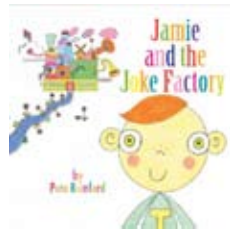


# Peta's School Bag: ILLUSTRATION AND LITERACY

As well as writing the words, I draw the pictures – or, to use the proper word, do the **ILLUSTRATIONS** – that appear in my books.

These are the books I've published so far: click on the covers to find out more!



## ILLUSTRATIONS DEVELOP THE STORY

Good illustrations don't just say the same thing as the words. What would be the point of that? **Good illustrations tell you things the words don't.**

So you have the words 'THE CAT SAT ON THE MAT' and that's all you know about the cat. But add an illustration, and suddenly you know a whole lot more...



Can you list some things the illustration tells us that the words didn't?

For example:

What does the cat look like?

What do you think the cat is feeling?

What sort of house do you think the cat lives in?

What do you think the cat's owners are like?

Can you write a story or a poem about the cat in the illustration?

Can you illustrate 'THE CAT SAT ON THE MAT' in a different way, that tells a different story?

Here is an illustration from my book, *Isabella's Adventures in Numberland*. As you can see, there aren't many words, but lots going on in the picture.



With that, he's off, at break-neck pace,  
And Isabella joins the race.

Can you make a list of the things that the illustration tells you  
but the words don't?

For example:

What is the weather like?

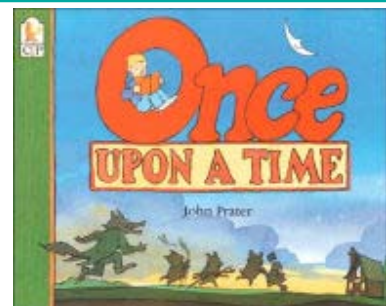
Where is the race taking place?

Who are the racers?

And why do you think they are racing?!

In the illustration, you can see a dodo and a mouse. They appear lots of times in the illustrations in the book (count them), but they are never mentioned in the words (the 'text'). Can you write a story about the dodo and the mouse that explains what they are doing in Numberland?

A really great book for showing how illustrations can extend a story (or tell a different story) is John Prater's 'Once Upon a Time'. It's one of my all-time favourites.



## Case study: Barton Primary, Isle of Wight, Years 1 and 2

These sessions were quite short so quite fast-paced and intense. Oh, and lots of fun!

We talked about how the **same words can be interpreted in different ways**.

We then looked at the first line of my book, *Jamie and the Joke Factory*:  
'Jamie was **SO** excited! He was going on a **surprise outing** with **Grandad!**'

We emptied our head of all preconceptions and the children were asked to think about how they would illustrate this line, if they knew nothing about the story (even, ideally, the title).

For example: What does Jamie look like? Is he even a human boy?

What is the surprise outing?

Where is Jamie in the picture? Is he still wondering what the surprise might be, or has the adventure already started?

Is there anyone else in the picture?

The children were asked to **extract basic information** from the text and then **let their imaginations fly!**

The children then worked in groups of five or six, with marker pens on large sheets of paper, to illustrate the line. They had to **work as a team, discuss their ideas, express opinions and agree a narrative**. (Thinking about how to illustrate the line, naturally led them to **predicting what might happen next**.)



The children then verbally shared their illustrations (and alternative narratives) with the class, and were encouraged to do so as if telling the story their drawings illustrated, rather than merely describing it.

I ended **my** session by reading *Jamie and the Joke Factory*, but the teachers were able to use the illustrations in other lessons for more extended writing and storytelling activities, which is very exciting!

Please email [petarainford@gmail.com](mailto:petarainford@gmail.com) if you would like me to come into your school to help develop storytelling through illustration.