



Module One

Task: Gather picture book ideas

Ideas are everywhere! You might be stimulated by a conversation you hear, or by a feeling. You might see something in a book, which triggers an idea. You might be triggered by a visit to the art gallery. The more you start paying attention, the more your ideas will flow.

Get into the habit of writing down your ideas as soon as they come. I promise you, if you don't, they will disappear!

Be patient with your ideas. Some ideas take time to brew. Some sit in your subconscious for years before they emerge, fully formed. The best picture book ideas will often demand to be noticed.

Exercises for generating picture book ideas:

1. Fill a page with a list of random words that spring to mind. Edwina Wyatt talks about doing this exercise regularly, and how it stimulated an idea for *Sometimes Cake*. Maybe you can circle words you really love. Try rewriting them over and over in different ways. If you are illustrating, you might like to draw the word on a separate page and see what comes.
 2. Flick through random magazines and cut out images which inspire you. You might like to make a vision board either in your notebook or on a separate piece of card or paper. Let your ideas flow. This is particularly fun to do with music or with a friend!
 3. Blindfolded drawing: Carson Ellis does a fun game, where she blindfolds her partner, then gets her partner to describe random characteristics. She then draws the character as she imagines them. This character might end up in a story.
 4. Close your eyes and remember an emotional time in your younger life. Where were you? How old were you? What was the emotion? Write it down.
 5. Pay attention to the emotions or key themes in your family life. Lucy Estela talks about worrying about her kids. And sometimes that worry becomes the emotion that seeds her picture book idea.
 6. Read a picture book aloud. Then write down five random ideas associated with the picture book.
 7. Listen to children's book podcasts. I do this when I am driving or in nature. Inevitably, I get an idea! Good podcasts include: *The Children's Book Podcast*, *First Draft*, *Picture Booking*, *The Happy Book* and *One More Page*.
 8. For kids, I create four boxes for them to fill with words and drawings: character, problem, goal & setting. One or more of these boxes might stimulate an idea.
 9. Visit a bookstore. I cannot leave a bookstore without a new idea!
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