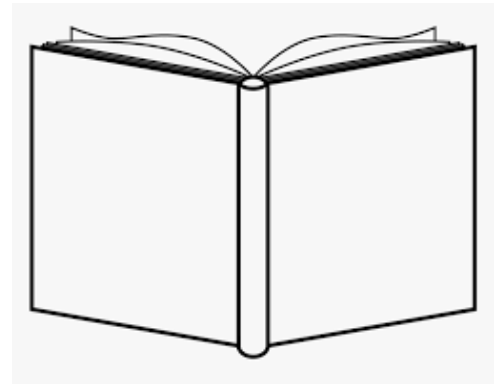


# Can You Judge a Book By Its Cover?



Description: We say we shouldn't judge a book by its cover but that is precisely what we do when we go to bookstores or the library. The reason being we do not have the time to read the entire book to determine whether we would like it or not. We have to look at the big idea captured on the cover to determine whether it is worth our effort. But how do you summarize the big idea of a book to entice others to want to read it by using only the cover of the book?

Depth and Complexity icons:



Product:

Students are going to create a book jacket that will summarize the basic plot of the book as well as try to convince others why they should read the book. Students should not give too much away but should have enough interesting information to make someone looking at it curious about the book.

Skills:

- Comprehension
- Artistic ability
- Synthesis
- Evaluation



Calendar:

<b>Day 1</b> What is the big idea? How do you show this?		<b>Day 2</b> Students will look at the backs of books and how they are summarized	<b>Day 3</b> Students will choose an image to use on the cover that captures the big idea of the book	
<b>Day 4</b> Students will write the synopsis of the book that gives the big idea but not too much away		<b>Day 5</b> Students will write the about the author	<b>Day 6</b> Students will write a review of the book	
<b>Day 7</b> Students will create a final version of the book jacket		<b>Day 8</b> Students will finish their book jacket	<b>Day 9</b> Students will share their book jacket with the class	

## The Big Idea

What do we mean when we talk about the big idea?



It is essentially taking something larger and boiling it down to just a few ideas.

Questions:

- What is the key idea, theory, or principle?
- What conclusions can be made based on the collection of facts?
- What evidence is needed to support to overarching statement?

Why do you suppose the symbol for Depth and Complexity is what it is?

Possible answer:

- The pillars represent the ideas and they are what hold up the structure

Why do you think it is important to figure out the big idea?

Possible answers:

- Because it is the important stuff
- Because that is what the author wants you to have gotten
- Because without it you might miss the point
- Because

A preview of a movie has to take two hours worth of content and boil it down into a few minutes. They have to carefully select what they are going to include in the preview to persuade people to watch it, but almost as important is what they leave out so that it does not ruin the movie for people.

Similarly, a book has what is called a book jacket that has to summarize the story of the book in just a few paragraphs. A book jacket also has other aspects that inform the reader what the story is about.

Wonder

Example of movie preview for Wonder:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDPEKXx\\_IAl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDPEKXx_IAl)

Example of a book trailer for Wonder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyvyGFjLiZY>

Or can show

Charlotte's Web

Example of movie preview for Charlotte's web

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63Xh4T0qb-Y>

Example of book trailer for Charlotte's web

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OLkY9DTx9I>

### Discussion questions

- Do you have a general understanding of what the story is about?
- Do you get the big ideas from these?
- How do they do this?
- Did they give the ending of the book/movie away?
- Why do you suppose they didn't do that?

## How do you summarize the big idea of a book?

Who here has ever bought a book based on the description on the back?

When publishers publish books, they have to try to persuade people to buy the book based on the description of what is inside the book.

These summaries are not usually very long.

Example: Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing by Judy Blume

*This fudge isn't so sweet! Two is a crowd when Peter and his little brother, Fudge, are in the same room. Grown-ups think Fudge is absolutely adorable, but Peter and his pet turtle, Dribble, know the truth. From throwing temper tantrums to smearing mashed potatoes on the wall, Fudge causes mischief wherever he goes. What will the tiny terror do next?*

What has this summary done?

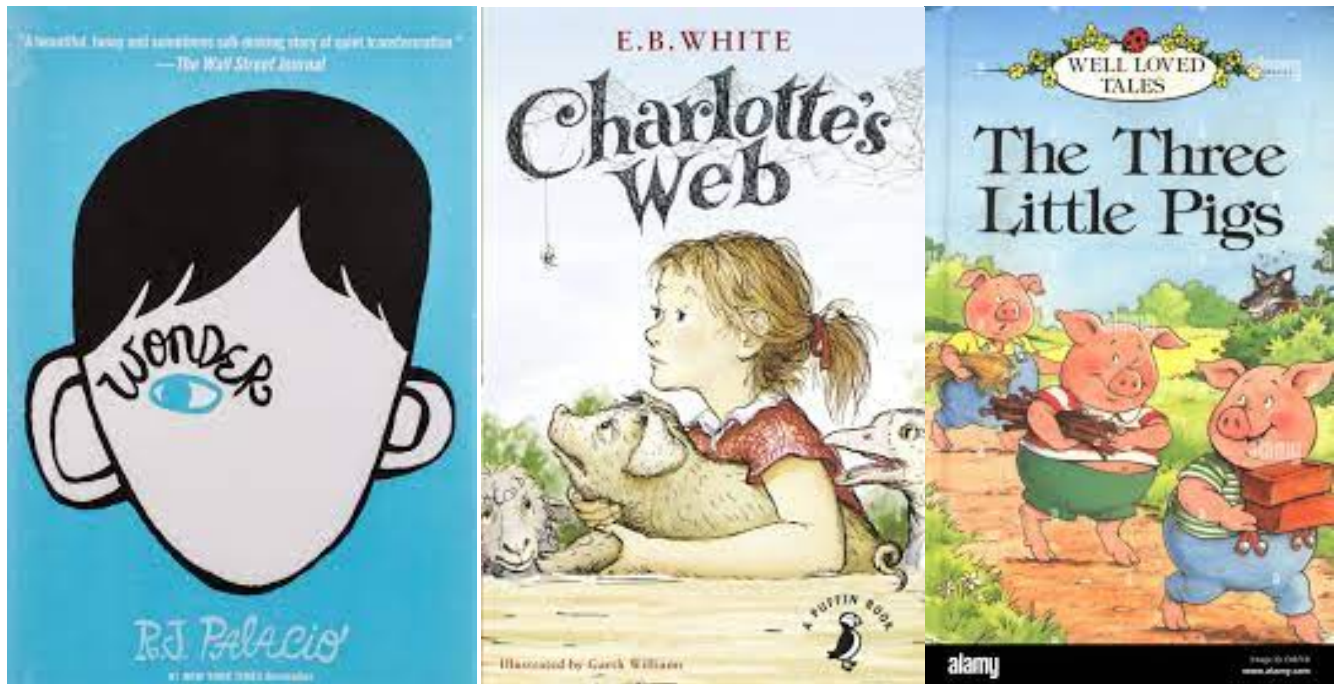
- Established the main character, Peter
- Given him an antagonist in his little brother Fudge
- Introduced secondary characters such as his pet turtle Dribble
- Provided examples that would make you curious such as “smearing mashed potatoes on the wall”
- Made you wonder “what will the tiny terror do next”
- Let you know the genre of comedy

The purpose of this summary is both to inform you about the basic story of the book, and also persuade you to want to read it. What does it not do?

- Give away the ending
- Put every character in the book in the summary
- Explain why he smeared mashed potatoes on the wall
- Says what year it takes place
- Tell you where it takes place

## Choosing the proper cover image

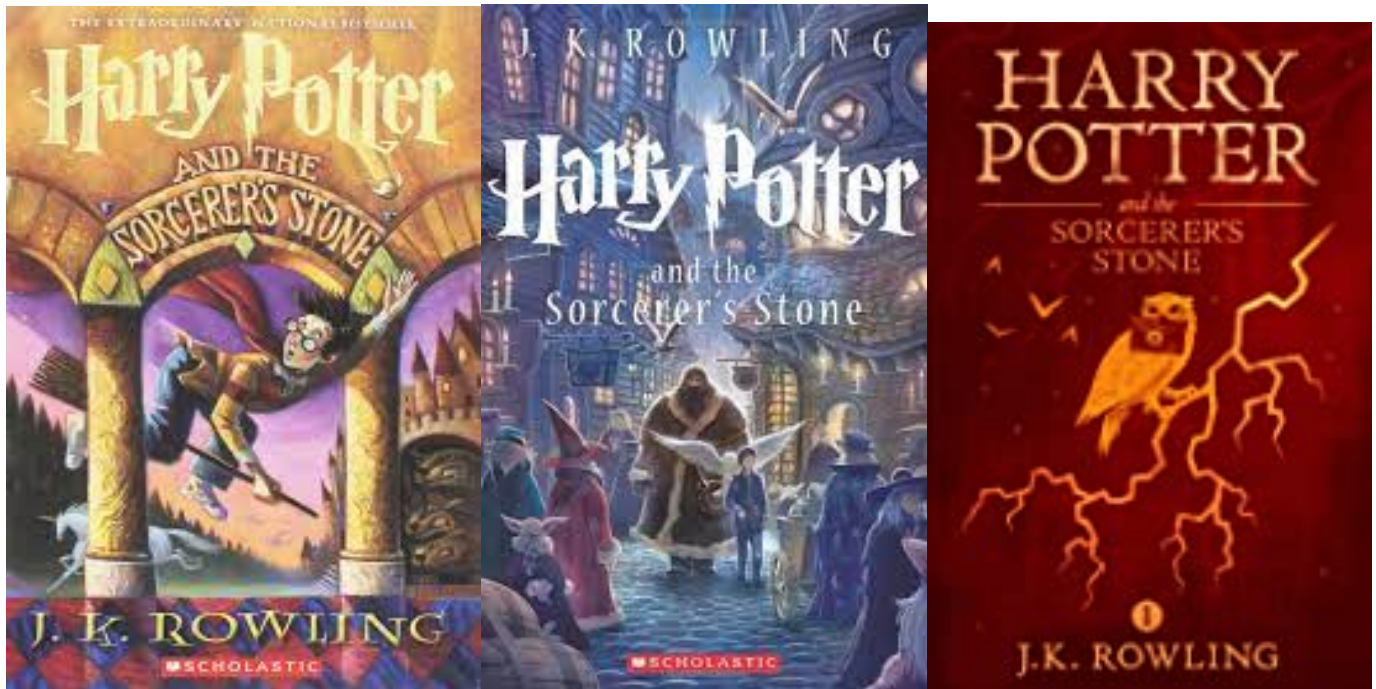
They say a picture is worth a 1000 words so what image you choose to put on the cover of your book can say a lot.



### *Discussion questions*

- What do these covers say about the book?
- How do they capture the big ideas of the book?
- Do you find them visually striking?
- What does the cover of your book look like?
- How could you convey the big ideas better with an image?

Let's look at these three covers for Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone



*Discussion questions*

- What are the differences in these covers?
- Why do you think they chose these covers?
- Which one do you think is most effective at capturing the big ideas and why?
- Which one do you think is least effective at capturing the big ideas and why?
- How would you illustrate the cover for Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone?



You either need to:

- Find an image (not a cover of the book already made) that best represents the ideas of the book
- Draw your own image (not copying the already existing covers) that captures the big ideas of the book

You will capture a rough draft of this on a piece of paper to be used later when creating the final draft of your book jacket.

## Writing the back of your book

The first thing you will want to do is summarize the story in the book in a sentence or two at most.

Use The Three Little Pigs as an example

Three pigs set out on their own to build houses, only to run into problems when a big bad wolf tries to eat them.

Then list the main characters which would be the protagonist (hero), antagonist (villain), and other important characters.

The three little pigs are the protagonists  
The big bad wolf is the antagonist  
No other really important characters

Then describe two actions that take place in the story that might persuade someone to read the book.

1. The three little pigs each use different materials to build their house with.
2. The wolf is able to blow down houses with a huff and a puff. Can he blow down the little pigs' houses?

Then you put this all together into a summary.

The three little pigs set out on their own to build a house. Each pig uses different materials to build their house, some taking more time than others. This ends up being bad for them as a big bad wolf is lurking in the area, looking to find a pig dinner. Will the houses hold as the wolf huffs and puffs and tries to blow them down, or will they be able to stop the wolf?

Summarize the book in a sentence or two

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List the main characters who you feel need to be included to tell this summary

Main Protagonist \_\_\_\_\_

Main Conflict/Antagonist \_\_\_\_\_

Other major characters \_\_\_\_\_

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What are two actions that take place in the story that might persuade someone to read the book.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Writing the author's bio

Usually included is an about the author section which does a few things:

- Provides a little background on the author
- Explains why this person is an expert to write the book
- Indicates achievements or awards
- Mentions other books by the same author
- Selling points/hooks

### Author bio for Rick Riordan

Rick Riordan is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series, the Kane Chronicles, and the Heroes of Olympus. He is also the author of the multi-award-winning Tres Navarre mystery series for adults.

For fifteen years, Rick taught English and history at public and private middle schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Texas. In 2002, Saint Mary's Hall honored him with the school's first Master Teacher Award.

While teaching full time, Riordan began writing mystery novels for grownups. His Tres Navarre series went on to win the top three national awards in the mystery genre - the Edgar, the Anthony and the Shamus. Riordan turned to children's fiction when he started *The Lightning Thief* as a bedtime story for his oldest son.

Today over 35 million copies of his Percy Jackson, Kane Chronicles, and Heroes of Olympus books are in print in the United States, and rights have been sold into more than 35 countries. Rick is also the author of *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones*, another #1 New York Times bestseller.

Rick Riordan now writes full-time. He lives in Boston with his wife and two sons.

If you were to write a bio about yourself, what would you include?

*Possible answers*

- Your family/where you live
- What makes you who you are?
- Some of your personality qualities
- Your likes/dislikes
- Something interesting you have done or do

Now write the author's bio to your book. Use the already existing one for ideas but use your own words. Add things that you feel will make it interesting. Feel free to do a Google search on the author or read their Wikipedia page should they have one for additional ideas.



## Writing a review

When books are written there are people who review them. Some of these are:

- professional reviewers who work for a magazine/website
- book lovers who post on LibraryThing or Goodreads
- people who want to leave a review on Amazon after reading the book

Some use a rating system such as:

- Stars
- A grade
- Emoji
- Thumbs up, thumbs down
- Some other clever graphic such as books or even kangaroos

## The One and Only Ivan

Here is a professional review of the book from Kirkus

How Ivan confronts his harrowing past yet stays true to his nature exemplifies everything youngsters need to know about courage.

Living in a "domain" of glass, metal and cement at the Big Top Mall, Ivan sometimes forgets whether to act like a gorilla or a human—except Ivan does not think much of humans. He describes their behavior as frantic, whereas he is a peaceful artist. Fittingly, Ivan narrates his tale in short, image-rich sentences and acute, sometimes humorous, observations that are all the more heartbreaking for their simple delivery. His sorrow is palpable, but he stoically endures the cruelty of humans until Ruby the baby elephant is abused. In a pivotal scene, Ivan finally admits his domain is a cage, and rather than let Ruby live and die in grim circumstances, he promises to save her. In order to express his plea in a painting, Ivan must bravely face buried memories of the lush jungle, his family and their brutal murder, which is recounted in a brief, powerful chapter sure to arouse readers' passions. In a compelling ending, the more challenging question Applegate poses is whether or not Ivan will remember what it was like to be a gorilla. Spot art captures poignant moments throughout.

Utterly believable, this bittersweet story, complete with an author's note identifying the real Ivan, will inspire a new generation of advocates. (author's note) (*Fiction. 8-12*)



Here is an Amazon review of the book

★★★★★ **Read This Book!**

Reviewed in the United States on October 23, 2017

**Verified Purchase**

There are some books that so delight a reader that she just wants to shout it out from the rooftops, READ THIS BOOK! Such is the case with *The One and Only Ivan*, written by the author Katherine Applegate, previously unknown to me and now a favorite. At the risk of sounding overly effusive, this book is heartwarming, soul touching, totally engaging, while not being at all overly sentimental. It has elements of distress as well, because it is written with an intelligent, careful realism without being preachy about the rights of animals in this world in which we live.

The book is presumably a children's book and I would agree it is such in the same way that *The Little Prince* is meant for children. What makes a wonderful book even more wonderful is that it contains a few lovely pictures, some drawn by Ivan, the protagonist Gorilla and some drawn by the daughter of the groundskeeper where Ivan and his fellow animal friends reside. I cannot guarantee that you will love *The One and Only Ivan*, as I did, but if you do, you will remember it forever,

You are going to write a full review of the book and then choose a blurb from it you will include on your book jacket. Things you might want to include:

### **1. Start with a couple of sentences describing what the book is about**

But without giving any spoilers or revealing plot twists. Try to avoid writing in detail about anything that happens from about the middle of the book onwards. If the book is part of a series, it can be useful to mention this, and whether you think you'd need to have read other books in the series to enjoy this one.

### **2. Discuss what you particularly liked about the book**

Focus on your thoughts and feelings about the story and the way it was told. You could try answering a couple of the following questions:

- Who was your favorite character, and why?
- Did the characters feel real to you?
- Did the story keep you guessing?
- What was your favorite part of the book, and why?
- Were certain types of scene written particularly well - for example sad scenes, tense scenes, mysterious ones...?
- Did the book make you laugh or cry?
- Did the story grip you and keep you turning the pages?

### **3. Mention anything you disliked about the book**

Talk about why you think it didn't work for you. For example:

- Did you wish the ending hadn't been a cliffhanger because you found it frustrating?
- Did you find it difficult to care about a main character, and could you work out why?
- Was the story too scary for your liking, or did it focus on a theme you didn't find interesting?

### **4. Round up your review**

Summarize some of your thoughts on the book by suggesting the type of reader you'd recommend the book to. For example: younger readers, older readers, fans of relationship drama/mystery stories/comedy. Are there any books or series you would compare it to?

### **5. You can give the book a rating, for example a mark out of five or ten, if you like**



## Creating your book jacket

Students will use a template to create their book jacket. Book jacket must have:

- Cover photo that represents the big idea of the book
- Synopsis of the book
- Review of the book
- About the author

### Book Jacket Template

<p><b>BOOK FLAP COVER FLAP</b></p> <p><i>About the author.</i> List the author's name and something about him or her, education, where he/she lives, etc. Write this in your own words.</p> <p>Include the publishing company's name and place of publication.</p>	<p><b>BACK COVER</b></p> <p>Title    Author    Illustrations Publishing company name Reading level (if known) Award (if book has received)</p> <p>Write a summary of the book from the viewpoint of someone important, or from a book review company. Give hints about exciting events which will happen, but don't give the answer!</p> <p>Write quotes you or your friends might have said about the book.</p>	<p>BOOK SPINE</p> <p>Title</p> <p>Author's last name</p> <p>Illustrator</p>	<p><b>FRONT COVER</b></p> <p><b>Book Title</b></p> <p><b>Author</b></p> <p>Draw a cover picture</p>	<p><b>FRONT COVER FLAP</b></p> <p>Write interesting information about the story which will make readers want to open the cover and keep reading. This is a short summary designed to be highly interesting to the reader.</p>
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	<b>Book Jacket – Content</b>	<b>Book Jacket – Appearance</b>
<i>Excellent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives a clear overview of the story without giving too much away, leaves the viewer wanting more</li> <li>• It is obvious who the main protagonist and antagonist are and their motivations</li> <li>• Tagline is very catchy and fits with the book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures the big idea of the book in all aspects of the</li> <li>• It is professional looking, with appropriate graphics and text</li> <li>• Has all 4 sections of the book jacket</li> </ul>
<i>Good</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives an overview of the story but some confusion as to the basic plot or gives too much away</li> <li>• The main protagonist and antagonist are mentioned but their motivations are not clear</li> <li>• Tagline is present but is either not very catchy or does not fit with the book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captures the big idea of the book in different ways</li> <li>• It is professional looking, with appropriate graphics and text</li> <li>• Has all 4 sections of the book jacket</li> </ul>
<i>Needs improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic story overview is very confusing or gives most of the story away, ruining it for others</li> <li>• The main protagonist and antagonist are not mentioned or it is confusing who is who</li> <li>• Tagline is not there or has nothing to do with the book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has less than 5 scenes in the trailer</li> <li>• Does not look good, having graphics and text that are not appropriate to the story</li> <li>• Is well under 1 or well over 3 minutes in length</li> </ul>