

Brief information on the analysis strategies

Use analysis strategies below to make up your mind about the picture book you have in front of you. Does the children's book expand or confirm traditional gender norms? This information summary is intended as a support to the *Analysis form* that you find on the website www.gendertest.no

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. A thorough introduction about the six different ways of analyse picture books can be found on the mentioned website.

The Counter

Check: What gender does the main character and the subordinate characters of the picture book have?

Or is the main character of the picture book an animal? Does this animal have a gender, or is it described without clear gender characteristics? The "counter" analysis strategy pinpoints and documents the gender statistics of the picture book. The number of picture books featuring a girl as the main character is lower than those featuring boys. Consequently girls have a lower number of books where they can identify with the main character. In a gender equality perspective it will therefore often be positive if the main character is a woman. What is the case with your picture book?

The Picture Reader

Examine: How is the main character's gender and environment presented?

What colours are used in the picture book? Pink, light, blue and black? Is the main character drawn with an expressive face? Do the pictures in the book hint in the direction of one of the genders? The analysis strategy we call the picture reader uses visual competence to read the pictures in the book, and to demonstrate how the pictures contribute to the book's presentation of gender. Picture books have text and pictures, and it is often through visual conventions, caricatures, colours and styles that gender patterns and gender norms are expressed. Which gender patterns do the pictures in your picture book signal?

Do children's books expand or confirm traditional gender norms?
A resource from a project funded by Nordic Council of Ministers

The Norm Critic

Examine: Which gender norms does the picture book have?

Is the girl in the picture book described as passive, beautiful, kind and the one who helps others? Is the boy in the book a silent hero who saves the day without any description of what he is thinking and feeling? Using the other analysis strategies, the norm critic checks the gender patterns in the picture book and assesses whether it confirms or contradicts these. Which gender patterns do you see in your book, and are they uncontested?

The Queer-Strategy Researcher

Examine: Is there something uncommon about gender, love and family life in the book?

Many works of art, particularly the classics, often have aspects of gender, identity, love and family life that are chaotic, illogical, where much has to be read between the lines. The analysis strategy we call the queer-strategy researcher will look for these deviations, the uncommon elements and ask what they mean. Do you see anything uncommon in your picture book?

The Child Researcher

Ask a child: What does she or he think about the book?

Which impressions does the book give the child about what it means to be a girl or a boy? The children's researcher analysis knows or examines what children are accustomed to reading. By reading for them and talking with them after reading the book, the researcher may discover how the children "read" and understand gender patterns in the picture books. What would a child see in its picture book?

The Fortune Teller

Check out: Are there other picture books or works of art that describe similar gender conditions?

Does the book tell us something about how it is to grow up as a girl or a boy in today's and tomorrow's society? Picture books are often highly sensitive to social changes, and the fortune teller has good knowledge and keeps abreast of how gender patterns in the family and society are developing. She or he sees and reads the picture book into a wider context. What does your picture book make you think of?