The story has beautiful internal rhythms, even though it lacks rising action. It is a series of repetitive events that create an eerie, sad mood. The emphasis is the creation of atmosphere, not a build towards a conflict.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Stina visits her grandfather in his house by the sea every summer. She hunts for treasure, checks the fish nets, eats fish for dinner, and sometimes does the dishes as a surprise. One evening they hear a report that a storm is approaching. Grandpa
finds Stina outside, wanting to see the storm, although she is not enjoying the experience. He takes her home, dries her, and then returns outside with her in slickers. Stina finds an abandoned drawer and keeps it to house her treasures.

Notation:
The story is more of a look at Stina’s relationship with her grandfather than it is a narrative with a conflict. It is enjoyable because it reflects warmth.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Anna and her grandma are secretly planning a surprise for the birthday of Anna’s daddy, a truck driver. They work on it on Wednesday nights when no one is home. They reveal the surprise gift on his birthday. The family discovers that Anna has taught Grandma to read, a gift her dad has long desired.

Notation:
The strength of this book is the suspense the audience experiences in guessing and then discovering the secret.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Sara, a little girl, and Miss Lilly, her neighbor are best friends. Miss Lilly tells Sara stories, gives flowers to everyone in the neighborhood for their birthdays, and cans jelly. After Miss Lilly becomes ill, Sara visits her in the hospital. When Miss Lilly dies, Sara is lonely. Later, flowers from Miss Lilly’s garden renew Sara.

Notation:
First-person narration adds effectiveness, even though the ending is rushed. The themes of friendship and persisting after death make this a powerful selection.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

Ada wants to be in the bandestra. She finally settles on a violin. At first, she plays poorly, but with practice she improves quickly. On her way to school, Ada needs to walk through a tunnel with her violin. A group of teenagers harass her. It happens repeatedly so that she quits practicing and going to rehearsal. When she tells her friends, they go to the tunnel and play a song together. The teens laugh and march behind. After the experience, Ada begins practicing again.

Notation:
The easy conversion of the older students is not totally credible; even so, the story relates well a girl's experiences with her fears and with her ability to overcome them.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Hattie lives in wealth in turn-of-the-century New York. The family moves from more-expensive home to more-expensive home as her father's wealth increases. Hattie's dream is to paint, an unusual occupation for girls of her standing. The audience learns of the experiences of the family. One evening while at the opera, Hattie decides to attend art school. When a fortune card confirms her hopes, she registers at the institute.

Notation:
This is an exceedingly long story. The events relating to Hattie directly reveal a person in flux, trying to find her place in the world.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Charlene is a night owl who bakes at night and walks her dog at midnight. When her nephew William visits, they have night picnics of raspberries and corn. They
climb trees at night and blow soap bubbles from the tree. While William is away, Charlene writes him about the deer in her driveway, about snow, about raspberries—and she awaits his return.

Notation:
This is primarily a mood piece. It works well as an episodic description of a friendship between a boy and his aunt. The strength of the book lies in its descriptions of unusual actions.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


An old Indian woman dies with her family gathered about her. The woman climbs a hill because her mother calls her. Then she sees her relatives on a plain. The family left behind grieves, cares for the body, and places it in a cottonwood tree. The tale ends with a description of Indian beliefs in the afterlife.

Notation:
This story is somewhat uneven because it is part story, part philosophy, and part didacticism. As prose, this would work well as a section of a literary program involving Indian beliefs.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Hershel, a blind boy, causes many problems for his widowed mother because he has limited jobs she allows him. He wants to do more than fetch wood and water. One evening an angel visits his dreams and tells him to "see in his dreams." He wants to help make Purim cakes, but his mother refuses. On the night before Purim, he awakens and shapes the dough into cookies. His mother is stunned and bakes them. The cookies sell well, and Hershel realizes he can be anything despite his blindness.

Notation:
The story interweaves a message about the disabled with details of Jewish life. It
works well because the story is well paced and includes strong family themes.

Alternate categories:

Brooklyn, NY: Kane/Miller, 1989.

Keiran O'Brady lives in Australia and every morning watches the crowded tram his father takes to work. Keiran wants to be a paper boy like Saxon at the tram stops. He begs so much that his dad gets him a job. Saxon is not pleased and forces Keiran to stay away from the tram. Finally, Keiran sells papers aboard the tram, stays on too long and is forced to jump. Saxon is suddenly nice to Keiran, but Keiran's dad has him sell at a safer location. Now Keiran dreams of being a conductor.

Notation:
It is a charming tale that is well written. It includes good pacing, a climactic build, and a satisfying release. The story has the depth of a good short story found in an anthology.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Nora finds a wounded duck and takes it to Doctor John, a medical doctor, not a veterinarian. Doctor John finds nothing seriously wrong with the duck and takes it to a shed where he has nursed other birds. Nora discovers that he also cares for dogs, hens, sheep, a goat, a tortoise, and a parrot. After seeing the animals, they find the duck has improved. Nora then lets the duckling return to its mother.

Notation:
This is a pleasant story, but it lacks dramatic impact. If one needs a piece that shows the relationship between people and animals, this is an exceptional selection.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

It is misty, and two siblings await the movers. Everything is packed in boxes, and they have said goodbye to everyone in the neighborhood. They have had hot cocoa from the deli and watch the movers carry the boxes. A neighbor lady gives the girl a farewell present. They wave goodbye to the place.

Notation:
This story lacks a traditional narrative. Instead, it records the events of a morning. It is a mood piece that gains its strength through the emotions evoked.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Nora hears stories from the villagers about the Great Bear and dreams of being the greatest bear hunter. She trains and finally joins the annual search. On the hunt, Nora learns hunting techniques. When the hunt is nearly over, Nora wanders into the woods, searching for the Great Bear. She becomes lost and then sees the bear. It makes no sound but leads her back to camp, and she realizes that once she is there, it has left no footprints. That night she thinks she sees the bear in the moonlight.

Notation:
The appeal of the story is the magic and the reversal of roles. Nora the hunter becomes Nora the lost. It is a well-written tale that will appeal to all audiences.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Mei Mei (pronounced May May) has moved to New York with her parents. She is unhappy because she prefers Chinese and refuses to speak English, even though she understands it well. At the Chinatown Learning Center, she tutors younger children, but she refuses to learn English. One day Nancy, a teacher, arrives to teach
Mei Mei English; but Mei Mei has a nightmare and turns against Nancy. Eventually, Nancy shows Mei Mei the importance of learning English while they are on a walk.

Notation:
As a multicultural book, this speaks directly to the issue of the difficulties of immigrants as they assimilate to American culture. The Asian perspective should find wide popularity.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


A boy imagines his father at the Civil War and his mother going after him to see whether he is well. If she leaves, the boy imagines he will have to work around the farm in that time—or care for mama later if his father never returns. If his father fails to return, he will have many responsibilities. If his dad returns with injuries, the boy knows his father will be the same man, despite a missing limb.

Notation:
The perspective is interesting because it discusses what could happen, not what will or did occur. The historical ties with the Civil War make this a unique book. It should work well as part of a literary program.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling


Because of rain and snow, the valley floods. The family is confident they will not be flooded; however, that night the flood whistle sounds, and they leave for Grandma's house up the hill. They asks the Macs, the Cains, and Papa Bill along to higher ground, but each has a reason for staying a while longer. Upon reaching Grandma's house, they go to bed and awaken to the big cleanup. Now they hope the floods will not return.
Notation:
The first-person narration gives this story many possibilities. Its folksy flavor about country people makes it adaptable for several categories.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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A series of mishaps befall Old Washburn, a whittler. His animals run away; the locust and the raccoons eat his crops; and his house blows down. Through it all he maintains a positive attitude. He whittles a fiddle and plays it. Hearing this, his neighbors come to rebuild his house, and the animals return. His positive attitude helps him regain almost everything.

Notation:
The emphasis on a positive attitude makes this an uplifting and intelligent piece. It contains much material for performers with potential. The story's rewards lies in the conclusion.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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A mother owl hears a sound. She knows it but cannot place it. Father owl is out searching for food. She leaves her nest in search of the sound, thinking it may be a puppy, a kitten, a mouse, a barn door, a snake, a raccoon, a dragonfly, or a woodpecker. All night she searches. She returns home and discovers the sound's origin--a baby owl is hatching. The mother owl snuggles it once it is hatched and awaits the hatching of four more eggs.

Notation:
The strength and the interest of this book rest in its sounds. The performer who can handle sound effects and make them real will surely enjoy this book.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Written in diary form, this tale lacks a narrative line. Instead, it is a period piece that establishes mood. The narrator, a boy, gives the reader details about rural life 100 years ago: cutting blocks of ice, working at the forge, playing hookey, taking the cattle to pasture, haying, swimming at Four Rock Bridge, picking apples, and celebrating Christmas.

Notation:
The first-person narrative provides opportunities for using this book in speech communications. It is effective because the reader sees events through the boy's eyes.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting


While an Ojibway baby sleeps, its sister weaves a dream net to protect it. The baby awakens and sees the women working, the children playing, and the men in canoes. That night the baby falls asleep, but the bad dreams are caught in the dream net. Good dreams surround the infant, mainly dreams of play. In the morning, the baby awakens, and the evil dreams are destroyed.

Notation:
This book has a lulling, dreamy quality because of the beautiful rhythms of the language. Not only is the language moving, but the story speaks of the American Indian experience, thus serving multicultural needs well.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Larnel and his mother visit Mrs. Katz, a widow. Because she is alone, Larnel gives Mrs. Katz a cat without a tail, Tush. Larnel and Mrs. Katz become friends. She tells him stories about her past, and they visit her husband's grave. While they are in the cemetery, Tush escapes, but later Larnel's father finds it. Mrs. Katz discusses
blacks and Jews with Larnel and shares Jewish customs. The next day Tush has kittens. Mrs. Tush becomes part of Larnel's family. Years later, Larnel visits Mrs. Katz's grave with his wife.

Notation:
Although it tends to be somewhat didactic, the book effectively portrays friendship and love--and all with multicultural themes at hand.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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To allay her granddaughter's fears about thunder, Grandmother decides to make a thunder cake. They keep counting the time between the lightning flashes and the thunder rumbles. As the time decreases, they gather eggs, milk the cow, go to the dry shed for flour, pick tomatoes and strawberries, mix the ingredients, bake the cake, and then frost it just as the storm is directly overhead. They eat the cake and drink tea, and the granddaughter never fears thunder again.

Notation:
If a story about fear or a grandmother's love is required, this is the one. Also, it has various strengths: pacing, suspense, a satisfying conclusion.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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A girl flies about her Harlem home in her dreams, seeing her parents playing cars and her brother sleeping. She sleeps on the tar roof, Tar Beach, and feels she owns everything around her, especially the George Washington Bridge, which opened the day she was born. Her father is a construction worker who worked on it. He has faced limitations because of his skin color, but she feels her ability to fly will give her freedom and will give her family a better life.

Notation:
The story is lyrical, almost poetic. The theme of rising above and escaping one's
problems is also powerful. Performers will enjoy the possibilities for movement that the storyline suggests.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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While they are waiting in line at the grocery store, Hannah asks her mother about the pregnant woman in the line ahead of them. She tells Hannah of the events of her pregnancy with Hannah: she planted morning glory seeds in a flower box, went swimming, took walks, went to baseball games, had a party, later gave birth to Hannah, and returned home to find a pink blossom on the morning glory vines.

Notation:
Because of the first-person narration, this would be well suited for dramatic acting and for storytelling. Performers will showcase their talents with the story-within-a-story framework and with the differences between the characters.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

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A child refuses to sleep. When the mother says they are at the end of day, the child asks where the end is. The mother answers the end is beyond the bed, the room, the garden, the path, the town, the countryside, the city, the sea, the mountains, and the stars, the place where dreams are. The child asks where dreams originate; the mother answers, "Your head." They say good night.

Notation:
As a dramatic acting selection, it does not provide much information about the characters. Also, it is fairly much a repetitious cycle of questions. The charm is the relationship reflected between the mother and her child. Characterization can be added through the performance.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling
Armien is visiting his old home in South Africa. When the boys tease him about fishing for goldfish, he brags that he will fish with his uncle the next day. Knowing he is too young, he sneaks aboard the fishing boat. The boat leaves in a storm, which knocks Sam overboard. Because Armien sees the incident, Sam is rescued and Armien becomes a hero.

Notation:
The storyline predominates over characterization. The story is a bit predictable but warmly describes the need for all people to have self-worth.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Two boys prepare for a hurricane with their parents. On the morning after the storm, they discover a fallen tree, which becomes the source of days of imaginative play. On the day it is sawed into pieces, the boys are disappointed but eventually become hopeful when they hear reports of a new storm.

Notation:
The story includes an internal division between the storm and the days of imaginative play. They are imbalanced, but each is strong and interesting in itself.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


After the priest discovers that drought is imminent, a boastful young man, Pik, brags that he would tell the rain god, Chad, to get to work. The enraged Chad agrees to a game of pok-a-tok. If Chad loses, he forgives Pik; if Pik loses, he will become a frog. Armed with a jaguar, a cape, a quetzal as a headdress, and the underground river as an ally, Pik wins the game, two to one. Rain falls, as a result, for many seasons.
Notation:
This is an insightful look into Mayan mythology. This tale contains highly specialized Indian language that might frustrate some, but the power of the story and the conflict make it a solid choice.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, storytelling

Prose, Humorous


Because an African carpenter wants more from life, he sees a fortune teller who predicts good things, but always with a provision. At that point, the audience discovers the fortune-teller is a fraud. The carpenter leaves but is so filled with questions that he returns, only to find an empty house. He takes on the fortune-teller's identity and becomes a man of wealth, thus fulfilling the prophesies. In the meantime, a series of mishaps befalls the first fortune-teller. He is never seen again.

Notation:
The ending is fun and ironic. It includes a multicultural setting, and the story is effective because the prophecies come true. It is absurd throughout!

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Miss Jellaby takes her class for a walk in the jungle. Miss Jellaby is so absorbed in spiders catching flies, ants taking away a beetle, lizards eating crickets, and caterpillars inside carnivorous plants that she ignores Tim's cautions about a boa following them. The boa eats the children, and Miss Jellaby finally discovers the problem. She punches its nose, picks it up by its tail—thereby releasing the students, and ties it around a tree. They have lunch, and Tim suggests the zoo for next week.

Notation:
This is a crazy tale. The teacher's singleminded interest creates the humor, and her
heroism provides relief and a good conclusion. The repetition of the events would make this a suitable story for storytelling.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Arthur wants a pet, but his parents want him to know that a pet is a great deal of responsibility and want him to prove himself first. He decides to run a pet business. He first cares for Perky, a nasty dog of Mrs. Wood, while she is on vacation. Others hear of his business; soon he is caring for a canary, an ant farm, frogs, and a boa. When Mrs. Wood returns, Perky has disappeared. They find Perky upstairs with a litter of puppies. Because he is been so responsible, Arthur earns $10.00 and a puppy from Perky.

Notation:
The tale has a good message about responsibility. The unity of characters and plotline and the interweaving of events gives the book its strength.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Because Vanessa wants to earn money, she captures a crocodile. She makes a deal not to make him into handbags or shoes, if he will help her. She places an ad and hires him for a House of Horrors, for an Olympic swimming pool, as a gum chewer, and for other occupations. Both gain fame and fortune. Vanessa notices homesickness in the crocodile. He finally says he will eat her or be taken home. She returns him home and receives a gift, mock crocodile shoes and a handbag.

Notation:
Good references to Australia recur. The reversal of power positions at the story's end makes this an entertaining tale.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

Ben Salem worships his sister, Eppie M., who tells him all kinds of tales, some of which he believes, some not. For example, she tells him that walking backwards with closed eyes will get one to Australia, that looking in a sheep's mouth allows a person to see into its stomach, that swallowing a minnow helps a person swim, that kissing a pig makes a person become a prince, that babies fall as rain in September, and that a man lives in the moon.

Notation:
Episodic in nature, this story does not build to a climax; instead, it describes a series of incidents that develop character, not plot.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Rody works on a kibbutz in Israel. Because he is successful in the chicken coop, he's called Chicken Man. Bracha, the baker, is envious of him and asks for his job; Rody moves to the laundry. Dov, the dairyman, sees Rod's happiness and asks for the job; Rody moves to the garden. Aviva, the dishwasher, sees Rody enjoy the garden and asks for his job; he moves to the daycare center. When the chickens stop laying eggs, the work committee agrees to put Rod in the chicken coop permanently.

Notation:
The repetition of events helps define the joyous, effervescent character of Rody. The multicultural angle makes it especially interesting. The jealousy of the minor characters would work well in prose.

Alternate categories:
prose, storytelling


Arne Hansen needs to buy a birthday present for his nephew Tove. He buys a pocketknife at the market, but he likes it so much that he keeps it and builds a bike for his nephew. Once it is completed, he realizes he has no way to deliver it to his nephew except to ride it. He learns how to ride a bike after many failures. He is
clumsy aboard the bike but finally arrives at his nephew's home only to discover that the boy already received a bike. He gives Tove the pocketknife, which Tove loves, and they have a bike ride together.

Notation:
The irony of the present adds to the story's flavor. It is a fun tale with a Dutch backdrop that highlights Arne's awkwardness and warmth.

Alternate categories:
storytelling, prose


Mrs. Tully buys a dog, Walter, on the advice of friends because she is alone. He wags his tail constantly and is popular. After he grows, he causes countless problems in town, knocking over everything. Finally, everyone closes the store doors to Mrs. Tully and Walter. While travelling later to the top of the hill, her foot is lodged in a rock. Everyone worries about her. Walter takes her red cape and waves it. The townspeople see the cape, rescue Mrs. Tully, and declare the dog a hero.

Notation:
Heavy on message, the story includes little language play or dramatic tension. It does include a satisfying ending and good pacing.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Apparently, two parents are describing life with their son. Sometimes he is an angel, mostly at night. Often he is a monster, fighting to go to bed, wanting always to play outside, sometimes causing floods or accidents. Sometimes he makes everyone else crazy and wild. Most of the time he is a regular little boy, and that is the part of him they like the best.

Notation:
The interesting perspective from the parents, not the child, gives this book a unique
place among picture storybooks. The contrast and irony add to the humor.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting


Six sheep are in bed asleep until one awakens the others with his snoring. They, in turn, awaken him. The six sheep then skip in circles, slurp celery soup, tell spooky stories, sing songs, sip milk, and count to 776. As they do each action, a sheep falls asleep until all do. Suddenly, the same sheep snores as before.

Notation:
The sibilation and the alliteration make this tale a delight. Every "s" sound imaginable occurs. Because it lacks storyline, this piece would be appropriate for a literary program established on sound exploration and language play, rather than a theme of sheep.

Cross-references:
storytelling


The Summers family moves into a new neighborhood. They plant flowers and watch the sunrise, but next door Mr. Wintergarten lives in a gloomy house. The neighborhood children tell horrid tales about him. When Rose Summers' ball flies over the fence into Mr. Wintergarten's yard, she takes flowers and cookies to him and asks whether she may look for her ball. At first he says no, but he opens his curtains, then kicks Rose's ball back into her yard, along with his slipper. She returns it, and they plan to play again tomorrow.

Notation:
The power of friendship and kindness in this story make it appealing for many purposes, including speech communications. The characters of Mr. Wintergarten, a curmudgeon, and Rose, a naive girl, give the story contrast and conflict.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Jim does not want to do anything because it is his first day of school. He does not want to get out of bed, put on his clothes, or eat breakfast. When he arrives at school, he does not want to stay or paint. Finally, he sees how much fun the children are having. He wants to join in. He paints, sings, reads, dances, counts, and plays. When it is time to leave, he does not want to until he is told to return tomorrow.

Notation:
This story has much potential for acting categories as well. The stubborness of Jim is the element that makes this story a delight.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


At News Time in class, Freya's friend, Miriam, announces their family has a huge green tent. Freya is jealous and tells the class the next day she has a guinea pig. After that she tells the class she has a horse in the garage and a baby elephant. Each time Miriam tells Freya not to lie. At home, however, Freya learns some real news from her mother: Her mom is having a baby. The class is excited, and Miriam is friendlier, even inviting Freya to see her tent.

Notation:
The increasing exaggeration in the story makes this more and more delightful. When Freya's stories grow more impossible, the humor becomes greater. The return to reality at story's end makes the tale well rounded.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Chrysanthemum is happy with her name until she starts school, where everyone laughs at her. Everyone teases her about it, and her parents comfort her. When the
students meet Mrs. Twinkle, the music teacher, they learn that her name is Delphinium and may name her baby Chrysanthemum. Chrysanthemum gains acceptance, and all ends well.

Notation:
Much of the humor lies in the original illustrations, but the storyline includes many possibilities for movement and gesturing. It should work well for anyone.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


A boy learns how different his family is from his best friend's family. His family occasionally hugs, but his friend Sam's family kisses all the time. His family maintains privacy in the bathroom, but Sam's family shares the facilities simultaneously. And Sam's family sometimes all sleep together in the big bed while the narrator's parents keep their bed to themselves.

Notation:
Because of the first-person narration, this book has much potential in speech communications work. Additionally, the contrast between the two families adds humor.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Prince Lachlan is a noisy,-destructive boy who ruins everything in the castle and plays loud music. On the other side of the kingdom of Hill, the Great One plots to steal the throne of King Ronald, Lachlan's father. To prevent the theft, Lachlan visits the Great One and breaks his windows, knocks over armor, and rips the tapestry. The Great One fears thieves and escapes, not knowing it is only Lachlan.

Notation:
The tale is lighthearted and builds well to the last line, where verbal irony summarizes the whole. The strength is the onomatopoeia. Throughout, the author
describes the sounds that the mishaps make; for that reason, this would be a delightful selection for prose.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Mr. and Mrs. Muddle like all the same things except for cars. They never go anywhere because he always wants to walk while she always wants to drive. Their friend Elmer tries to settle the problem. He says they are both right and should compromise. They decide on a boat. They buy a canoe, take turns paddling, and end up going in circles. Elmer then advises them to paddle simultaneously. They do, and Mrs. Muddle upsets the boat. They swim to opposite shores, compromise, swim back to the canoe, and paddle off to lunch.

Notation:
The issue of compromise and the Muddles' unwillingness to do that make this entertaining. Although the message is strong, the moral is subtle and works well for storytelling. The dialogue make sit suitable for prose interpretation.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Walter constructs a magic wand. When he goes to the library, he touches a book, Tigers, with his wand, and a jungle appears. The tigers fail to nab the librarian, however, because she spreads thumbtacks on the floor. He taps a book called Pirates, and a Caribbean island appears. The pirates do not kidnap the librarian because she builds a fortress of books. He then taps a book named Oceans. Whales and dolphins appear, but the librarian is not swept away because she has a raft made of bookcases. Walter thinks he is daydreaming and throws away the wand until he sees seaweed in the librarian's hair.

Notation:
Every librarian will love this story about a boy who is determined to cause problems.
The exploration of the imagination and the power of books are two themes that make the story appealing. Its strength also lies in its repetition and ironic ending.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Kevin's mom is about to leave for class, and he refuses to cooperate. Kevin yells when his mom leaves and storms onto the back porch. He then makes a mess in the kitchen. All this time the babysitter, Aunt Lovey, begins watching a baseball game. Kevin is interested, and as the babysitter pulls more and more baseball paraphernalia from her purse, he is involved. They finish watching the game. Later, Kevin wants Aunt Lovey to live with them because she is his friend.

Notation:
The addition of the boy's point of view makes this a fun analysis of a person's gradual change of attitude. The irony concerning the baby-sitter adds to the fun.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Bently Hopperton, a frog, is friends with Kack Kack, a widowed duck. One day Kack Kack lays an egg, of which Bently is jealous. Kack Kack asks Bently to watch the egg while she's away. He paints it like an Easter egg, but a boy takes it. Bently follows the footprints of the boy to a house, where he finds the egg and attaches it to a balloon. On his journey home, he meets the boy's sister, falls on a hat, and meets the boy again. He finally saves the egg and falls asleep. When he awakens, Bently finds Kack Kack and a baby duck emerging from the egg. The three become friends.

Notation:
The story meanders into areas that do not further the plot, but it is fun and dramatic. It has adventures and includes potential for bodily movement and gesturing.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

Shorty is a deadbeat cowboy who never pays his bills. Because he owes Widow Macrae $4.50 at her restaurant, she heads to the ranch to find him. Some friends tell her that he is dead and display him in the coffin. She takes the casket to the graveyard and says to the "corpse" that he will be buried in the morning. That night three robbers come to the graveyard to divide their loot. Shorty scares them off after they try to cut off his nose to make the coffin lid fit. Shorty and the widow divide the reward, but he still has not repaid her.

Notation:
Although the narration outweighs the impact of the illustrations, the book has so much western charm and folktale flavor that it is indispensable.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Frank and Zelda have a successful pizza place by a factory. Because the factory closes, their business withers. When a customer finally arrives, he has no money to pay but grants them a wish of having countless customers. The overcrowding leads to a wish for help. Hundreds of waiters appears, and they lead to a wish for a larger restaurant. Because these wishes create problems, Frank and Zelda wish they had never had the wishes. Now they have a pizzamobile on the beach.

Notation:
The heightening crisis in the story adds good dramatic tension, and the conclusion adds the necessary humor and release after all the panic.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


A young man keeps his heart in a bucket (because it was once broken) until a carp
that becomes a maiden snatches it away. She forces him to solve a riddle before she will return it. When he returns home as a blacksmith, he melts down his bucket and retrieves, magically, a heart. When he delivers the items he had previously been commissioned to make, he discovers the answer to the riddle. His customers—a baker, a piper, a couple with a baby—accompany him to the maiden. When he gives the maiden the answer, she gives him her heart, and they plan to marry.

Notation:
This is a complicated tale, but the various elements blend well. It includes a structured and a unified plotline.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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Imelda is so small that she sleeps in a shoebox. Her father suggests they see a doctor. When they visit Dr. Anderson, he tries to avoid the issue of her height. Then he measures her and suggests she eat only long foods such as spaghetti and licorice sticks. In a week's time, Imelda has not changed. The family is disgusted and leaves for the park to sulk. There, an elderly woman suggests having Imelda sleep in a bed. She does that and grows. Now she keeps her doll in the shoebox.

Notation:
The ending is so abrupt, unexpected, and undetailed that the story trails off. The issue of the shoebox being restrictive needs explanation. The story's premise, absurdity, and pace are good elements.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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Four interrelated subplots run simultaneously: a thief hides among Holsteins, then stops the train, boards it and escapes; a boy riding a train sees the thief dressed as a woman, then arrives home to his parents; the people waiting forever for the train make paper hats and clothes; two kids' parents, who had been waiting for the train and wearing newspaper hats, persuade their children to join the fun.
Notation:
This is a wacky, complicated story. Only a highly skilled performer could make sense of this tale and capture its interwoven, frenetic storyline.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Mrs. McDockerty is knitting a sweater until the cat comes in and pounces on the yarn. Mrs. McDockerty puts her stool on the table and knits there. The dog comes in and leaps at the knitting while the cat pounces. Mrs. McDockerty then puts her stool on a barrel on the table. The pig enters, but Mrs. McDockerty glares at it. When Jack enters and shoves the pig from the doorway, all comes tumbling down. On Jack's suggestion, Mrs. McDockerty asks the animals to leave. Problem solved!

Notation:
The story is full of amusing language and a ridiculous situation that will make anyone laugh. It is perfect for prose or storytelling because it includes many suggested movements for performers.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Mirandy wants to capture Brother Wind so that she can win the cakewalk. She tries to put black pepper in Brother Wind's footsteps and to catch him with a quilt. She tries the conjure by Miss Poinsettia to catch him in a bottle of cider when he smells it. Finally, she snags him in the barn. At the cakewalk, she receives her wish from Brother Wind and wins the cakewalk with her awkward friend Ezel.

Notation:
This is a good Southern black folk story. It includes well-defined characters and
heavy dialogue. Because the characters are strong, it has many possibilities for speech communications.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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Nettie searches for a needle to sew a dress for her doll. Without the dress, the doll cannot accompany Nettie to the wedding of Nettie's cousin, and Nettie then will not go. While searching for a needle, she finds items to help the rabbit, the fox and the puma, but no needle. Later, in return for help, the animals give her a needle to sew the dress.

Notation:
This story has many characteristics of folk stories, but it blends them unevenly with realistic elements. The animal characters add potential for detailed characterization.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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Percy, a beaver, finds gold. Ferd, a fox, learns of this fact and asks Percy to join the House of the Month Club in exchange for the gold; he does. In August a cardboard Victorian appears, but the wind blows it away. In September Ferd delivers a cardboard castle, but the rains ruin it. In October a crepe teepee arrives, but the winds rip it. In November a toy camper arrives, and the mice take it. In December Ferd delivers an igloo. Percy tells Ferd to keep it and learns that the traditional home, a dam, is best.

Notation:
This is a good animal tale about deception and about the security of one's home. It works because of the message, not the detail dialogued or in-depth characterization. It is a clever, original book.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

Kate has a little sister, Tory, who is a copycat. Kate likes to dance, read, roller skate, build structures from blocks, paint, mail letters and play in the rain. She also wants to look like Kate. She evenlikes the same ice cream flavor--double peppermint chocolate chip. All this bothers Kate. Finally, Tory makes other friends and sometimes wants to play alone. This fact also bothers Kate. Finally, Kate's mother reassures her that Tory still needs her. Now they have ice cream together, and it does not bother Kate.

Notation:
The refrain, "that bothered Kate," in its various forms makes this a delightful and humorous story about sisters.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Mr. Blumpoe is a grump who complains to the garbageman, the trick or treaters, and everyone else. He takes a trip to visit his sister in St. Cloud and stops at a hotel. The hotel provides a cat for each guest. The cat, Arnold, which is never chosen, sneaks into Blumpoe's room. When Blumpoe discovers him, he tries everything possible to get rid of him. Finally, Blumpoe gives up and falls asleep. In the morning he awakens and feels good about Arnold. He plans to stay there again on his return from his sister's home.

Notation:
This is a rather involved story. The humor arises from the conflict of wills between Blumpoe and Arnold. Each would be a good character for a performer to create.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


While Noah visits his grandmother, she retells him the story of the day he was
When Nana hears that her grandchild is about to be born, she prunes her berry bushes. She then has a conversation with the cats about the new baby. She bakes cookies, shines the pots and thinks about the times with the child. At night, Noah's dad calls Nana to tell her of the birth, and she says she is Noah's Nana.

Notation:
If the need is for a story about the relationship between a grandmother and a grandchild, this is it. Also, it includes a story within a story and a flashback. It is a delight.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Dudley the rooster is friends with everyone in the farmyard except for Gunther, the goose, who is jealous of his crowing. Gunther tells the other animals, to their disbelief, that Dudley cannot bring up the sun in the morning. Dudley admits this fact but is still well liked. One day Gunther chases Dudley into the woods, where he is assailed by a fox and by owls. The sun decides not to rise because Dudley does not crow. Hector the horse saves Dudley from an owl; Dudley crows; the sun rises; and Gunther leaves.

Notation:
The storyline takes precedence over language play. Performers will enjoy creating the characters of Dudley and Gunther, both of whom are memorable.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Aunt Lulu is a librarian in Alaska. She travels by dogsled (with 14 dogs) to deliver books to the gold miners. Because she misses New Jersey, she decides to move but must take the dogs with her because they do not want to leave her. The gold miners say farewell and give her a moose call as a gift. Now Aunt Lulu lives in Parsippany. In the summer she puts wheels on the dogsled, and the dogs and she wear pink glasses as they sled all over town.
Notation:
The storyline meanders, but the absurdity of dogsledding in New Jersey and wearing pink glasses makes for great fun.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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Natasha is a selfish girl who will not allow her grandmother, Babushka, to do household chores. After lunch, Babushka goes to the store, and Natasha plays with a doll that Babushka played with only once as a child. The doll comes alive and wears out Natasha with running, playing on the swing, and ironing. Once Babushka returns, Natasha says she will never play with the doll again and seems much less selfish.

Notation:
The story builds well to the climax. It contains a wonderful lesson for all. The activities of Natasha and the doll lend well to movement for performers.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling

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Naomi, an Amish girl, tends her chickens but wants just once to be fancy. When she discovers a fancy egg, she gives it to a hen to hatch it. It grows into a peacock, but she worries that the community will shun her because it is a fancy bird. When the peacock escapes and displays its feathers at a community frolic, the town praises Naomi for raising it and then gives her a white cap to replace her old blue one.

Notation:
The story captures the Amish spirit and values. A skilled performer will enjoy portraying the fears and the triumph of Naomi.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling
At the annual Halloween picnic, William competes in various contests. He loses and embarrasses himself in front of Hester in each: the pumpkin-carving contest, the fishing booth, the pumpkin-seed spitting contest, and the tug-of-war. During the costume contest, he feels inadequate in his sheet. Just then from the Quicksand Bottoms comes a glow, which everyone thinks is the ghost of Titus Dinworthy. William knows it is just swamp gas. He jumps in, proves it is gas, wins the costume award for his swamp monster outfit, and wins Hester's heart.

Notation:
A fun Halloween tale, this story contains enough other elements such as puppy love, self-esteem issues, and humor to make it an engaging story to use.

Alternate categories:
storytelling, humorous acting


When a girl's grandfather becomes better, she plans to ride elephants through Brooklyn, lead a parade, march on petals from sunflowers, and release thousands of balloons. Also, a band will play; aunts and uncles will dance; cats will do cartwheels; brothers and sisters will not fight; they will eat treats; and her hair will not tangle. According to the last line, they have now done all this.

Notation:
Many possible uses could result because of the first-person narration; however, the lack of a detailed narrative narrows the categories in which this tale can be used. Because this story concerns the special relationship between a girl and her grandfather, it would work as part of a program involving families.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Dolores awakens on her birthday to prepare for a party. She bathes and borrows her sister's nail polish. She puts on an outrageous outfit that her mother persuade her
to modify. She frosts the cake, wants to win all the prizes, and puts her cat in the closet. Stewie wins the prizes, and Dolores receives three of the same gift. Because the kids are restless, they release the cat from the closet and chase it so that it jumps into the birthday cake. They have pizza instead, and Dolores is happy.

Notation:
Dolores is obnoxious, but she is fun and would be an amusing character for anyone to portray. She is precocious and selfish. It is a great part for someone with talent.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Neat and petite Faye will not allow her messy little sister, Dolores, to play with her Betty-Sue dolls or to eat the brownies that she made because Cindy Snappleby is coming to play. After the snobby Cindy arrives, she condemns the Betty-Sue dolls. Cindy and Faye eat brownies, dance and play jacks. When Dolores shows Cindy her room and her frogs, Cindy loses her composure, loses at jacks, calls Dolores a witch, and leaves. Faye and Dolores reconcile.

Notation:
The characters lack dimension, and the storyline about friendship is predictable once the reader is aware of Cindy's snobbery. Well constructed, even if routine, the story includes familiar character types.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


The Frog Prince and his wife are not living happily ever after. Upon his wife's crabby comment, he decides to become a frog again. In the woods, he meets the witches from the Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and Hansel and Gretel stories. Each wants to do him harm. Finally, he meets the fairy godmother from the Cinderella story. She turns him into a carriage, but he becomes a prince again at midnight. He returns home; he and wife kiss and become frogs.
Notation:
This is a warped story that creatively places a twist on the old tale. Any performer would enjoy portraying the witches, the wife, the godmother, and the prince.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Irene lives in Harlem. Because her friends, Lulabelle and Lulamae, are not yet up one morning, she goes outside, where she meets Charlene. They play, and Charlene insults Irene, who heads upstairs to prepare to fight. When she returns, Charlene is gone. Irene then plays with Lulabelle and Lulamae. They climb rocks, plant seeds, find a nickel, buy a raisin bun with it, and share the bun—even with Charlene.

Notation:
This story has a random plotline. The only element that really holds it together is the grandmother's advice that continually reawakens Irene to be sensitive to others. Although it rambles, it evokes emotions and an environment effective for speech communications. The piece has much potential because of the dialogue.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Elbert attends a party, where a foul word that he has never heard before flies into his mouth. When a mallet falls on his foot, he says the foul word and is punished. Elbert sees the gardener wizard for a cure. The next time the mallet falls on his foot, he does not use the word.

Notation:
The story's strength is the description of the word as a living creature. It includes a powerful climactic build.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Matthew is unhappy that his family has moved from Main to Finley streets. He wants to return. A pigeon leads him to Featherman's Wing Shop, where he tries on seagull and bat wings. Each pair of wings takes him to places other than Main Street. When he finally tries on airplane wings, he finds that Main Street has changed drastically—and he does not like the change. The storekeeper gives him bee wings free of charge, and he flies home.

**Notation:**
The story has a slow start, but it builds gradually to an interesting lesson for Matthew. It is worth the wait.

**Alternate categories:**
humorous acting, storytelling


An old woman finds a jar in the woods, takes it home, and fills it with sugar. She uses the sugar in it to bake. When she has naughty Jackie McPhee over to give him "a talkin' to," they both begin saying only "uum" because the message at the bottom of the jar says anything eaten from the jar makes the person say "uum." The pair head to the Willy Nilly Man because he knows magic; they discover the jar is his. The Willy Nilly Man accuses the woman of stealing the jar. Just then, Jackie, hidden under a shawl, pelts the Willy Nilly Man with rotten eggs. The Willy Nilly Man tells her the cure, and she and the boy are now close friends.

**Notation:**
The story is long because it winds down many trails. To be useful in speech communications work, it needs editing. It is a good folk legend, albeit a long one.

**Alternate categories:**
humorous acting, storytelling

For Mother's Day, Ivy and her little brother plan to make breakfast in bed for their mom. They decided against cake, eggs, mayonnaise, and pickles. They plan to serve cornflakes with milk and a banana—and orange juice. In the process they make a mess in the kitchen. They place the prepared tray on their mom's bed and scare her to awaken her. She sends the tray over the bed. Mom asks for a sandwich: she will be the cheese, and each child will be a slice of bread. They hug.

Notation:
The story has a great build to the mother's suggestion. The mess adds humor, and the desire to give a gift adds warmth and charm.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling


Dogs, cats, horses, and even the pet rabbit dislike Father but enjoy the company of Mother. Even the cow stamps on father and kicks over the milk bucket. Father decides to travel to Africa to find a wild animal that will appreciate him; however, his letters prove the elephants, the lions, the crocodiles, and the rhinoceroses do not like him either. When he returns home, he says he will be satisfied with his family's love, that is, until his own baby bites him.

Notation:
The story has a delightfully ironic ending. It works well and is unexpected. The story includes some unevenness, especially when he suddenly departs for Africa. Yet, the absurdity of it all makes for great fun.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, storytelling
Prose, Seriocomic


A man and a boy travel down a country road in an old car until they are stopped at a railroad crossing. They experience the sounds and the thrills of the train passing.

Notation:
The story emphasizes onomatopoeia. In fact, it is an entire study in sound. It would be suitable for storytelling because of the images evoked. It does not include strong characterization.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Sarah helps Grandpa plant seeds, water herbs, and watch birds in the garden. They also go to the nursery to buy plants and plant them. Later, the garden grows, and Sarah goes to Grandpa's house for a garden lunch. They have flowers for a centerpiece, mint in the tea, a vegetable salad, basil in the sauce, and zucchini cake.

Notation:
The story is primarily a mood piece. It lacks the dramatic tension, characterization, and narration necessary to make it usable in various categories. Instead, it evokes imagines of a special family relationship.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


As the Parkers prepare for their first child, so does their dog, thinking it will be a pup. After the baby, Samantha, arrives and Shadow realizes it is human, he cares for her. When she is older, Samantha is less friendly to Shadow. Because of the rejection, he mopes all over the house. A trip to the veterinarian reveals nothing. Finally, Mrs. Parker buys a puppy which Shadow nurtures.
Notation:
The story has several serendipitous plot shifts that make this tale creative and original.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


At play, Josephina's friends will not exchange names with her, thus convincing her that her name is horrid. She then discovers that her grandma named her after a great aunt, a researcher of plants and animals and a true scientist. Josephina dreams that night of visiting the jungle, where her great aunt now lives. She enjoys the visit. When she awakens, she enjoys her name, as her friends do later.

Notation:
The book includes a story within a story that adds double interest.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


Angelina ruins her bike on her way home from buying decorations for her birthday party. Her mother suggests that she earn some money to buy a new bike. She works after school at various job but has not earned enough for a new bike. On her birthday, she receives many gifts and, finally, the bike she has seen in the store window. Then everyone at the birthday party goes for a bike ride.

Notation:
This book has a rather predictable storyline; even so, it is well paced, building to the climactic moment intelligently.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

Ashraf, a boy, does not live in the wild areas of Africa. Instead, he lives in a city in Africa. He knows of wild Africa only through books. The bulk of the book discusses one of Ashraf's days in the summer as he travels across streets, through intersections, down alleys, by stores, past street musicians, and to the library, where he renews his book about the wilds of Africa.

Notation:
This book thematically breaks down stereotypical ideas about all peoples, especially people in Africa. It has limited usability, but the character of Ashraf is one performers will enjoy portraying.

Alternate categories:

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Alexis, a girl, has an older woman as a friend, Marj, who thinks China is exotic. Marj tells Alexis of digging through the earth to the other side. After reading about it, Alexis digs there through her backyard. Each day she goes farther until she reaches China, where she buys Marj a birthday gift. On Marj's birthday, Alexis gives Marj a postcard from China. Alexis convinces Marj of going to China. At story's end the audience sees Chinese children coming through the tunnel.

Notation:
The story includes some inconsistencies by blending fantasy with reality. Even so, the ironic ending, the character of Alexis, and the pacing contribute to good speech communications material.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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Steve likes to run, but his dog Marathon hates it. One day Steve takes off with Marathon far behind. Eventually, he catches up because Steve is seated, nursing a hurt leg. The police take Steve and Marathon home, and the doctor later discovers a
strained tendon and suggests swimming instead. As a result, Steve swims and leaves Marathon home. Later, Marathon goes to the beach and enjoys running.

Notation:
The story switches point of view. That shift would cause some difficulties for performers; however, the actions in the story would work well to create movement and gesturing in a presentation.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


The famous dentist, Dr. De Soto, travels to Africa to help Mudambo, an elephant, who has a toothache. Because Mudambo will not give up his tusk to fill the cavity, they go to a museum to find a bit of walrus tooth. Before they finish the job, a revengeful monkey, Honkitonk, kidnaps Dr. De Soto. Everyone searches for the doctor and finds him after he escapes. Because De Soto breaks his leg in the escape, his wife finishes the job under his direction.

Notation:
This story is uneven. Bits of humor offset elements of revenge, kidnapping, near starvation, and physical injury. The characters, however, would be easy for any performer to capture.

Alternate categories:
storytelling


While Nurse Lugton is stitching on a curtain, she falls asleep. On her fifth snore, the animals come alive on the curtain, as do the people and the towns. The blue of the cloth becomes the sky; the animals go to the watering hole while the thimble shines as a sun and the snores come as a breeze. The people and the animals interact harmoniously while an ogress (Nurse Lugton) has them enchanted. When a fly awakens Lugton, the animals and people become figures on the curtain again, and she resumes sewing.
The element that makes this book enchanting is the fantasy element within the realism. The blend works well and lends itself to speech communications work.

Alternate categories:
storytelling

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Amoko lives in Ghana in West Africa. She takes her bear, Efua, with her everywhere. She is irresponsible and constantly leaves it behind: when she has a bath; when she goes to the market; when she watches her dad cook; when she plays with Kwame; when they eat; and when she plays drums for Auntie Dinah. That night she leaves Efua outside. Two dogs struggle over it and pull off an arm. In the morning Amoko's father finds the bear and the arm, and her mother reattaches the arm to the bear.

Notation:
Although the story rambles from event to event involving Efua bear, the message is strong. The repetition of events makes this ideal for storytelling.

Alternate categories:
prose, dramatic acting

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Emma lives in a small village. She has no friends because she is new; the others will not play with her. When a circus arrives in town, Emma sees it and instantly becomes enchanted with a dancer in red shoes. The dancer talks to her after the show, gives her shoes, and teaches Emma to dance. After the circus leaves, Emma dances, thinking the others will want to be her friend. She does not give up. When she suggests a circus of their own, they agree and become her friends.

Notation:
Even though the ending is rushed, the story has various excellent elements: a
lonly child, determination, good pacing, a successful conclusion. The story could use more dramatic tension, but it is inviting.

Alternate categories:
prose


A brother and a sister, Jack and Rose, are different. She reads; he plays. He sleeps soundly; she reads at night. They also argue constantly. Finally, their mother tells them to play outside until lunch because she is tired of their fighting. He explores, finds a tunnel, and crawls through it. When Jack fails to return, she crawls through and reaches a wood that becomes a dark forest. She finally finds Jack, who is turned to stone. Her touch returns him to life. They leave and become close friends.

Notation:
The story has good pacing and enough tension between the children to be usable. The only weakness is a lack of thematic connection between the first (realistic) and second (fantastic) halves of the book.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Once born, a tiny cricket desires to make a sound when he meets an adult cricket, a locust, a praying mantis, a worm, a spittlebug, a cicada, a bumblebee, a dragonfly, mosquitoes, and a luna moth. A female cricket helps elicit the sound he is tried to make.

Notation:
The climax is the cricket's chirping. The strengths are the repetition of the wording and the variety of the characters he meets.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose

Two men enter the rain forest; one begins hacking with an ax at a Kapok tree. Because he is hot and tired, he sits at the base of the tree and falls asleep. While he is asleep, a boa constrictor, a bee, a troupe of monkeys, tropical birds, a tree frog, a jaguar, four porcupines, several anteaters, a three-tied sloth, and a child from the Yanomamo tribe speak to him to stop deforestation and to prevent him from chopping further. He awakens, sees the animals and leaves the forest.

Notation:
For the ecologically minded, this tale enforces an important theme. Also, this story includes many possibilities because of the variety of animal voices needed.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Seven toy tub people stand along the bathtub and sometimes have adventures aboard the soap bar or the wash cloth raft. Once, the boy falls down the drain and plugs the water flow. The human adult pulls him out. All are then delivered to the bedroom, where they now stand on the windowsill. Now, however, the boy stands between his mother and his father.

Notation:
The number and variety of characters would make this highly usable. Facial and body gestures would play a large part in the story.

Alternate categories:
prose


Herdsman are grazing their animals outside a sanctuary. On a sanctuary ridge a tigress and her cubs see the herd. The monkeys scream warnings, but a bullock is killed. The herdsmen move their animals, but the tigers kill a camel that night.
Rather than kill the tigers, the herdsmen use fireworks to scares the tigress back into the sanctuary.

Notation:
The story lacks some dramatic impact because tension between the tigers and the prey is absent; however, a strong performer could evoke interest through movement.

Alternate categories:
prose


April lives at 519 Kipperney. For her, the stairs is a waterfall; the living room is a desert; and the washer and dryer are monsters in a cave. Her older sister Meredith lacks April's imagination and says things that make the desert and the waterfall disappear. Later, Meredith is to be a swan in a recital, but she is clumsy. April takes Meredith to the front hall where she knows a lake has formed because of the waterfall. Meredith practices there, becomes graceful, and in April's eyes becomes the swan. April also knows Meredith has seen the lake.

Notation:
The power of the imagination and the spirit of the creative person are the themes presented. As a result, this tale lends itself well to storytelling.


As the sun sets, Red Fox awakens to find dinner for himself and his mate. At the farm a guard dog deters him. At the pond he finds no frogs. In the wheatfield he finds only grasshoppers and crickets. A passing train prevents him from catching a rabbit. He heads to the city, lurks in the shadows, and snatches leftovers from a garbage can. At sunrise he returns home to discover his mate birthed five pups.

Notation:
The story lacks dramatic tension or characterization; instead, the persistence of the fox unfolds well in storytelling so that the audience is driven by the fox's dedication.

Alternate categories:
prose

Tamika's best friend is her grandfather. They take talk-walks and go to the theater, where Grandpa is an actor. One day Tamika peeks into Grandpa's room as he rehearses. She notices that he has a mean face. She becomes afraid and misbehaves at dinner. Grandpa takes her on a talk-walk, and she tells him her fears about the face she has seen. He reassures her that he will never be truly angry with her.

**Notation:**
Because acting is part of the situation, performers should enjoy this selection. Playing the various emotions and demonstrating the conflict will make this piece come alive.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Grace loves stories and plays many parts. At school the other children tell her she cannot play the part of Peter Pan because she is female and black. Her mother and grandmother tell her otherwise, and her grandmother takes her to a ballet featuring a black woman. Encouraged, Grace earns the part through hard work and learns she can do anything she desires.

**Notation:**
The story is uneven. We learn much of Grace's playtime activities, but the author provides no information concerning the ballet or the play itself. Grace is a dynamic character, however, and affords many opportunities for good performances.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Billy and Carlos are best friends. When Billy receives a new bike for his birthday, Carlos asks his mother for one on his birthday. When she says she cannot afford
one, he is disappointed and sulks. Eventually, his birthday arrives, and he receives a go-cart from his brother. The go-cart helps him win the big race.

Notation:
The story is somewhat long; however it is well detailed. It also moves at a pace that maintains interest.

Alternate categories:
prose


A group of South African children are excited because their fathers are returning from work in the mines. They attend school, go to the crossroads, and create makeshift instruments, all while singing about their fathers. They wait throughout the night and until dawn, when their fathers finally arrive. They then celebrate.

Notation:
This story builds to a climactic moment and provides a satisfying conclusion afterwards; however, it has a rather simplistic plot.

Alternate categories:
prose


Dinah's mom reprimands Dinah for coloring on the wall. Sent to her room, Dinah bumps the wall with her rocking chair and wishes that her mom's face would turn ugly, that a vampire attack her, or that a witch kidnap her. Meanwhile, Dinah's mom remembers the naughty things she did as a child. Each feels sorry for her anger; they reconcile.

Notation:
The story includes emphasis on storyline and characterization. It is realistic.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose

A feral cat has four kittens. She and the kittens are hungry. She decides to go to a human's house. A boy and his mother feed it cream, and she then brings a kitten to share in a second bowl of cream. The cat leaves the kitten behind, and the family finds a home for it. The cat repeats this three more times, and the family finds homes for the others. Finally, the cat trusts the boy and returns to find a home for herself. At story's end, she is not wild anymore.

Notation:
An interesting element in this story is seeing into the cat's thoughts. Such an interesting perspective allows the reader to see the story from a varying point of view. The story lacks developed dialogue.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Choco, a little bird, searches for his mother. He asks a giraffe, a penguin, and a walrus bear, but none look like him. He then meets Mrs. Bear, with whom Choco imagines what having a mother would be like. A mother would hug Choco, kiss him, and dance with him. Mrs. Bear asks Choco whether she may adopt him. He agrees and meets three other children whom Mrs. Bear has adopted.

Notation:
Reminiscent of Are You My Mother?, this story has a good twist near the end with the adoption. The irony adds interest.

Alternate categories:
prose


On a Caribbean island, Simon helps each morning in Pops' bird hospital. One morning he finds an injured baby flamingo in the water. Pops catches the bird, which Simon names the Flamingo Baby. Simon nurses the bird to health and eventually releases the bird into the wild. Simon is reluctant to let baby go but
knows he must. Simon’s mother reassures him that she will love him after he begins school, just as he still loves Baby.

Notation:
Because of the Caribbean setting, dialects could make this an engaging tale to hear from a speaker.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose

Matthew the mouse lives in an attic with his parents. They want him to be successful, maybe as a doctor. One day he goes to the museum, sees the various paintings, and is inspired. He also meets Nicoletta, a girl mouse. That night Matthew dreams and realizes he wants to be a painter because he now sees the world differently. After working hard at his profession, Matthew becomes world famous and marries Nicoletta.

Notation:
Although the story’s conclusion seems rushed to provide a happy ending, a skilled performer could effectively portray the emotions of anticipation and aspiration.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose

An old woman lives in a ramshackle house. Her daughter Rilda gives her a blue blanket, but the woman places it on the donkey. She then will not use it herself because of the smell. Her son Hans gives her a white blanket, but the woman places it on a goat. She then will not use it herself because of the burrs. The older son, Jacob, gives her a yellow blanket, but she places it on her dog. She will not use it herself because of the fleas. Her children complain, but she explains how the animals serve her and keep her content.

Notation:
This has the classic characteristics of a well-told fable. It has repetition of actions, irony, and a conclusion that ties the elements together. Although the tale is long, it
is usable because of the medieval setting and the warm tone.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Rosie wants to bake with her mother, but her mother is too busy with her baby brother, Fat Mat. To let her mom sleep, Rosie takes Mat outside to make mudpies and to pick blueberries. He is a mess afterwards. When Rosie's mom sees him, she is cross. Rosie runs away until she realizes her dad and Mat need her. When she returns home, Mama asks to bake blueberry pies with her.

Notation:
The story includes irony, a range of emotions, and a glimpse into someone's mind. For those reasons, this story is suitable for speech communications work.

Alternate categories:
prose


Eric and Karin, his other sister, attend daycare together. She is helpful to Eric, but now she is going to school, and their parents devote much attention to her. He feels small and wonders how he will survive daycare. He dresses himself poorly that first day, and Karin teases him. At daycare he befriends and cares for a smaller boy. Now Eric feels big.

Notation:
The perspective of a preschooler helps make this story memorable. The ending has enough of a twist that it concludes the tale satisfactorily.

Alternate categories:
prose

A sparrow lands on Filofilo's pole as he crosses on a tightrope. He asks the saints for help because he is imbalanced. A novice, Saint Tony, assists by sending another sparrow, a pigeon, a cat, a dog, and a monkey. The situation only worsens with each addition, that is, until Saint Ulysses intervenes as a snake. The snake wraps around Filofilo's feet and lowers him to the ground. The animals disappear, and the audience applauds loudly.

Notation:
The story has repetition of action. Complication follows complication until a true deus ex machina is necessary to alleviate the problem. The story includes much potential for movement and gesturing.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


A man lives across from a field and loves it. When a for sale sign appears in the field, he sells his goods but lacks the money to buy the land. He thinks of growing pumpkins to earn money. He sews seeds and tends them until he has 461,212 pumpkins. He rents trucks and planes and writes to people around the world to buy his pumpkins. He sends them off, and people buy them, make jack-o-lanterns, and use them for baking. After he receives his money, he buys the field and some new furnishings for his house. Then he gives away his seeds.

Notation:
Because the story lacks dialogue and characterization, it seems best suited for storytelling. The emphasis is the narrative. It is slightly far-fetched, but it has heart.

Alternate categories:
prose

The Sheldon family leaves Connecticut to settle in Ohio in 1800. On the way a thunderstorm stops them. They spend the night underneath the wagon to avoid the rain. In the morning they try to clear the road of the numerous fallen trees. Mr. Sheldon walks to Aurora, merely a surveyor's post, then onward to Hudson to find eight men to help him clear the road. Then they need to push the wagon through the mud. The men return to Hudson, realizing they are the dawn, the first people in this area.

Notation:
The story has a feel of historical accuracy, even though it lacks dramatic tension. It includes a range of emotions from desperation to hope.

Alternate categories:
prose


A girl has awoken from a dream and retains a special feeling. She attends dance class to prepare for the evening's performance, but they do not overrehearse. That night the girl lets go because she still feels the dream. She expresses herself through movement, not words. The performance is successful, and the girl anticipates the next day.

Notation:
Uneven narration misses the connection between the dream and the dancing; even so, any performer would enjoy the movements that this selection suggests.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


One morning a cub awakens to find its mother gone. He searches the old trails and encounters a nasty lemming, a mother moose, and an old bear. Locating a stream and being very hungry, he learns to fish and learns to defend the stream. As he
becomes more self-sufficient, he grows bigger, fatter and fiercer, ready to be an adult.

Notation:
Although this story lacks overt drama, it includes a subtle plotline and an interesting narrative that shows growth.

Alternate categories:
prose


In India, a gardener, Guba, and his pet monkey, Kaloo, meet a white elephant who promises to return to take them to paradise. Guba tells a potter, a seller of spices, and a weaver. Each asks to accompany him. On the appointed night of the elephant’s return, Guba grabs onto the elephant’s tail, and the others grab onto him. As they fly, Guba lets go of the tail in exasperation of the others’ questions. They fall and find what they had hoped to discover in paradise. They discover they are in Guba’s garden. Kaloo returns from the trip, saying it was only an elephant’s paradise.

Notation:
The story touches on several themes, including greed and the search for paradise. The simplicity of the plotline and the repetition of events compensate for the lack of dialogue and characterization.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mr. Hatch works in a shoe factory, keeps to himself, and leads a mundane life. A box of chocolates delivered on Valentine’s Day transforms Mr. Hatch into a socializer. When it is discovered that the chocolates were delivered in mistake, he reverts to his old ways until everyone realizes how much Mr. Hatch has done for them; they throw him a party.

Notation:
The character of Mr. Hatch is a delight. Anyone will enjoy portraying his humdrum
existence and his change of personality.

Alternate categories:
prose


Eric never talks because his secret friend, the Night Shimmy, speaks for him. The Night Shimmy chooses good stories and chases bad dreams away. Eric's other friend is Marcia. One day he flies a kite in the park, climbs a tree and makes monkey sounds with her. That night he awakens and cannot find the Night Shimmy. The next day he is irritable even when Marcia wants him to play. When Marcia's kite is caught in a tree, he frees it, begins talking, and flies kites until dusk. The Night Shimmy appears to wave goodbye at story's end.

Notation:
This is a surreal book. The identity of the Night Shimmy (Eric in a wizard's hat and a mask) remains somewhat of a mystery even until the story's end. The surreal quality would probably not translate extremely well in speech communications.

Alternate categories:
prose


During World War II, bombing makes the zookeepers at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo fearful that the animals will get loose and terrorize the city. As a result, they poison all the animals, except the three elephants, which are more difficult to kill. They try poison and eventually starve them. Today, a monument stands in the animals' honor.

Notation:
This is a powerful tale. It speaks despairingly of the horrors of war. Its strengths are a story within a story, extreme tension that builds to a climax, and emotional appeal.

Alternate categories:
prose
In a marsh, herons, geese, wolves and other animals live. The pilgrims arrive and build homes. Communities are built. The wolves leave, but the grass still swishes in the wind. The Revolutionary War is fought. After the British leave, the settlers fill in the marsh, and most of the animals leave. Lights are installed, and houses catch on fire. Cars and trolleys appear as do other forms of transportation. Everything is crowded, and one last heron calls goodbye.

Notation:
The tale has an interesting blend of environmental concerns and American history. Together, they combine to make an engaging storytelling piece. Also, it has much potential because the sounds of the animals and the grasses are expressed so well.

Alternate categories:
prose

An Asian boy has received pictures from his adoptive parents and is now flying to the United States to meet them. At the airport and at home he is nervous and anxious. Eventually, he feels safe as he becomes familiar with his parents' faces and home. They are the same as those he has seen in the pictures.

Notation:
The raw emotions in the story give it force and make it highly usable as speech communications material.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose

Walter, a boy, is insensitive to his environment, tossing garbage away indiscriminately and not separating the garbage. That night he dreams that he travels to the future aboard his bed. He sees a world loaded with mountains of trash, empty forests, pollution-producing factories, rampant commercialism, seas
without fish, crowded freeways, and weary animals. When he awakens, he changes. When he dreams again, he dreams of an environmentally sound world.

Notation:
The story's strength is its message about ecological management; its weakness is a very slow build, that is, very slow pacing.

Alternate categories:
prose


Because an old man, Bruno, is lonely in his cottage, he makes three wooden dolls--Winnaker, Maisie, and Ralph. He places them on a ledge to watch him work outside. One day Bruno leaves, never to return. Plant and animal life overrun the house until it disappears in vegetation. One day a man discovers the house while exploring and returns the next day with his wife and his daughter. The family returns in the spring when they clean and clear the house. The little girl repaints the dolls, who now have a family with whom to live.

Notation:
The story includes some mystery (what happens to Bruno?) and magic (the way nature claims the house). Also of importance is the quiet thinking implied by the dolls. The weakness is a lack of dramatic tension.

Alternate categories:
prose


A girl is aboard a boat, hoping to see whales for the first time. She first catches glimpses of tails, but they are of dolphins. Then she sees spouts and tails. The whales emerge from the water, and she sees their mouths. Eventually, one whale rises, and the girl and the whale seem to have silent communication.

Notation:
The anticipation of seeing a whale builds well to a climactic moment. Then the
tension releases, and an affirming conclusion follows.

Alternate categories:
dramatic acting, prose


Mr. Nick and Mrs. Jolley knit on the 45-minute trip to the city aboard the train each morning. One day Mrs. Jolley isn't aboard the train, and Mr. Nick learns she is in the hospital. He visits her with a gift of yarn. Because she says she has nothing to see in the hospital, Mr. Nick knits for seven days and pieces together a quilt with countless blocks, each depicting a different scene. Now she has something to see while in the hospital, and both knit for 45 minutes, although they are apart.

Notation:
A story of friendship, this book emphasizes loyalty and thoughtfulness. It lacks tension and conflict, but the two characters include enough dimensions that any performer will enjoy portraying them.

Alternate categories:
prose


Jessie and James live on a farm. James has a cat, William, who does everything with him. One day James suddenly dies. In grief and depression, Jessie puts out William. The cat fends for itself and becomes mean. Jessie realizes that James' cat is no longer friendly; she then takes him in again.

Notation:
The story lacks strong characterization that could be demonstrated vocally or physically. Its strength is the movements of the cat that the story suggests.

Alternate categories:
prose

A small African boy wants to make a galimoto, a wire push toy, but he lacks enough wire. He trades a knife for some wire, acquires some from his uncle's shop, finds some at a mill, trades a stick for wire, and scrounges in a trash heap. He finally has enough and makes a pickup. He then plays with his friends with his galimoto.

Notation:
The story is primarily episodic. It repeats the same action; for that reason, it lacks dramatic tension while demonstrating unity.

Alternate categories:
prose


Because Anlaf Haraldsson lands first in the valley through the help of the hidden folk, Gorm the Grim writes a runic curse in a boulder that later rends Anlaf's daughter, Elfwyn, blind at birth. The hidden folk protect Elfwyn from all harm. When Elfwyn is older, Gorm the Grim delivers a huge crystal that bewitches all in the kingdom except Elfwyn because of her blindness. The spell creates squabbles among the people, and the kingdom falls into ruins. Elfwyn destroys the crystal, and the shards destroy the cursed boulder. Elfwyn gains her sight, Gorm is banished, and the glow from the crystal shards now constitute the Northern Lights.

Notation:
An imaginative myth about the Vikings, the story leaves no unanswered questions and builds well to a climactic conclusion. Except for an unclear opening, it is a magical tale that performers will enjoy because of the conflict between good and evil.

Alternate categories:
prose


Maylin cooks in her father's restaurant in Chinatown, but her father claims her lazy
brothers prepare the meals because women are considered subservient. Maylin prepares Ross Sing on New Snow for a competition sponsored by the governor of South China; she wins, but the governor thinks the brothers made it. When her family cannot repeat the dish for the governor, they confess the lie. When Maylin states the dish cannot be repeated in China, the governor attempts to make the dish alongside her. His dish is miserable, and Maylin's reputation as a chef grows.

Notation:
This is a satisfying tale with good pacing and a climactic conclusion. Because of those aspects, it would work well in speech communications coursework. Also, its folklore and multicultural aspects make it highly usable.

Alternate categories:
prose

**Storytelling, Humorous**


In Paris, Felix Clousseau enters his humble painting of a duck in an art contest. He wins because the duck comes to life. His popularity grows because all of his paintings become real. Chaos follows, but a character from one of his paintings acts heroically and saves Felix from prison.

Notation:
The story has an ironic ending with good touches of humor throughout. The chaos of the paintings would be difficult to suggest physically.

Alternate categories:
prose


Jessie Mae idolizes Charlie because he can do anything, even pick up a penny from the bottom of a pool. When Charlie gives Jessie a magic kit, she begins to perform unbelievable acts, which Charlie cannot accept, such as juggling and making a rabbit appear. Finally, he's convinced and decides to go on a journey with Jessie Mae.
Notation:
The story is highly imaginative, lending itself to the suggestiveness of storytelling.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting


For his birthday, Harry receives a helicopter made from cardboard. One afternoon, the helicopter lifts off when a wind blows. He hovers over the city and learns how to operate it. He discusses his moves with a tower, location unknown. While in the helicopter, he does acrobatics with seagulls, barely navigates a bridge, lands in a park, passes by office buildings and the Statue of Liberty, and is lost. The radio tower directs him home, where his dad is waiting.

Notation:
The book is an adventure. It includes escapades with which most people can relate. Also, the book has action that encourages performer movements.

Alternate categories:
prose


Stina visits her grandfather's house on the island. One afternoon they decide to visit Stretchit, Grandfather's friend, because it is his birthday. They make honey sandwiches, his favorite, but find the house quiet and Stretchit lying in bed. When he discovers the sandwiches, he jumps out of bed and relates exaggerated stories about his sailing days, especially how he floated in a washtub after a shipwreck. He gives the tub to Lena for her to use as a boat for her stuffed animals.

Notation:
The internal story of Stretchit provides a clever story-within-a-story structure. The personalities of Stretchit and Grandfather would be fun to portray.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Norman, the signmaker's assistant, realizes how obedient all the townspeople are to the signs that the signmaker paints. He begins painting signs that cause problems such as "no school." Then while the signmaker's away, Norman paints such signs as "knock heads" and "detour" through a house. Because of the prank, people remove all the signs, creating chaos around town. When the signmaker returns, the people chase him out of town. That night Norman replaces all the signs and apologizes on a banner. They forgive him and learn not to obey signs blindly.

Notation:
The story has much potential because the signs suggest all kinds of goofy, absurd actions. The moral helps the performer return to a traditional base at story's end.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Every morning Professor Dupont gets out of bed, prepares for the day, and heads downstairs to say "good morning" to his ten cockatoos. Tired of hearing the same thing every morning, the cockatoos escape from the conservatory and hide from Professor Dupont. He looks for them in the dining room, the kitchen, the bedroom, the bathroom, the attic, the roof, the garage, the cellar, all while the cockatoos are nearby, hiding. The next morning the cockatoos have returned, but Professor Dupont again says "good morning." The implication is that the cockatoos will hide again.

Notation:
The humor of this book lies in the illustrations. While the professor is searching each room, the cockatoos are hiding from him. The repetition of lines is limiting.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Lottie believes wishing will make dreams come true. She wishes to have a circus and plays all the parts: ticket taker, ringmaster, food and balloon vendors, carpenter, painter, clown, animal trainer, driver of the calliope, trapeze artist, tightrope walker. When her cat runs away and wishes not to be part of the circus, it ends. That night her father reads a circus story to her.

Notation:
The ending is confusing. Suddenly, her father appears, and the ideas become muddled. Other than that, this book lends well to storytelling because of the various activities described.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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D.W., Arthur's sister, volunteers him to babysit the terrible Tibble twins. As soon as Grammy leaves, they play cowboys, toss cards about the room, play hide-and-seek, and cause Arthur problems in the process. When Arthur begins telling the twins about the Swamp Thing and its appetite for twin boys, they settle down. Grammy arrives home, sees the pacified pair, and invites Arthur to babysit again. He agrees and volunteers D.W.

Notation:
This is a clever tale that invites action especially during the traumatic babysitting incidents. The irony in the ending adds humor.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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Arthur's class participates in an essay contest; the topic is "How I Can Help Make America Great." Arthur wins and is invited to the White House to deliver it. His family and his class prepare for the trip to Washington. Once there, Arthur is nervous about speaking in front of others. At the White House, Arthur's notes fly
away when the President's helicopter lands. Arthur forgets his speech when he begins, but everyone laughs when D.W., Arthur's sister, is hanging down from a branch with cue cards.

Notation:
The story contains a great amount of action and moves quickly to a fun ending. The pacing, the humorous conclusion, and the nervousness of Arthur make this highly suitable for speech communications work.

Alternate categories:
prose


Joseph Kay is waiting for his father to return from picking up his mom. His dad has said things were going to change. While waiting, Joseph sees the tea kettle turn into a cat, the slipper into a bird, the sofa into a crocodile, the chair into a gorilla, a soccer ball into an egg, and socks into a skull. He goes to his room and turns off the light. His parents return with a baby sister, the change foreshadowed.

Notation:
Although a performer could only suggest the changes Joseph sees, good storytellers could register in their faces the surprises, fears, and magic involved.

Alternate categories:
humoroujs acting, prose


Marvin escapes during feeding time at the zoo. In his new life in New York City, he dines in fine restaurants, swings about in parks, visits museums, sees movies, frolics in toy stores, fishes on the Staten Island Ferry, climbs skyscrapers, attends baseball games, plays checkers in the park, and adjust well to his new life all while the police are looking for him. Just then, the hippo, Helvetica, escapes....

Notation:
This book is hilarious. The storyline is episodic, but it is fun. Because so much of
the humor lies in the illustrations, performers will need to work extra hard to portray the fun of the book.

Alternate categories:
prose


While Mommy's away, Daddy tries to get Susie to nap. Because she refuses, he tries to make her tired by walking, dancing, exercising, reading a story, and lying down. She delays by asking for a drink of water, a balloon, and her pink socks. Finally, Daddy falls asleep. Mommy arrives home, but she still refuses to sleep.

Notation:
Performers will enjoy portraying the feistiness of the child, and they will like the amount of movement involved.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Henry the cat is jealous of the family's new puppy. He climbs a tree, rolls over, walks on the back fence, and walks on the clothesline to gain attention. One day the puppy follows a squirrel onto a ledge. Henry climbs a wire and rescues the puppy. The family then appreciate Henry.

Notation:
It's an unusual animal tale, but it includes many possibilities for movement and emotion. It has a satisfying conclusion.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Professor Potts and his family are travelling West by train. On a water stop, he finds a bone and digs until he finds many bones. He takes them home to the East and tries to assemble them in various ways, but he always has leftover bones. He eventually arranges them until they fit. His wife makes a skin of fabric, and he reveals to the public a ridiculous-looking creature, a tribrontosaurus rex.

Notation:
The story includes a good build to a climax, which is preposterous. The delights, the frustrations, and the idiocy of the professor are traits performers could portray.

Alternate categories:
prose


Box works nights at a press; Cox works days at a hat store. Each rent the same room, one sleeping while the other is away, and both unaware of the arrangement devised by Mrs. Bouncer: she replaces each man's items before the other returns so that neither is aware of the other's presence. All goes well until each proposes, and she agrees to marry both. To celebrate, Cox comes home and discovers Box. Both leave, and Mrs. Bouncer is released from her woes. She then posts a vacancy sign.

Notation:
Although the story's strength is not characterization, the pace and the action are so frenetic that no one could help become involved in the events.

Alternate categories:
prose


Henry and Hilda Hatter are awful children. They constantly fight and cause havoc. One day after they paint the wallpaper green and each other purple, their parents send them to the zoo to live. At first, the zookeeper is happy. Then the pair
torment all the animals. As a result, the zookeeper places them in a cage with a fierce lion. They grow scared, submissive and thin. After their parents visit and notice the change, they take Hilda and Henry home. The lion accompanies them to watch over them. Now they are changed, although the story's conclusion hints not all is well.

Notation:
Even though the book is somewhat hostile in approach, it is fun and well paced. The story lacks dialogue and would work best in this category.

Alternate categories:
prose

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A girl, Tory, travels to Taylor's workshop, where he carves wooden weathervanes. The latest one is in the shape of a terrier. Tory makes tiny baskets shaped from peach seeds, which they tie around each weathervane's neck. They deliver the weathervane to Miss Perry, who dresses the weathervane to match her dog. At Taylor's, they feed the animals, sip hot chocolate and plan their next weathervane.

Notation:
This is a straightforward tale that emphasizes mood over other elements such as language play or characterization. The strength is the characterization possibilities.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Roseberry the pig is an adventurer and learns from the birds, the fish, and the moles. But tired of being lost, eating gross things, and being without a home, he hopes to be the ward of a shepherd once he sees how kindly the shepherd treats his sheep. Roseberry soon realizes the shepherd plans to eat him, even though the sheep assure him otherwise. He cries for help as the shepherd begins to chase him; and the moles, the fish, and the birds rescue him.

Notation:
This story is somewhat absurd; however, it contains irony and a happy ending.
Performers will enjoy portraying the shepherd's deceitfulness and Roseberry's adventurous spirit.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Louise has a cat, Frida. One day a package with a collar in it arrives on the doorstep. Because it is too small for Louise, Frida wears it and begins to do marvelous things such as playing the piano, cooking bean soup, going to the post office, driving a bus, and waltzing with Simon from next door. Frida becomes so busy entertaining others that they give the collar to Simon's dog. The dog begins doing marvelous things, and Louise and Frida resume their former lives.

Notation:
This is a fun tale that incorporates minor elements well, especially the boy next door and the bus trips.

Alternate categories:
prose


Lily Laceby, nearly 90, lives with Butch Aggie, her dog. One night she falls asleep in her chair. The dog hears noises outside and gradually grows more and more angry as the noises increase. Miss Lily continues sleeping. Finally, pounding on the door awakens Miss Lily. She lets in her two sons, three daughters, 14 grandchildren, and 35 great-grandchildren, who wish her a happy 90th birthday. She admits to her great-granddaughter Emily that she is 90 but claims she is 4-1/2 inside, just like Emily.

Notation:
The gradual build to the invasion of the family into the house creates excitement. The increasing tension would work well in storytelling; the release includes a bit of fun irony.

Alternate categories:
prose
Sarah's cat Ralph has broken the strings on her violin and has pasted her stamp collection on himself. Because he has ruined her projects, she takes him for show and tell. He behaves on the way to school; but once at school, he knocks over the red ant farm, does frightening shadows on the screen, and commits other misdeeds. He was supposed to show how he could write his ABCs. He wears the dunce cap and feels bad on the way home. Sarah then bakes him a cake and pastes a gold star on his nose.

Notation:
The preposterousness of a cat being able to do his ABCs, besides pulling pranks, is fun. The various misdeeds could be incorporated well into a presentation.

Alternate categories:
prose


A boy and a girl are tired of caring for the pet cat and dog of their grandfather. As a result, Grandpa tells them a story of how animals have become so lucky as to be served by humans. In the past cats and dogs ruled the world. The other animals served them, but they grew so lazy that the kingdom was in a mess. Eventually, they discovered humans, who became their servants. The roles later reversed because the animals were so lazy; the humans took over and now rule the planet.

Notation:
This is a fun folktale that explains how humans began caring for their pets. The story works on different levels because it is a story within a story.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mabel finds a duck on her doorstep that thinks it is a cat. It does not swim, drinks milk from a bowl, catches mice, and plays with yarn. Mabel shows the duck pictures
of ducks and cats, but it is unconvinced. When a dog chases it, it flies to a lamppost and down again. Mabel convinces the duck it is a duck. The next day a cat appears, quacking....

Notation:
The story has a climactic ending with irony as its conclusion. The frustrations of Mabel and the stubbornness of the duck could lead to fun facial gesturing.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


When Grandpa and Grandma come over for Sunday dinner, Grandad entertains the baby Max with his reappearing chocolate bear. Alison then tries to juggle her three stuffed puffins. She does not do well, and Grandad does not either. On a later Sunday, Grandad pulls the tablecloth off the table and almost breaks an expensive porcelain piece after he sees Alison juggling. On the next Sunday, Grandad hides a box of chocolates to do more magic; but before he does, the dog eats the chocolates.

Notation:
Although the story rambles, the possibilities involving magic tricks make this tale well suited for storytelling. The performer could suggest many actions.

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No one sees William's first step. He rolls down the front steps, his wind-up bear with him. After he begins walking, the family takes precautions because he grabs everything; nevertheless, it all comes tumbling down. He is always taking off. Once they find him in a duck pond. On his birthday, the family takes him shopping. He becomes lost, and they find him in a store window. During his party, they find him at the table, a mess because he has been eating. That night they find him exhausted—with his bear—in the dog's bed.

Notation:
This is a delightful story about a toddler. Because William is learning to walk, the movement needs to be emphasized through acting or storytelling.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Miss Teaberry's cat digs up a locket. Miss Teaberry worries that a burglar will steal it. As a result, she asks the milkman to give it to a girl, who returns payment with three puppies. Miss Teaberry has the milkman give the puppies to a young man, from whom she receives a parrot. This situation continues: Miss Teaberry receives a horse, sheep, pigs, geese, and an ox. She returns them all. Finally, Miss Teaberry arranges for the boy and the girl to meet. They do; and they marry, giving Miss Teaberry the freedom to return to her garden.

Notation:
The story has a build to an ironic ending. The fear of Miss Teaberry and her later frustrations, besides the weariness of the milkman, are good emotions to portray.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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On an island is a town. The sailors who protect the island are healthy because they drink milk from the cows that eat clover pollinated by the bees, which are not bothered by mice because the cats owned by the old ladies of the town are out at night and chase the mice into the forest. One night the mayor trips over a cat and decrees that cats must stay inside. Of course, the balance of nature falters: the clover grows sour; the cows give little milk; and the sailors become weak. Then invaders arrive. Once the mayor drops the law, balance returns, and the sailors banish the invaders. They then give their awards to the old ladies who have always known how important the cats are.

Notation:
The house-that-Jack-built style makes this tale most engaging. The message is the interconnectedness of all creatures. Skilled performers will find a challenge in making the connections controlled yet fun.

Alternate categories:
prose

Because the tortoise is tired of being mistaken for a rock, he criticizes the elephant for walking on him, claiming the elephant is stupid because of its small head. The tortoise bets that he can jump over the elephant’s head, and the winner will provide a feast for the other. The tortoise uses his brother to trick the elephant into thinking he can jump over him in a flash. The other animals enjoy the joke and go to the feast. The elephant feels foolish and never steps on the tortoise again.

Notation:
This story is great folklore. The characterization demands will be challenging but also rewarding. A skilled vocal contortionist will enjoy the variety.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mrs. Peterkin has accidentally put salt in her coffee instead of sugar. Her son Agamemnon suggests seeing the chemist, who agrees to help because he will be paid in gold. He puts many kinds of chemicals into the coffee, but nothing works. They then try the herb woman, who uses all kinds of herbs. Finally, they ask the lady from Philadelphia, who tells them to brew a new cup. They do.

Notation:
The repetition of action within the plotline is not dull. Instead, the absurdity involved makes this highly entertaining. Exaggerated facial gestures are warranted.

Alternate categories:
prose


Nine ducks are on a walk. Because they know a fox is following them, one disappears during each of these events: walking, sitting on a gate, taking off together, doing balancing tricks, diving, reaching the shore, flying into a tree, having things to do. Finally, when one duck is left, the fox lunges forwards, lands on the
bridge, and falls through the trap laid by the ducks. The ducks swim, and the fox never chases them again.

Notation:
The story includes a fun build to the moment when the ducks dupe the fox. Repetition of language and of story events helps create a climax and some humor.

Alternate categories:
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At Christmas, both sets of grandparents, three friends, Uncle Bartholomew, Lily and her baby, the minister and his family, the kids next door, five aunts from Abindon, two couples whose car breaks down, and a kitten stay with the Mistletoes. Because of the number of people, they sleep that night in unusual places: the bathtub, the sink, the kitchen cupboard, the mantelpiece, and the windowsills. On Christmas they have a wonderful dinner together.

Notation:
The cumulative effect creates humor and leads, satisfactorily, to the conclusion, a Christmas dinner spent together. The story suggests the heavy use of gesturing.

Alternate categories:
prose


Ruthie Simms has an imaginary playmate, Jessica, who does everything with her: sledding, reading, building towers, feeling mad, sharing a birthday, going to bed.... On the first day of kindergarten, Ruthie isolates herself with Jessica until a girl asks to be her partner in a line. The girl's name is Jessica, and they then do everything together.

Notation:
The irony of the girl's name helps this tale build to a good climax. The imaginary
playmate would suggest many gestures from the performer.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Before Julius is born, Lilly is excited. After he is born, she hates him. She scares him, tells him bad stories, refuses to share, makes noise, and tells everyone else about his faults. Her parents punish her and call him "the baby of the world." In defense to her Cousin Garland's criticism of Julius, she too calls him the baby of the world. She and Julius then become good friends.

Notation:
The repetition of phrasing and the illustrations make this an outstanding book. Pouting, anger, sneakiness, and pride are some of the emotions a performer would need to express to relate this selection successfully.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Dave, his sister Sue, and their mother Maude are outlaws, but the father of the family, Dan, likes to sew. They rob many stage coaches while Dan stays home and sews clothes. One day the victims of a robbery ask the family where they buy their clothes....Now, the family no longer robs. Instead, they stay home, where Dan sews and sews.

Notation:
Because so much of the story is dependent upon the illustrations, a storyteller or an interpreter would need to embellish much to have the story make complete sense.

Alternate categories:
prose
Annabelle Jones wants to dress like a proper lady. She dons a pale blue dress, a white petticoat, navy-blue knickers, pink socks, shiny black shoes, a straw hat, white lace gloves, and a long gold chain. Then she heads outside. She is stopped to retrieve a cat from a tree, to go-cart down a hill, and to play ball. She tries to remove the dress each time, but still she is a mess when she returns home. Her mother suggests less fancy attire the next time when she travels outside to be a proper lady.

Notation:
The actions necessary to tell this story make this book perfect for storytelling. Each clothing item would have a trademark gesture, and her antics would be fun.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Josh has two older sisters who constantly tease him. When their mom leaves to shop, she puts the girls in charge. At first they refuse to play, but then they blindfold Josh and leave him in the yard. He hides. When the girls cannot find him, they agree to play nicely if he comes out. He does, and they are good—for a while.

Notation:
This has an interesting first-person perspective. The strength of this selection is the rivalry between the sisters and their brother. Also good is the implication at the story's end that not all will remain peaceful.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Alexander is afraid of nothing except the dark because he sees giants, witches, and bears in the shadows. One evening he sees the shadow of a dragon underneath his bed. His mother reassures him, and the next day his dad says to scare it off or make
slapstick and some absurd gesturing, both facial and physical.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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A lady living alone makes soup on Halloween. It is thin because she lacks a soup bone. She looks everywhere for one and finally begins digging in the yard. She locates a skeleton that jumps out and scares her. She climbs a tree, and the skeleton decides to cause trouble in her house. He finds the soup, but a dog finds him and chases him. The skeleton hides under the bed, and the dog reveals itself to be the woman in disguise. They agree to quit scaring each other, to share the soup and each other's company, and to scare someone else because it is Halloween.

Notation:
The twist of events makes this a fun book. Also, the Halloween aspect gives this tale real flavor (pun intended).

Alternate categories:
prose

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Nothing is the way Henry wants for his brithday: the cake, the favors, his clothes, a kiss from Aunt Gertie, and the presents. Molly then pins the donkey tail on him, and he loses at musical chairs. When he blows out the candles on his cake, he wishes it to be someone else's birthday. Then he discovers how good the cake is and how fun the presents are. When everyone is gone, his mom reassures him that he can wish for something else next year.

Notation:
The series of problems and their build to the birthday wish makes this story suitable for speech communications. The story includes classic rising action, internal conflict, and falling action.

Alternate categories:
prose
friends with it. Alexander tries the first and whacks the dragon on the nose, making him sad. Feeling compassionate, Alexander invites the dragon to stay and play. It does but comes out only when Alexander is alone. After that, Alexander goes without a night light and curls up each night with the dragon.

Notation:
The story is slightly anti-climactic, but it includes various possibilities for action and for humorous facial and physical gesturing. It is a tale full of the imagination and full of building tension.

Alternate categories:
prose

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When Mother sees Titch's neat room, she suggests that his older brother and sister, Peter and Mary, clean their room. While Titch helps, he asks for the old toys, games, and outfits they no longer want until his room is packed. Their rooms are clean, and his is now untidy.

Notation:
The story's conclusion includes charming irony. The strength of the story is its repetitious build to humor and the inevitable results.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Sally is on the beach and finds a limpet. She pulls it off the rock, but it becomes firmly attached to her finger. Her dad cannot remove it. Then the nature teacher and Sally's friends try to pull it off; finally, the doctor tries. Because no one succeeds, she runs off by herself again to the beach. She runs to the water and jumps in. The limpet wiggles off, and Sally returns it to the very rock where she first found it.

Notation:
This is a fun tale about leaving creatures of nature alone. It could include some

Horace is a little leopard adopted by tiger parents. Every night when he goes to bed, Horace's mom tells him of his adoption, but he falls asleep before she is finished. He does not feel he belongs in this family, especially at his birthday party, because he looks different. After he dreams about being with other leopards, he runs away to the park to meet them. He meets a leopard family, but while he plays hide-and-seek, he realizes he misses his parents. He returns home and knows he can "choose" them just as they had adopted him.

Notation:
The last line will surely bring a smile to anyone's face or a tear to anyone's eye. This a touching story that speaks quietly but powerfully.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mother leaves and puts Libby and Sam in charge of Alvin, who cries. He does not want to have cookies or milk, to play a game, to hear a story, to take a nap, to draw pictures, or to play at the park. When Mother returns, she discovers that Alvin did not receive a kiss goodbye. Now he is ready to do everything that Libby and Sam previously suggested.

Notation:
Because of Alvin's contrary attitude and Libby's and Sam's frustrations, this story has much potential. The conflict adds humor and demands performance skills.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Wild and Woolly, a brother and a sister, dig a hole in their sandbox and fall through to the North Pole. While travelling home, they meet Father Christmas, the Good Fairy, Prince Charming, the Little Mermaid, the Pirate King, and the Gypsy. Each takes them in and feeds them. Finally, they arrive home safely.
Notation:
The various characters and the inclusion of dialogue add much potential as a piece for storytelling. A skilled performer with voices is necessary.

Alternate categories:
prose


Pinkerton does anything possible to be first. He is first down the slide and first through the cafeteria line. One day on a Pig Scout troop outing to the beach, he hears a voice, asking, "Who cares for a sandwich?" He runs down the beach, desiring the food, but he runs into a sandwich. Because he has said "me first," she takes him to her home, where he powders her nose, feeds her, cleans the place, does laundry, and tucks the Sandwitch into bed. When he cannot think of a bedtime story, she helps him to retell his and he learns being first is not always best.

Notation:
The story has a few loose ends and unexplained plot devices; overall, however, it is engaging. The strength of the selection lies in the characterization.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Arthur is a gentleman who has little fun because he has no friends. One day while in the park he nearly steps on a talking worm who asks Arthur to be friends. Arthur takes him home, gives him a bed and names him Charles. Arthur takes Charles to a tailor to buy clothes. They eat in restaurants, take bus rides, and go to the movies. The children learn of Charles and want to play with him. The town bully, Bill, posts anti-worm notices around town, but the children pull them down and kick him out. Arthur and Charles may now do want they want.

Notation:
The introduction of the bully at the story's end makes the tale uneven. It is,
however, a fun story about friendship that would benefit from characterization and identifying voices.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Rosie loses her baby tooth while playing dragon with Sid, who tells her to place it under her pillow for 50 cents from the tooth fairy. Rosie fears growing up, which the lost tooth symbolizes for her. At bedtime, Rosie says the tooth is gone so that the tooth fairy will not find it. Her dad persuades her to leave a letter underneath her pillow. The reply letter asks Rosie's permission to put the tooth on a golden chain. She finds it and that night leaves it under her pillow. In the morning she finds the chain and is happy.

Notation:
Because of the story's content and message, it has limited usability; even so, it has warmth and charm that would work for storytelling.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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Norvin is a boy who looks like a shark. Because he cannot find many good acting parts, he begins swimming in Caramel Cove. Norvin does not want others in his way while he swims. He constructs a dorsal fin and appears to be a shark. He clears the waters of swimmers and becomes selfish about the Cove. Several times swimmers return when they see Norvin without a fin, but each time he clears the waters again. Finally, a female shark mistakes Norvin for the real thing and wishes to marry him—or will bite him. The other people realize the joke, and Norvin stays out of the cove for a long time.

Notation:
This story includes great humor. It is delightful and contains a predictable but
enjoyable conclusion. Good performers could find many ways of enhancing the story through movement.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Peregrine the pirate lives with his aunt and her parrot. Whenever he comes home from the sea, he attends parties but refuses to take his aunt along. As a result, she decides to have a party of her own. She bakes cookies and dons a party dress, but no one arrives. The parrot then invites its friends, and the neighbors come to join the hullabaloo. Later, Peregrine arrives home to find a deserted mess. The aunt is asail for adventure, and he is left home to clean.

Notation:
This is a satisfying tale with a just ending. The problem is that the message takes precedent over language play. Performers will have fun in developing characters.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mrs. deVere lives in an apartment and walks to the beach. Mr. Derry lives at the beach and walks to a fountain outside Mrs. deVere's apartment. Each day they meet but never talk. Because they are lonely, each finds a dog at the pound, but again they do not see each other. While walking in the park with their masters, the two dogs recognize each other, growl, attack, and wind Mrs. deVee and Mr. Derry in their ropes. After they are untangled, the couple have orange juice together and begin a relationship of walks, fishing, the opera, and dancing.

Notation:
The story has shades of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" because of the dogs' names and 101 Dalmations because of the entanglement of the two people. Also, the story includes some entertaining parallelism and resolutions to problems that make it
highly valuable. Because the emphasis is narration, not characterization, this piece is best suited to storytelling.

Alternate categories:
prose


An old woman offers a farmer a chest of gold to break a spell she is under, but only if he tells no one of it. He tells, of course, his wife and a neighbor, who tells her brother. Soon it is all over town. When the magistrate hears of it, he tells the farmer's wife that he suspects the gold is stolen. Before the farmer goes to court, his wife fools him into thinking that it has rained doughnuts and that soldiers with beaks are attacking. At the trial, the husband tells the magistrate of the doughnuts and the soldiers. All think him insane, and the farmer and his wife live happily ever after.

Notation:
The story will surely elicit chuckles. The story also includes many possibilities for characterization.

Alternate categories:
prose


Spud and Joe have been cup-ups in school all year and now head to Camp Custer, where their mothers fear they will be terrors. They meet Mary Frances Hooley and her friend Frothingham, the nephew of the camp director, who happens to be Lamar J. Spurgle, the high school principal. The pranks begin: bubble bath in the wishing well, plastic worms in Spurgle's flap jacks, a spook in the girls' cabin. Each time Spud and Joe are blamed. That night they discover Mary Frances working on a boat made in crafts, Andrew pulling another prank, and Spurgle later driving Mary's boat (he gets caught in a tree with it). From then onward, the boys have Andrew serving them.

Notation:
It is a fun tale full of irony, mistaken assumptions, and funny situations. The
ending does not have the merit of the rest of the book, but it is fun. The story contains much dialogue.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Because Tim and his family are poor, he seeks work. He finds a band of wee folk and demands a treasure. They give him a goose that lays golden eggs, but on his way home, the McGoons steal it after he brags about it. The same happens with a tablecloth of plenty. Finally, the wee folk give him a hat. When the McGoons steal it, the wee folk come from underneath it and club them. After his goods are returned, Tim heads home, and he and his family live comfortably.

Notation:
This is a good Irish tale, especially for St. Patrick's Day. A performer should have an ability to speak with an Irish accent. The repetition in the story makes it appropriate for oral communications.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


A bear climbs aboard a truck stalled in the forest. The truck travels into town. A boy sees the bear aboard the truck and tries to help him find his home. They travel about the city and then use the library to find their answer about the location of the bear's home. They board a bus and return to the bear's home, the forest. Then, the boy becomes lost, and the bear promises to take him home.

Notation:
The story includes a good reversal of events, but it has little language play or noteworthy invention.

Alternate categories:

Harry finds a green-tufted tropical bird that has been hit by a car. Its wing is broken. He takes care of it but will not let it go, even at his mother's urging. One day he notices one tree is green while all the others are shedding its leaves. It is full of green-tufted tropical birds. They follow him everywhere and refuse to leave the tree even after he tries to scare them. He knows they want the bird he has named Sally. On the day a winter storm approaches, he tries one last time. Finally realizing that Sally is unhappy, he lets all the birds in his room for the winter.

Notation:
This book has a fun surprise ending. The irony and the message make this appropriate for speech presentations. The boy's selfishness and shock at seeing the tree would add to great characterization.

Alternate categories:
prose


Meggie returns home after Jimmy's birthday party. The story she tells is wild. They went to Sea Land. A whale knocked Jimmy's goldfish and mom into the tank. They all dove in. The kids hid in the whale's mouth to hide from the sharks. The seals and penguins played keep away with the goldfish. Eventually, the trainer fished everyone out. The boa saved Jimmy's mom. Jimmy got an octopus from the deal, and Jimmy's friends all bought him goldfish to replace the one that remained to perform with the whale.

Notation:
Whew! One mishap leads to another. Performers will need to be cautious, for this tale could be confusing.

Alternate categories:
prose


Each day the shepherd falls asleep in the afternoon. The sheep graze their way to
town, enter the theater and perform during the matinee. They do skits, songs, and acts of daring. They return to the field as the shepherd awakens. He puts them to bed and hurries to town, where he performs in the same theater.

Notation:
This tale has a fun twist of irony throughout and a double twist at the end. The sheep entertainments would allow movement and hand gestures.

Alternate categories:
prose

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In the fall, Annabelle goes to the park with her mommy. She plays under the slide, as she has all summer. The bigger children are always going down the slide, and Annabelle watches. Annabelle climbs the ladder and reaches the top of the slide. When the larger kids are behind her and want her to slide down, she takes a breath and goes. She speeds down the slide into her mother's arms. She then climbs the ladder again.

Notation:
The built-in climax and the implied movement make this a natural piece for storytelling; the lack of dialogue makes it less workable for other categories.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

———


Kate finds a frog while on vacation in Florida and takes him home, where he becomes a major nuisance. When her mother orders the frog out, she becomes really upset, dreams swampmares, and then advertises a free frog in the paper. A chef who wants to cook the frog, a boy who wants to experiment on him, and a woman who wants to kiss it arrive. Kate does not want to give it to any of them. Sensing danger, the frog escapes. While everyone chases after it, Kate's mom packages it and sends it Florida, from where it now sends postcards.

Notation:
This is a creative tale. The most imaginative element is the three people and their
reasons for wanting the frog. Each would make a memorable character.

Alternate categories:
prose

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We imagine what would have happened had Eugene kicked the ball through the McBeavers' front window, hit Mr. McBeaver and broken a priceless Chinese vase. Or it could have gone across the dining room, through the wall, and into Mrs. McBeaver's oatmeal. Eugene would then have to join a circus, sail to South America, sit on a Himalayan mountain, become a monk, or fall in with gangsters. As it is, the dog catches the ball, and nothing bad happens.

Notation:
This is extremely short. It would work in a longer literary program. The concept of the imagination would lend itself well to events that could only be suggested.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Mr. Griggs loves his work. When at home at the end of day, he thinks of it constantly: for example, how much would this package cost? One day he becomes ill and is worried that someone is doing his work. He feels like a dead letter. When he returns to work, he is so happy about it that he is ecstatic when greeting his customers and using the work materials.

Notation:
The story has an anti-climactic ending. The story includes many good individual lines, but lacks a strong storyline. It has charming whimsy and sentiment.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Leon is still in bed on the wedding morning of his sister Marcia. Grandma awakens him to go upstairs with a silk flower for his mother. His sister wants him to take her veil downstairs to Grandma. Grandma wants him to take Marlene's blue shoes upstairs. Marlene wants him to take the yellow gloves downstairs to Grandma. She wants him to take perfume upstairs to Marcia. When he is on the stairs, he stops and screams because he is wearing all of those items. Everyone laughs at him because he looks like a bride. Frustrated, he returns to bed.

Notation:
This is an amusing tale that builds slowly but entertainingly to an ironic moment. The brevity of the story and the repetition of action make this appropriate for storytelling.

Alternate categories:
prose


Dibble and Dabble, two white ducks, see a furry snake in the reeds. They jump back into the water and tell Vole, Frog, Fish, Kingfisher, Heron, and the boy Pete, who is in his boat. Each time they tell their story, the snake becomes more fiercesome and closer. All the animals and the boy return to the reeds to discover the snake is actually the tail of Tigger the cat. Everyone laughs.

Notation:
The repetition and the methodical build to the story's conclusion would work well in storytelling. The various animal voices would help develop vivid characters.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


A nasty cat named Solo rips up newspapers, digs plants out of pots, rolls eggs off countertops and eats them after they have smashed. One morning he sees a mother
duck with a nest of five eggs. He scares the duck off, but a baby duckling hatches, sees him, and thinks he is its mother. It follows him everywhere, but he finally is rid of it when he pushes it into the water near its mother. Solo then changes some of his past bad behaviors, but not all.

Notation:
An interesting tale, it has limited suitability because it lacks human characters. The variety of events would create audience involvement.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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Liz is interested in dinosaurs because of a class presentation. When she hears that creatures have been sighted in Baja, she persuades her family to vacation there. In Baja, she captures the interest of a dinosaur with two hamburgers. The dinosaur follows Liz to camp, and Liz persuades her parents to keep the dinosaur, Albertosaurus, as a pet. Albert is an object of interest in Los Angeles. As their pet, he watches T.V., runs through the sprinkler, and attends school assemblies.

Notation:
As novel as the story is, it lacks direction. Because it rambles, it does not build to a climactic moment. A performer could do well with the selection by emphasizing the absurdities.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

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Lulu is crabby. She is impatient with her father because he cares for her little brother while she is ready to play in the park. Then, when they arrive there, they do not stay because it is too cold for the baby. Against Lulu's wishes, they go to the museum, where the cupids take her into other paintings, and they frolic in the snow, in the sea, in a jungle, on a mountainside, and in a wood.

Notation:
A combination of points of view (first-person and omniscient) would make this a
more difficult piece to perform. The fantasy element should create a highly playful performance.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


A doctor tells a boy that he needs glasses; the boy disagrees because he does not want to be a dork. The doctor tells him his parents, his sister, inventors, stunt people, planets, cats, dogs, snowmen, dinosaurs, worms, bunnies, and potatoes all wear glasses. The boy thinks the doctor is crazy until the doctor slips glasses on the boy, and the boy sees all that he has been missing. He takes a pair with gold-wire rims.

Notation:
The story lacks any narrative. It has dialogue, but it is purely an argumentative interchange. The strength of the selection lies in the characterization and difference of opinion.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


An ogre lives alone in the forest because he has eaten all of his family members. Now he eats animals, but he is tired of chasing them. To lure them, he practices smiling, and the animals are unsure whether to trust him. They send the rabbit for a visit to see whether the ogre has changed. The rabbit returns with good news and an invitation for all for dinner. They are skeptical but go anyway. After the meal is finished, the frogs notice the ogre's hunting knife in his back pocket. They all overcome him and break the knife. The animals learn never to trust him again.

Notation:
The story has a weak ending; it trails off. The characters are the strength of the piece. The gruff ogre, the trusting rabbit, and the perceptive frogs will be a storyteller's delight.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose

Mary Ann and Louie are tired of the snow. Their grandpa entertains and comforts them with wild winter stories from his childhood: sneezes froze; bathtub water froze; the town disappeared under snow; a snowball grew so large it levelled the town; and sneezes cracked the ice off houses.

Notation:
This tall tale lends itself perfectly to storytelling. The humor lies in the absurd events, but with a good performer the humor could lie in the wild character of grandpa.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Only one person knows that Horace the King has horse's ears: his barber, who is sworn to secrecy. Because the secrecy wears on him, the barber sees a doctor who advises him to tell someone about the situation. He tells a reed alongside a riverbank. One of the musicians who has been summoned to play at the king's wedding plucks the reed. He plays it at the wedding dance, and the secret is revealed. Everyone laughs until the bride says she loves the ears. Then the ears become a fashion trend, and they live happily ever after.

Notation:
A fun message is revealed at the story's end. The folklore aspect gives this book a twist. The emotions of the barber, the king, and the princess could be easily handled.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


A red fox tries to steal the chickens from the farmyard. The vain rooster warns him to leave or he will crow. Later, the fox disguises himself with ashes, but the rooster
crows and the farmer comes running. The next day, the farmer leaves, and the fox tricks the rooster with a game of hide-and-seek. When he sees the fox, he crows. Soon all the farm animals join the game. The rooster crows himself into laryngitis because he crows whenever he locates another animal. That night the fox steals the chickens, and the rooster cannot crow a warning. After he steals the chickens, the reader discovers the fox wants eggs for breakfast, not chickens.

Notation:
The ironic ending adds punch. A skilled performer could easily portray the two characters, one wily and sneaky, the other vain and proud. The story is well paced, but the title does give away some information.

Alternate categories:
prose


The Blairs decide to walk in the park after breakfast. While they are gone, a bear named Somebody comes in, tries the cereals, the seats, the items with which to play, the water to drink in the bathroom, and the beds. When the Blairs return, they see the house is a mess. Before they can capture the bear, it has escaped.

Notation:
This is a delightful variation of the old children's tale. Performers will enjoy experimenting with the voices of the humans.

Alternate categories:
humorous acting, prose


Max's sister takes him shopping for new blue pants. While waiting for her to try on dresses, Max becomes lost and eventually gets a dragon shirt, which he wanted instead of the pants.

Notation:
The story includes a good blend of characterization and narration. Those items lead
to a climactic and ironic conclusion. The strength of the selection is the contrast between the characters.

Alternate categories:


Because the queen is hot, she decides to go to the sea, taking her entourage along. On the long, long walk there, everyone becomes hot and silly. The footman tosses the suitcases into the pond; the maids have a pillow fight; the bodyguard shoots himself in the foot; the lady-in-waiting makes mud pies; and so on and so forth. The queen grows angry, corrects the problem, and then marches everyone to the sea, where they have afternoon tea.

Notation:
Repetition is the core of this story. The absurdity of the characters' actions could easily be suggested through a skilled storyteller, who could also differentiate well among the characters through facial gestures.

Alternate categories:
prose


Bobby Bell has a surprise in his wardrobe, but when he tries to tell friends and his teacher at school, they ignore him. On the next day Bobby removes a witch from the wardrobe and takes her to school. They ride her broom to get to school and arrive late. At lunch Bobby takes the witch, whom the teacher calls the new girl, to the cafeteria, where she makes a hedgehog; favorite foods; frogs; sweets and desserts; and bats, beetles, and spiders appear. Bored, she leaves.

Notation:
The story is uneven because it seems to lack direction and answers to several
unexplained situations. The magic of the witch would be easy to portray, as would her character.

Alternate categories:
prose


Henry has decided to clean his room, which no one has seen in a year. The reporters have even arrived to cover the event. Henry yells, "Everybody out!" Out of the room march raccoons, a flea circus, some birds, and other creatures. The army, the Historical Society, the scouts, and scientists come in, each to collect valuables. Henry then cleans, and everyone celebrates when he is finished. That night Henry cannot sleep. After all the creatures return, Henry rests comfortably.

Notation:
This is a tall tale that captures the interest of the audience with its exaggerations. The number of animals and the return of the groups create humor. A performer could distinguish each creature and item with an identifying gesture.

Alternate categories:
prose

Storytelling, Seriocomic


Mommy Rabbit is putting Baby Gray to bed and reads him the story of Rodney Rabbit, who has tomatoes to juggle, a green pepper hula hoop, an onion skin airplaine, carrot stilts, a celery phone, and a radish doll. Rodney often reads a story about Baby Gray, whose family eats vegetables at all times. Baby Gray's family enjoys picnics and eats much. Rodney then eats beet cookies and falls asleep, just as Baby Gray does.

Notation:
This story has a unique element, a story within a story within a story. For young children, distinguishing between the real Baby Gray and the fictional Baby Gray may
be difficult; for the story-inside-a-story concept may prove enjoyable for speech communications work.

Alternate categories:
prose


Pip is a three-year-old penguin who wonders why she is small in comparison with other penguins her age. She plays games such as tobogganing, somersaulting, and swimming. She meets a three-year-old sperm whale, and they play together. His friendship helps her feel not so bad about her size.

Notation:
The character is not sustained, and it is brief. However, a good performer should be able to evoke the warmth and charm of the piece and demonstrate differences between the characters.

Alternate categories:
prose


Tommy wants to be an artist. He draws pictures constantly and places them everywhere. Sometimes he gets in trouble, as when he draws on the sheets. He starts school and learns he does not receive lessons until the first grade. Nothing is agreeable in the first-grade art lessons: he may not use his own crayons; he gets only one sheet of paper; he must copy. However, he strikes a compromise. If he first does what is required, he may then draw on his own, as he does till today.

Notation:
Performers could suggest Tommy's artistry through stylized movement. It could be a powerful selection with correct blocking and gestures.

Alternate categories:
prose

A child explains the origins of its tree. Seeds fall to the ground, and the squirrels eat many of them except for the one that sprouted. The seedling sends off roots and leaves. The nursery workers transplant it and care for it until they take it to the garden center, where the child's father buys it. They plant it at home. The child watches it, hangs treats for the birds in it, and observes the seasons.

Notation:
Appropriate movements could give life to this tale, even though it is highly instructional and more geared for information than entertainment.

Alternate categories:
prose


Koala Lou, a koala, is loved by many but most of all by her mother, who constantly tells Lou that fact. When siblings are born, Lou is jealous and plans to find a way to regain her mother's attention. She trains for the tree-climbing event of the Bush Olympics. She competes but loses. When she arrives home, her mother tells her that she still loves her.

Notation:
This is a classic tale about sibling jealousy. Koala's character would be enjoyable because it is varied: jealous, determined and, finally, happy.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mr. Dry-Bone, a skeleton, and Anancy, a man, both hope to marry Miss Louise. The first one who makes her laugh wins the honor. Mr. Dry-Bone turns himself into a bat, a rabbit, a cat, and a pig. He also does somersaults, but Miss Louise never laughs. To look good, Anancy borrows a suit from the tiger, a hat from a dog, shoes from an
alligator, a tie from a monkey, and feathers from a parrot. He looks so ridiculous, she laughs, and they marry.

Notation:
This is a typical black American folktale. It builds to a fun climax and a satisfying conclusion. Three distinct characters and a colorful contest would make this tale memorable.

Alternate categories:
prose


A storm is approaching on the African plain, and the lazy lion realizes it has no home. As a result, he asks the white ants, the weaver birds, the aardvarks, the honey badger, and the crocodile to build him a home. Each home they build, however, proves unsatisfactory. They seek cover when the storm hits, but the lion stays in the rain when it comes and does to this day.

Notation:
This animal fable incorporates many types of animals so that voices and facial gestures would be highly valuable in distinguishing among them.

Alternate categories:
prose


Laura wants a pet, but she is allergic to dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, gerbils, and parakeets. Friends offer a frog, a snake, a goldfish, and a turtle as alternatives, but she wants a furry pet. Finally, her brother Alfie persuades their parents to buy a chameleon. When she sees the chameleon change colors, she accepts it and names it Furry.

Notation:
The problems she has with her allergies could be highlighted with interpretation.
Laura's headstrong attitude would be a performer's great challenge.

Alternate categories:
prose


A cat who loves to sing and play a mandolin travels and encounters many other animals in the woods who enjoy playing instruments, including a goat with a harmonica, a fox with a flute, and a goose with a bassoon. One by one, they join the cat until they have enough for a jamboree.

Notation:
The cumulative structure of the plot generates desire in the audience to know more. The various animal characters are a storyteller's delight. Each deserves a different voice and a distinguishing body movement or gesture.

Cross-reference:
prose


Hershel of Ostropol travels to a village that does not celebrate Hanukkah because of goblins. He agrees to stay in the synagogue over Hanukkah to face the goblins as they come each evening. He outwits each, one a night, with an egg, a pickle jar, and a dreidel. On the last night he faces the King of the Goblins and tricks him into lighting the Menorah, thus banishing the goblins from the village forever.

Notation:
The European setting, the repetition of events, the cleverness of the protagonist, and the evil wiliness of the goblins combine to make a magical selection.

Alternate categories:
prose
Charley Owen Muldoon's house is on the Boston waterfront. In the back is an old molasses tank. One warm January day the tank explodes because of the heat, and molasses spreads throughout the city, carrying houses and buildings with it. That night the weather turns cold, and snow falls. Soon people from everywhere shovel the molasses into wheelbarrows. Because Charley's mom gathers so much molasses and serves it on everything, Charles grows tired of it, although he loved it once.

Notation:
This is a good bit of American folk legend. The exaggeration and the irony add to the story's enjoyability.

Alternate categories:
prose


The mice live and work beside the wall, never considering anything about it or the things on the other side, not until Tillie does. Because of her interest, they try to climb over it and drill through it, but to no avail. She finally digs under it to the other side, where she meets other mice. They follow her back. Now all are friends, and they travel freely back and forth.

Notation:
The story lends itself well to the suggestiveness of storytelling. It lacks characterization but redeems itself in plot development.

Alternate categories:
prose


When Mommy listens to Sue's story, she falls asleep. As a result, Sue and her little sister Jenny tuck Mommy into bed. When Daddy arrives home, he tucks the girls into bed.
Notation:
The story demonstrates family love and warmth. Plot developments take precedence over character development.

Alternate categories:


Sophie is extremely shy but is intrigued by the activities at a dance studio next door. She becomes more confident and captures the interests of Lou, with whom she eventually dances.

Notation:
The climactic build is excellent. Much could be accomplished with the suggestion of movement, especially dancing.

Alternate categories:
prose


A group of children establish an imaginary community on a hill, outlining streets, homes and stores with white rock. The depth of their play intensifies until the times when they move away and relive the events in memory.

Notation:
Few characters need development. It lends itself to suggested actions. It would serve well as part of a literary program.

Alternate categories:
prose


In ancient Venice a king and a queen have no son to inherit the throne. Two fairies of the lagoon give the king a plant to place in the garden and promise a child to be
born from it. He scoffs; but a kitchenmaid plants it, and a boy grows from it. The king rejects the boy and imprisons him in the garden. The Witches of the Grand Canal visit the boy, tell him of their flower-plant girl, and invite the king and the queen to a ball. The boy escapes the garden on the day of the ball with the help of the wind; searches throughout the witches' house; there meets a dragon, an ogre, and the mother witch; locates the girl in the chandelier of the ballroom; and sails away with her in a pigeon carriage in order to play.

Notation:
It's a magical and fantastic voyage that the boy takes. The story lacks much dialogue but would be perfect for storytelling because of the movements described: throwing out the plant, sailing in the carriage, and dancing at the ball. Also of interest are these characters: the cruel king, the forlorn boy, the vain dragon, and the absent-minded witches.

Alternate categories:
prose


All the animals on the farm laugh at the cow that oinks. Also, all the animals on the farm laugh at the pig that moos. Both are sad, but the cow has a great idea. They teach each other how to oink or moo. First, the pig learns to oink after many tries; then the cow learns to moo after many attempts. Because they are "bilingual," they have the last laugh on all the other animals.

Notation:
Although the story seems simplistic and undramatic, it works well for storytelling. It has irony but little character development.

Alternate categories:
prose


An aardvark snores so loudly in a tree that it keeps the mongoose and the other animals awake. When the mongoose decides to annoy the aardvark more than it annoys him, he confers with the monkeys, the lion, and the rhinoceros. That night
the monkeys and the lion make noise while the rhinoceros bumps the tree; but the aardvark continues to snore. Finally, termites gnaw through the tree's roots so that it topples. The aardvark discovers the termites and now sleeps in the day while searching for termites at night, allowing all the other animals to sleep.

Notation:
An old beast fable, this story includes various humorous possibilities: snoring, animal voices, machinations, and the toppling of the tree.

Alternate categories:
prose

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A howling dog is barking and awakens the Weatherbees and their pets, the Burgs and their chickens, the Grays and their sheep, and Farmer John's family and their cows. Soon everyone is awake, and the dog is happy and quiet because she is no longer lonely. Everyone and everything returns to sleep, as does the howling dog.

Notation:
The unique element of this book is its build to an anti-climactic climax and its release. The story's irony adds humor.

Alternate categories:
prose

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The tale describes the typical day in the life of a storekeeper. She rises before dawn and opens the store. As people travel to work or school, she sells doughnuts. The whole town stops in. She cleans the store, sorts the mail, sells items to customers, listens to salespeople and makes purchases. At night, she closes the store and says good night to the town.

Notation:
The story lacks characterization and dialogue; however, an emphasis on movement
and suggested activities would give this story depth.

Alternate categories:
prose


When Dad brings home a small dog, his wife will not care for it because she fears dogs. As a result, the children, Abigail and Sam, must take it with them to the pool, to the library, and to the movies; but they must leave each place because dogs are not allowed. On Sunday at the park, Benton, the dog, saves Mom from the attack of another dog. They keep Benton, and Mom now allows it stay home with her.

Notation:
The storyline takes precedence over characterization. Although the stock characters are one-dimensional, the children's frustrations add humor.

Alternate categories:
prose


A dog and a cat are neighbors. When they meet, the dog barks while the cat climbs the tree and grooms itself. When the cat tries to climb down, the dog barks. Finally, the cat jumps on the dog's back. The dog does not know what is on him and cannot remove it. Finally, the cat jumps into the hedge. The dog catches a glimpse of the cat and never chases cats again.

Notation:
Although this story does not include a traditional storyline, it includes many delightful possibilities: movement, facial gestures, and exaggeration.

Alternate categories:
prose

Edmund has a pet parrot, Harris, who knows the colors because of color flash cards. One day Harris is sucked out the window with a windstorm. Edmund becomes ill, and parrots from a talent agency do not excite him. Edmund's parents tell Higgins, the chauffeur, to find Harris. Edmund accompanies him. They search in cities, the countryside, deserts, and foreign lands. When they nearly give up, they locate Harris in a tree. They return home successful.

Notation:
The selection lacks dialogue and twists of plot; but the boy's strength and determination to find his pet give the story charm.

Alternate categories:
prose

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When Uncle Nick takes Peter for a walk, Peter discovers that his new pants have no pockets. Now, when he picks up anything, it must go into Uncle Nick's pockets. Those items are a blue feather, a ball, two ribbons, a marble, a nickle, and a button. When Peter's mom hears of this situation, she sews pockets on his pants.

Notation:
The story builds well to a climax. It has a very simple storyline, but it would allow a performer to suggest through movement the various objects the boy collects.

Alternate categories:
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Savi, a baby elephant, and her mother visit the beach. Savi plays in the water while her mother cools in the shade and eats bananas. When Savi's mother asks her to leave three times, Savi says no and goes further out into the water. Her mother then leaves with bananas. When Savi is later cold and tired, she discovers a trail of
bananas that lead to her mother. She wants one last banana, but it is the moon. Savi then goes home.

Notaion:
The willful child's change of heart makes the message more important than characterization, dialogue, or action.

Alternate categories:
prose

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While Ben's mother is making apple pie, Ben wants to play hide-and-seek. Each time that he hides, his mother finds him because of a mess he leaves: a fallen coat shows he's behind the coat rack; a pile of clothes shows he is in the laundry basket; boots in the hall show he is hidden in the closet; and dolls on the floor of his bedroom shows he is under the covers. Of course, his mother stops making pie each time. He then naps and plans to have pie when he awakens.

Notaion:
The tale relies on the repetition of events. The pacing is good, and the plotline leads to a satisfying conclusion. Skilled performers will need to add some sparkle to this straightforward story.

Alternate categories:
prose

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During the time of the czars, two bears are friends. Boris, a doctor, visits his friend, Max, a dancer in the Moscow circus. Hearing Boris's jealousy of his fame, Max agrees to teach Boris to dance after he returns from St. Petersburg. In the first lesson, Boris learns a simple step. Afterwards, he practices constantly. Later, Max teaches Moris the Dance of the Hussars. Now Boris dances with Max in the circus.

Notaion:
The book describes themes of substance: jealousy, friendship, and persistence. The
characters are not developed but would be fun to bring to life.

Alternate categories:
prose


Johnny lives with his brothers, Bill and Bart, who think he is too young to help on the farm. He plants his own pumpkin seeds, tends them, and protects them with a scarecrow made of witch hazel brooms. On the night of the harvest festival, the scarecrow comes alive, tosses the pumpkin into the sky to become the greatest moon ever, puts Johnny in bed, and leaves him seeds for next year.

Notation:
The strength of the story lies in the magic and the imaginative details. The contrast between Johnny and his brothers and Johnny's characters are elements that performers can emphasize.

Alternate categories:
prose


Gus the dormouse usually hibernates through Christmas. Gus asks a squirrel to awaken him at Christmas to meet Santa Claus. At Christmastime, the animals gather, and Santa gives them gifts. The squirrel forgets to awaken Gus, but an owl that overheard the request does. The owl leads Gus to Santa. All depart, and Gus falls asleep in Santa's pocket.

Notation:
This tale is effective if characterization concerns are not important. The magical effect of Santa and the animals' talking make the story one worth considering.

Alternate categories:
prose

Noel discovers a huge sack in the woods. A note instructs him to return tomorrow. That night he dreams he is a dwarf magician. He returns to find a new note the next day. Three dwarf magicians arrive and tell him the sack is full of toys. They cannot carry it anymore and want his help. That night the three magicians find him and take him in a sleigh to deliver the gifts down chimneys. Noel and the magicians take the trip each year. After he becomes an adult, Noel becomes Santa Claus and is promised to live forever if he keeps the secret about the gifts.

Notation:
The story does not move easily from event to event; a performer will need to explain much. The story's strength is the magical events that could be easily suggested.

Alternate categories:
prose


In January Miss McGillicuddy notices a sprout of a tree outside in her yard. By April it has grown very large and unusual in shape. By May it starts to sprout money, not leaves. Parents, town officials and then perfect strangers start carting off bagsful of money. Hordes of people take hordes of money, but Miss McGillicuddy never takes any. In December she and some boys chop down the tree for kindling. At story's end, Miss McGillicuddy is again inside her home, smiling to herself.

Notation:
The theme is greed, and Miss McGillicuddy's perspective on the tree--from afar--lends great wisdom and poignancy to the story.

Alternate categories:
prose


An ant scout discovers a source of sugar crystals. The scout leads an exploration
across the lawn and into the kitchen of a house. All ants except two take a sugar crystal and leave. The two eat and eat and in the morning are caught in a series of mishaps. They become trapped in a cup of coffee, a toaster, a garbage disposal, and an electric outlet. When the other ants return that night to get more sugar, the two bad ants return with them to the safety of their home.

Notation:
The perspective is unique. The performer could demonstrate each mishap easily and exaggerate both the humor and the seriousness of the events.

Alternate categories:
prose


The Sea-Breeze Hotel is about to go out of business because it is so windy eleven months of twelve. No one wants to stay there. Sam gets an idea and makes a kite. It's such a hit with the staff that they all make one. Their fun becomes news around town. Soon everyone comes to fly kites, and business soars (pun intended). Now the hotel is bustling, and April, the least busy month, is the time when the staff relaxes and makes kites for the next year.

Notation:
The story includes excellent pacing. The movement possibilities involving the kites lend well to storytelling.

Alternate categories:
prose


Mice are playing in the meadow, but they fall asleep. A hungry snake snatches ten of them and places them in a jar. Once they are in the jar, they trick the snake into looking for another big mouse, which is actually a rock. In the meantime, the mice tip the jar and escape.

Notation:
Although this is primarily a counting book, it has a fun storyline that would work
well in some speech communications situations.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Three white mice discover three jars of paint (the primary colors). Because they think it is mouse paint, they climb into the jars and become those colors. By stepping into puddles of drips, they mix colors and form secondary colors. When the paint stiffens on their fur, they wash it off in the cat's drinking bowl and then paint paper, making each part a primary or a secondary color. They leave one part white so that the cat will not discover them.

Notation:
As delightful as this tale is in color instruction, it lacks characterization, dialogue, and dramatic tension. Its strength is the imaginative play of the mice and their cleverness in outwitting the cat.

Alternate categories:
prose

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Mama Jones gathers nuts for a nut cake in the rain. The next day is her son Ben's birthday. She packs the children off to school and sends three-year-old Ben for a hike with Grandpa. Instead of resting because she feels ill, she writes poems and goes to the store for the rest of the ingredients for Ben's birthday cake. When Papa returns from work, he sends her to bed. He and the children make the cake. They celebrate Ben's birthday and tell Mama they want a favor: she is to go to bed. They clean as she rests.

Notation:
The story has dialogue but little character development. For this reason it would work best for storytelling. The themes of family unity and dedication give the story warmth.

Alternate categories:
prose

Bertha is alone, walking. She discovers a deserted house, mends and cleans it, and names it "Come by Chance." In the winter a storm rages. Bertha hears a noise and then takes in a cow, a cat, and a goose, all of whom come knocking at the door. Because the house is the only shelter within the area, animal after animal arrives; and Bertha houses them. They sing and dance each evening. In the spring the animals leave for the meadows. Because one cat decides to stay, Bertha is not alone.

Notation:
The story lacks dialogue and characterization, even of the protagonist. Instead, it relies primarily on plot development through repetition. Although it lacks traditional dramatic tension, it builds to a climax in the gathering of the animals.

Alternate categories:
prose


In the pond of the Summer Palace in Peking lives a carp, Wo Ti, who feels something missing from its life. The birds and the fish are contented because the high wall keeps out attackers, that is, until the cat, Kitti Ho, is chased over the wall and into the garden. Each day it eats a bird and a goldfish because the gardeners have not expected an intruder. Gradually the cat grows bold. The fish decide to act like rocks in the pond and catch the cat. The next day the cat sees the "rocks" in the pond and climbs on them to reach Wo Ti. The fish give way, and the cat falls into the pond. The gardeners discover and remove it. Wo Ti is now contented because of his adventures.

Notation:
This animal tale flows smoothly because of its rich pacing. It contains enough dialogue and dramatic tension to be highly useful in speech communications.

Alternate categories:
prose
Supplement A: Best Titles for Speech Communications Use

Dramatic Acting

Ackerman, Karen. When Mama Retires.
Bacheller, Irving. Lost in the Fog.
---------. The Wall.
Carrick, Carol. In the Moonlight, Waiting.
Howard, Elizabeth Fitzgerald. Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later).
Joose, Barbara M. Mama, Do You Love Me?
Jordan, MaryKate. Losing Uncle Tim.
Levinson, Riki. Our Home Is the Sea.
McCully, Emily Arnold. Mirette on the High Wire.
Scheller, Melanie. My Grandfather's Hat.
Smucker, Anna Egan. No Night Stars.
Wisniewski, David. The Warrior and the Wise Man.
Yolen, Jane. All Those Secrets of the World.
---------. Letting Swift River Go.

Humorous Acting

Brett, Jan. Berlioz the Bear.
Joyce, William. A Day with Wilbur Johnson.
Scieszka, Jon. The True Story of the Three Little Pigs.

Poetry, Dramatic

Dragonwagon, Crescent. Home Place.
Treece, Henry. The Magic Wood.

Poetry, Humorous

Bunting, Eve. In the Haunted House.
Gerrard, Roy. Rosie and the Rustlers.
Grossman, Bill. The Guy Who Was Five Minutes Late.
Keller, Jackie French. Fish Fry Tonight.
MacDonald, Amy. Rachel Fister's Blister.
Marshak, Samuel. The Pup Grew Up!
Martin, Bill, and John Archambault. Chicka Chicka Boom Boom.
Paxton, Tom. Engelberg the Elephant.
Seuss, Dr. Oh, the Places You'll Go!

Poetry, Seriocomic
Staines, Bill. All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir.

Prose, Dramatic
Carlstrom, Nancy White. Blow Me a Kiss, Miss Lilly.
Lyon, George Ella. Cecil's Story.
Martin, Jacqueline Briggs. Good Times on Grandfather Mountain.
Osofsky, Audrey. Dreamcatcher.
Polacco, Patricia. Thunder Cake.
Ringgold, Faith. Tar Beach.

Prose, Humorous
Alexander, Lloyd. The Fortune-Tellers.
Emberley, Michael. The Present.
Henkes, Kevin. Chrysanthemum.
Kimmel, Eric A. Four Dollars and Fifty Cents.
Levitin, Sonia. The Man Who Kept His Heart in a Bucket.
Martinez, Ruth. Mrs. McDockerty's Knitting.
McKissack, Patricia C. Mirandy and Brother Wind.
Polacco, Patricia. Babushka's Doll.
--------- Just Plain Fancy.
--------- Picnic at Mudsock Meadow.
Scieszka, Jon. The Frog Prince Continued.
Smalls-Hector, Irene. Irene and the Big, Fine Nickel.
Thurber, James. Many Moons.
Wynot, Jillian. The Mother's Day Sandwich.

Prose, Seriocomic
Storytelling, Dramatic

Cherry, Lynne. *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest.*
Hughes, Shirley. *Wheels: A Tale of Trotter Street.*
Tsuchiya, Yukio. *Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals, People, and War.*

Storytelling, Humorous

Arnold, Tedd. *The Signmaker’s Assistant.*
Carrick, Carol. *Big Old Bones: A Dinosaur Tale.*
Chetwin, Grace. *Box and Cox.*
Graham, Bob. *Has Anyone Here Seen William?*
Greene, Carol. *The Old Ladies Who Liked Cats.*
Hadithi, Mwenye. *Tricky Tortoise.*
Henkes, Kevin. *Jessica.*
---------.* Julius: The Baby of the World.*
Holabird, Katharine. *Alexander and the Dragon.*
Tolhurst, Marilyn. *Somebody and the Three Blairs.*

Storytelling, Seriocomic

Stewart, Sarah. *The Money Tree.*
Van Allsburg, Chris. *Two Bad Ants.*
Vaughan, Marcia. *The Sea-Breeze Hotel.*
Albert Whitman & Co.
6340 Oakton Street
Morton Grove, IL  60053
800-255-7675

Alfred A. Knopf
(subsidiary of Random House)
201 East 50th Street
New York, NY  10022
800-733-3000

Atheneum
(see Macmillan)

Bantam
(division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.)
666 Fifth Street
New York, NY  10103
800-223-6834

Bradbury Press
(affiliate of Macmillan)
866 Third Avenue, 7th Floor
New York, NY  10022
800-257-5755

Candlewick Press
2067 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA  02140
800-526-0275

Caroline House
(Longman Publishing Group)
The Longman Building
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White Plains, NY  10606-1951
800-447-2226

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Clarion Books
(see Houghton Mifflin)

Chronicle Books
275 Fifth Street
San Francisco, CA  94103
800-722-6657

Clarkson N. Potter
(see Crown Books for Young Readers)

Crown Books for Young Readers
(division of Random House)
225 Park Avenue, South
New York, NY  10003
800-733-3000

Dial Books for Young Readers
(see E.P. Dutton)

Dutton Children's Books
(see E.P. Dutton)

E.P. Dutton
(division of Penguin USA)
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY  10014-3657
212-366-2000

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.
19 Union Square, West
New York, NY  10003
800-631-8571

Four Winds Press
(see Macmillan)

G.P. Putnam's Sons
(see Putnam Publishing Group)
Greenwillow Books
(division of William Morrow)
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
800-843-9389

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
1250 Sixth Avenue
San Diego, CA 92101
800-543-1918

Harper & Row Junior Books Group
(see HarperCollins)

HarperCollins
10 East 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022-5299
800-242-7737

HarperCollins
(see Harper & Row Junior Books Group)

Henry Holt & Co.
115 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
800-488-5233

Holiday House, Inc.
425 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017
212-688-0085

Houghton Mifflin
1 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
800-225-3362

J.B. Lippincott
(subsidiary of Wolters Kluwer U.S. Corp)
227 East Washington Square
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3780
800-441-4526
Kane/Miller
P.O. Box 529
Brooklyn, NY 11231
718-624-5120

Little, Brown & Co.
(division of Time, Inc.)
1271 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
800-343-9204

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard
(division of William Morrow)
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
800-843-9389 or 800-237-0657

Macmillan
866 Third Avenue, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10022
800-257-5755

Margaret Hamilton Books
19 Madeline Street
Hunters Hill
New South Wales 2110
Australia

Margaret K. McElderry Books
(see Macmillan)

Morrow Junior Books
(see William Morrow & Co.)

North-South Books
(subsidiary of Nord-Sud Verlag from Switzerland)
1133 Broadway, Suite 1016
New York, NY 10010
800-282-8257
Orchard Books
(design of Franklin Watts)
387 Park Avenue, South
New York, NY 10016
800-672-6672

Philomel Books
(see Putnam Publishing Group)

Putnam Publishing Group
200 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
800-631-8571

R & S Books
(see Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

Random House, Inc.
201 East 50th Street
31st Floor
New York, NY 10022
800-733-3000

Scholastic, Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003
800-392-2179

Simon & Schuster
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
212-698-7000

Tambourine Books
(see William Morrow & Co.)

Thomas Y. Crowell, Co.
(see HarperCollins)

Viking
(see Viking Penguin)

Viking Kestrel
(see Viking Penguin)
Viking Penguin
(division of Penguin USA)
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014-3657
800-331-4624

William Morrow & Co.
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019
800-843-9389 or 800-237-0657
Chapter 5
Summary

The Horn Book Magazine incorporates various types of books within its definition of picture storybooks. For instance, it includes ABC books such as *Alison's Zinnia* by Anita Lobel and *The Handmade Alphabet* by Laura Rankin; counting books such as *Pigs from 1 to 10* by Arthur Geisert and *Going Up!: A Color Counting Book* by Peter Sis; wordless or nearly wordless books such as *Will's Mammoth* by Martin Rafe, *Across Town* by Sara, and *Window* by Jeannie Baker; concept books such as *What Shape?* by Debbie MacKinnon and *Good Days Bad Days* by Catherine Anholt; board books such as *I Make Music* and *My Doll, Keshia* by Eloise Greenfield; compilations that do not interweave the pieces within such as *Home: A Collaboration of Thirty Distinguished Authors and Illustrators of Children's Books to Aid the Homeless*, edited by Michael J. Rosen; picture books that illustrate previously written works such as *The Ark* by Arthur Geisert, *The Three Little Pigs: An Old Story* by Margot Zemach, and *The House That Jack Built*, illustrated by Jenny Stow; and specialty books such as the Braille book, *Redbird*, by Patrick Fort.

None of the books appear in the annotated bibliography because they are not appropriate for any type of speech communications work. Also absent are books with extremely simple plots such as *Bedtime Cat* by Lynn Reiser, *Amy Loves the Rain* by Julia Hoban, and the Tom and Pippo series by Helen Oxenbury. These lack a sustained storyline, characterization, a conflict, the pacing, or the language play necessary to make them useful for speech communications work. Overly textual
books, the opposite of simplistic books, are also absent from the annotated bibliography. Such books have so much text that they qualify more as illustrated picture books than picture storybooks. The pictures seem incidental, not essential to understanding the story. Also, their length is prohibitive and would render them unusable because a program featuring one of these books would surely exceed the time limitations placed on all categories. Such titles include Melisande by E. Nesbit and Minnie's Yom Kippur Birthday by Marilyn Singer.

Most of the 134 books omitted from the annotated bibliography but included in Appendix B are creative, highly entertaining, instructional, or informative. Their absence is not a comment on their quality. Nor does the appearance of other books in the annotated bibliography imply this researcher's personal endorsement of them. The inclusion or exclusion of titles only means they were or were not suitable for speech communications work.

The irony is that some counting books, ABC books, and adaptations do appear in the annotated bibliography. Despite their status as something other than a picture storybook, many have been written in such a way that they are highly usable for speech communications work. Any speech instructor would be remiss in not using some of the titles merely because they are also instructional. For example, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin and John Archambault is an ABC book that delightfully tells a story about a mischievous letter a while instructing preschoolers and children in the primary grades about the alphabet. Similarly, One Hungry Monster: A Counting Book in Rhyme by Susan Heyboer O'Keefe creatively
teaches counting while describing the efforts of a boy to rid his house of messy monsters. Such books cannot often stand alone because of their brevity, but they can serve as part of a larger literary program that emphasizes their language play.

The number of picture storybooks reviewed by Horn Book has increased over the past decade. That rise may have resulted from various reasons: a growing market for children's publications, an increased awareness of picture storybooks and their potential for diverse audiences, a new awareness of and attitude towards children and their literature, and a larger number of people who have expendable incomes. Whatever the case, the number of published picture storybooks has grown. Determining specific reason(s) why would serve as an interesting research corollary.

In the present study, storytelling dominated as the category in the annotated bibliography for which most of the picture storybooks were best suited. One reason is that it served somewhat as a catchall for titles that were not appropriate for the other categories. For example, a primary factor for placing a book in the acting categories was the inclusion of first-person narration. Because an acting selection needs to portray character growth and motivation, first-person narration is the best method to accomplish that goal. Similarly, a primary factor for placing a book in the prose category was dialogue. This researcher is aware that characterization dependent upon dialogue often adds sparkle to an otherwise bland prose selection. Dialogue is not mandatory in the prose category, but it does demonstrate competence in performers and showcases their talents.
In part, storytelling included titles that did not seem appropriate elsewhere. That fact does not mean, however, that books listed within the storytelling category had no identifying characteristics. Rather, the stories in this category mainly include a traditional storyline. They typically have an opening exposition that identifies setting and characters, rising action featuring a conflict, a climactic confrontation, falling action detailing the resolution of the conflict, and a conclusion that includes catharsis, irony, closure or a hint that the action will repeat itself in the future. That last possibility appears more frequently in picture storybooks, especially humorous books, than this researcher had expected.

While storytelling dominated, humorous acting had the fewest entries. One may only speculate why this situation has occurred; however, one suggestion is that comic revelations do not lend themselves to first-person narration. First-person narration conveys the soul of the character. Discussions about personal tragedies, family problems, and emotional difficulties, therefore, seem easier to adapt to this format than lighthearted, satiric, or absurdist observations about life.

The 363 titles appearing in the anotated bibliography vary in their usability. All are suitable, but some will have more impact and usefulness than others. For example, Black and White by David Macaulay would prove difficult to use because of the four intermeshed plotlines. A skilled performer could use the book but only after careful planning. As stated previously, usability is not the same as quality. Black and White is entertaining and creative; however, its complicated storyline makes it difficult to use successfully in speech communications coursework.
The study yielded results much as this researcher had expected except for three points. The first, as previously stated, is the number of titles considered unsuitable for the study. This number exceeded expectations because *Horn Book* includes more kinds of books in its definition of a picture storybook than this researcher does. Second, the number of books written by one person and illustrated by a second surpassed any preconceptions. Although a majority of authors also illustrated their books, numerous books were shared creations.

The final point does not concern the content of the books, but their availability. The major challenge in completing this study was locating the books. Some libraries such as the Des Moines Public Library and the Ames Public Library proved exceedingly helpful; even so, many books were interlibrary loans from Nebraska, Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri. No library housed most, although some had a majority of the titles. Several libraries in larger Iowa communities, however, had as few as 20% of the titles. That is a discouraging statistic for patrons in those communities because children in those areas have little access to recent, relevant titles.

This last unexpected discovery gives rise to a suggested research topic for further study. Funding for children's materials has obviously not kept pace with publishing costs. A statewide survey of larger and smaller communities would undoubtedly reveal a widening gap between budgets for children's resources and the rising average cost of items such as books, videos, computer software, and realia. It would probably also reveal a growing inconsistency among communities in their
funding, rural areas suffering from budgetary problems the most.

Also suggested is an study similar to the one presented here, its focus being the social sciences, not speech communications. Because the number of books that feature minorities or foreign settings is large, it would serve such courses as minority cultures, world history, and global studies well in resource-based teaching. For instance, The Lily Cupboard is set in the Netherlands during World War II; Dreamcatcher features Native American culture; Mrs. Katz and Tush describes the intermingling of two minorities, African-Americans and Jews; Tar Beach depicts urban African-Americans; Faithful Elephants is set in Japan during World War II while Galimoto is set in Africa, Sami and the Time of the Troubles in Lebanon, and The Great Kapok Tree in the Amazon rain forest.

Two related studies are also possible. One would be an update of Hall's research, which analyzed picture storybooks reviewed in Horn Book from 1980 through 1985. Such an update is warranted because the number and kind of authors continue to change. An increasing number of adult authors now also write for children. Danielle Steel and Amy Tan are examples. Musicians such as Carly Simon and Joni Mitchell have also penned works. Furthermore, while the body of work of established authors such as Lois Ehlert, Chris Van Allsburg and Jane Yolen grows, new authors with new styles also appear. Examples are Mary Lyn Ray and Beth P. Wilson. The other study could be an update of this research study. Because currency is a concern, updates of this study are necessary.

The absence of many titles from numerous libraries in Iowa creates a question
about selection tools. Was the unavailability of many of the books merely a result of the fact that libraries do not use The Horn Book Magazine as a reviewing source? If public libraries use School Library Journal and Booklist instead, two research questions emerge. First, how much overlap of titles occurs among the three reviewing sources? Second, which of the reviewing periodicals are public libraries using, and how does that differ from what school library media centers use? Either could be the focus of a research study.

A final research possibility stems from personal observations about the shelving and cataloging concerns of children's picture storybooks. This researcher observed these situations in various libraries across the state: one library shelves books at a height that only people five- or six-feet-tall could conveniently reach. A second library separates picture books from easy books; but for this researcher, neither section seems well defined. A third library shelves picture storybooks randomly. The books are not even grouped by the first letter of the author's last name. In contrast, other libraries shelve them author by author and title by title--in perfect order. Some libraries have books on shelves; others use bins exclusively; and others use both. A final group shelves books by the first letter of the author's last name but no more specifically than that. The rationale for each procedure should reflect library philosophies and policies, identify differences in services for children and adults, and prove to be a worthy study of inquiry into librarianship.

This study resulted from an observation at a speech contest in a small north central Iowa town. This researcher has long known the usefulness of picture
storybooks; others, obviously, have understood the point as well. As Beckman and Diamond (1984) stated, "Picture books can be a valuable resource for all ages, providing easy access to a variety of language arts skills that basals alone cannot approach" (p. 102). They are not just for children, and the complexity of thought in such books as Black and White proves the point. Everyone can benefit.
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--------. The Horn Book Magazine 65 (July/August 1989): 469-480.


--------. The Horn Book Magazine 66 (July/August 1990): 441-449.


--------. The Horn Book Magazine 67 (July/August 1991): 443-452.


The Horn Book Magazine 68 (July/August 1992): 444-447.


Chatton, Barbara A. "Picture Books for Young Adults." The ALAN Review 17 (Spring 1990): 16-18.


Appendix A: Checklist of Speech Categories and Characteristics

Picture Storybook: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DRAMATIC ACTING</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>analysis of material</td>
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<tr>
<td>assimilation of material</td>
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<tr>
<td>projection of thought and emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>use of bodily activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>vocal technique</td>
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<tr>
<td>portrayal of character(s)</td>
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<td>establishment of a serious tone</td>
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<td>portrayal of character(s)</td>
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<td>establishment of a humorous tone</td>
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<td>arrangement of material</td>
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<tr>
<td>projection of thought</td>
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<tr>
<td>projection of emotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>control of bodily activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>rhythm</td>
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<td>pronunciation</td>
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<tr>
<td>voice control</td>
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<tr>
<td>facial gestures</td>
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<td>projection of bodily activity</td>
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<tr>
<th>STORYTELLING</th>
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<tr>
<td>ability to recreate author's story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusion of narrator/narration</td>
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<tr>
<td>creation of a storyline</td>
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<tr>
<td>high energy level</td>
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<tr>
<td>enjoyment in telling the story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate facial gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appropriate bodily movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpretation of story, not performance of it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Titles Not Suitable for Inclusion in Annotated Bibliography


----------. **Tom and Pippo Go For a Walk.** New York, NY: Macmillan, 19??.


Tom and Pippo Read a Story. New York, NY: Macmillan, 19??.

Tom and Pippo See the Moon. New York, NY: Macmillan, 19??.

Tom and Pippo's Day. New York, NY: Macmillan, 19??.


Abstract

High school speech instructors frequently use picture storybooks in their curriculum. Picture storybooks differ from illustrated storybooks and picture books because they are the only type of the three that includes a balanced union between text and illustrations. An observation made at a high school speech contest in Iowa was the impetus for the formation of a bibliography of picture storybooks suitable for speech contest work. The researcher located, read, annotated, and categorized books reviewed in *The Horn Book Magazine* between 1989 and 1992. Of the 497 books read, 363 formed a bibliography of picture storybooks divided among these categories: dramatic acting; humorous acting; poetry, dramatic; poetry, humorous; poetry, seriocomic; prose, dramatic; prose, humorous; prose, seriocomic; storytelling, dramatic; storytelling, humorous; and storytelling, seriocomic. The suitability of many titles for speech communications coursework was expected; the difficulty of locating the books was not.