

Form for gender examination of the characters in a picture book

Which types of children's books are best suited for use with this examination form?

- An ordinary picture book
- Aimed at children between one and six years of age
- A leaflet/brochure with illustrations/pictures and text
- A picture book app for tablets

The analysis strategies are not suitable for poems, nonsense verse and factual books.

Read the book, look at the pictures and answer the questions. If necessary, leaf through the book to answer a specific question. Use the answers as the basis for assessing whether the picture book expands or confirms traditional gender norms.

Questions about the book's main character

a) Active-passive: choose one of the options

The text and images of the book presents the main character as ...

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
strong, brave, a hero | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
cheeky, mischievous,
independent or
adventurous | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
careful, anxious or
withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
passive or a victim of
others or circumstance |
| | The main character gets
things happen and
affects the environment
significantly | Other players makes
things happen or
substances sets frame.
He/she affects other
indirectly to act | The second main
character does little or
can do little to change
the situation |

b) Emotions-absence of emotions: choose one of the options

The thoughts, emotions and vulnerabilities of the main character are in the text and the images of the book ...

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
portrayed in great detail
or is central for the plot | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
displayed or included as
an important part | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
less important compared
to the other aspects of
the book | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
not described or not
central |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|

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c) Relevance of appearance: choose one of the options

The text and the images of the book presents the main character as ...

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
pretty, and the portrayal
a beautiful appearance is
load-bearing, or central
to the narrative | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
beautiful, pretty,
handsome or cute | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
pretty or not, appearance
is irrelevant to the story | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
ugly, monstrous or less
attractive – through the
whole story |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

d) Identity: choose one of the options

The text and the images of the book presents the main character as ...

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
A boy or a man | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Girl or woman | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
A person who can't be clearly
categorized as either girl, woman,
boy or man |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4
A male animal or creature | <input type="checkbox"/> 5
A female animal or creature | <input type="checkbox"/> 6
An animal or being which can't
be clearly categorized as either
girl, woman, boy or man |

Questions about the book's second main character

The book has only one main character: go to the question i) about the parent figures in the book.

e) Active-passive: choose one of the options

The text and images of the book presents the second main character as ...

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
strong, brave, a hero | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
cheeky, mischievous,
independent or
adventurous

The second main
character make things
happen and affects the
environment
significantly | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
careful, anxious or
withdrawn

Other players makes
things happen or
substances sets frame.
He/she affects other
indirectly to act | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
passive or a victim of
others or circumstance

The second main
character does little or
can do little to change
the situation |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

f) Emotions-absence of emotions: choose one of the options

The thoughts, emotions and vulnerabilities of the second main character are in the text and the images of the book ...

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
portrayed in great detail
or is central for the plot | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
displayed or included as
an important part | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
less important compared
to the other aspects of
the book | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
not described or not
central |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|

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g) Relevance of appearance: choose one of the options

The text and images of the book presents the second main character as ...

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
pretty, and the portrayal
a beautiful appearance is
load-bearing, or central
to the narrative | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
beautiful, pretty,
handsome or cute | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
pretty or not, appearance
is irrelevant to the story | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
ugly, monstrous or less
attractive – through the
whole story |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

h) Identity: choose one of the options

The text and the images of the book presents the second main character as ...

- | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
A boy or a man | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Girl or woman | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
A person who can't be clearly
categorized as either girl, woman,
boy or man |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4
A male animal or being | <input type="checkbox"/> 5
A female animal or being | <input type="checkbox"/> 6
An animal or being which does
not clearly can be categorized as a
girl, woman, boy or man |

Questions about the book's first parent character (father, mother etc.)

The book does not have a mother, father or parent figure, go to “Keys in assessing the picture book.”

i) Intimate-distant: choose one of the options

The text and the images in the book presents the parent character as ...

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
the child's closest carer | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
present and caring | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
one that attempts, but
has problems with being
a good parent | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
distant, little supportive
or one that make
problems |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

j) Identity: choose one of the options

The text and the images of the book presents the parents character as ...

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
Woman | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Man | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
A person who can't be clearly
categorized as either girl, woman,
boy or man |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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Questions about the book's second parent character (father, mother, etc.)

The book has just one parent figure, go to “Keys in assessing the picture book.”

k) Intimate-distant: choose one of the options

The text and images of the book presents the second parent character as ...

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
the child's closest career | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
present and caring | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
one that attempts, but
has problems with being
a good parent | <input type="checkbox"/> 4
distant, little supportive
or one that make
problems |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

l) Identity: choose one of the options

The text and the images of the book presents the second parent character as ...

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1
A woman | <input type="checkbox"/> 2
A man | <input type="checkbox"/> 3
A person who can't be clearly
categorized as either girl, woman,
boy or man |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Keys in assessing the picture book

Go through the answers and assess the picture book. Do they give you a basis to assess whether the book expands or confirms traditional gender norms?

a and e) There are fewer female than male main characters described as strong, brave or as heroes.

b and f) Fewer boys than girls have been portrayed with their thoughts, feelings and vulnerabilities on display.

c and g) In many picture books and booklets the beauty or appearance of the female main character is fundamental. Alternatively a girl audience is targeted by making the book in itself is cute or beautiful.

d and h) There are significantly fewer picture books with a female than a male main characters. There are several examples of human main characters in picture books who neither fit in the “girl” or “boy” box. Animals or creatures are often portrayed with the characteristics of a boy or a man, or the gender is open to interpretation. Albeit very few animal main characters are portrayed as girls or women.

i and k) Traditionally fewer fathers have been portrayed as close and caring.

j and l) Until recently same sex parents have been non-existent.