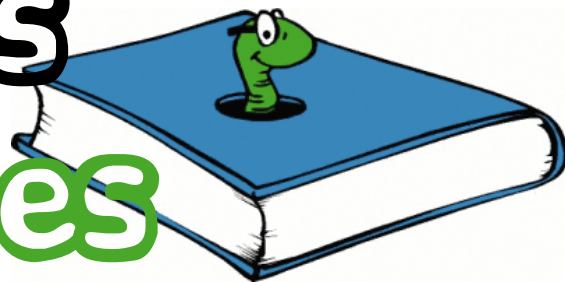


# picture books about libraries



THERESA SASS

## Book Selector

Libraries are daunting places for young children. To help them overcome this perception many authors wrote books about visiting the library for the very first time. We have many picture books in stock that cover the topic of first experiences in a library. The themes of the books are usually about the many different books, the librarians and the message that reading helps you learn and discover new things.

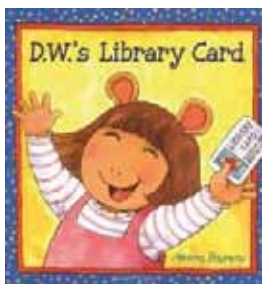
Most of the time the library is portrayed as a friendly place where children are always welcome. However, librarians are initially depicted as frowning, stern-looking ladies. As the child gets to know them they find out that they are actually friendly people. I also noticed that in most of the picture books the main character is accompanied by a parent or an older sibling.

The author will also often use animals or a child as one of the characters to attract the readers' attention. The stories often tell young readers the advantages of having a library card or how books can open up a whole new world. Following is a list of picture books about books and libraries.

**Brown, Marc.** *DW's library card.*- Little, 2012.

'DW can't wait to get a library card, she just has to learn how to write her name first. When DW and Arthur are at the library one Saturday, DW asks her brother to check out a book for her. He's mortified at the idea of having a baby book on his record. DW asks Mrs Turner, the librarian, how she can get her own library card and the librarian's answer sets DW off on a discouraging adventure because DW's parents have given her a handful of a name. No wonder everyone calls her by her initials! Still, patiently, DW keeps on practising her full name, over and over again ... until ... she gets it right. Then she presents Mrs Turner with her full written name, and in return gets her very own first library card.

'Off she trots to find the book her brother wouldn't check out for her but it is no longer on the shelf. Mrs Turner tells her it was borrowed and will be returned in a week. One whole, long week. DW must now



learn patience! Well, eventually DW gets her book and another lesson, this time about being responsible for the books she borrows from the library; ([www.rebeccareadsarchives.com](http://www.rebeccareadsarchives.com))

**Cleminson, Katie.** *Otto the book bear.*- Jonathan Cape, 2011.

Otto is a bear who lives in a book. He is so happy when anyone reads his story, but the day comes when the family move on and Otto is left behind. Otto decides to climb out of his book and goes off to find a new home. But the world is a scary place when you are as small as Otto, and he moves from place to place, feeling lonelier with every step, until he sees a library! Otto immediately feels that this is the perfect home for him. This is a lovely story which celebrates the delights of books. (Theresa Sass)

**Cousins, Lucy.** *Maisy goes to the library.*- Walker Bks., 2007.

Maisy (a little mouse) travels to her local library to find a book about fish and a quiet reading nook. During her search, she sees other animals using the computer, making copies, and listening to music. While looking at the aquarium, she locates the book she was hoping to find. Just as Maisy is ready to settle down to read, her friends arrive for story hour. This simple book presents the library as a fun, child-friendly place. (Theresa Sass)

**Donaldson, Julia.** *Charlie Cook's favourite book* / illustrated by Axel Scheffler.- Macmillan, 2005.

The story starts when we see Charlie Cook reading his favourite book, curled up in a chair in the lounge. When we turn the page we, the readers, are now reading that favourite book entitled *Shiver me timbers*. The double spread depicts a double spread from the book he's reading and we read there that, when the pirate opened the treasure chest he had found on the island, he found a book. We then turn the page to find ourselves reading from the pages of that book, entitled *Fairy tales from a forgotten island*. What an amazing book this is! It is sophisticated, fun and appealing and at the same time has a neat ending. (Johanna de Beer)

**Hartmann, Wendy.** *Theo the library cat* / illustrated by Joan Rankin.- Lapa, 2007.

'Theo loves books and finding out things, but this too-curious cat sometimes finds out too much ... Drama and humour in three separate stories, enriched by Rankin's imaginative, atmospheric, cat-crazy illustrations.' (Argus)

**Houston, Gloria.** *Miss Dorothy and her bookmobile* / illustrated by Susan Condie.- Harper, 2011.

'As a youngster, Dorothy Thomas knew she would become a librarian and planned to be in charge of a fine brick library like the one in her small Massachusetts town.



However, after getting her library degree, she married and moved to rural North Carolina, where she operated a bookmobile for many years, until a library was established. As the years passed, her library-on-wheels blossomed, and Dorothy profoundly affected many lives through her love of books. Finely drawn colourful illustrations feature

a good number of landscapes, giving a strong sense of the Blue Ridge Mountain setting while closely matching the story line of the brief text as Dorothy and her green van visit patrons in small towns, farms, schools, and even snowbound homes. The final page features an author's note that establishes that Dorothy Thomas was a real person and reaffirms her influence in her rural community.' (*School Library Journal*)

**Jacobs, Jaco.** *Bertus soek 'n boek* / geïllustreer deur Marjorie van Heerden.- Lapa, 2009.

Bertus hou niks van lees nie en die biblioteek lyk vir hom grys, vaal en baie vervelig. Toe sy ma van 'n verrassing praat, het hy nou regtig nie gedink dit behels die uitneem van boeke nie. 'n Verrassing vir hom is 'n nuwe fiets, 'n rekenaarspeletjie of 'n besoek aan die diere-tuin, definitief nie 'n boek nie! Maar dan ontmoet hy die bibliotekaresse, mevrou Haasbroek, en sy avontuur met boeke begin. Saam ontdek hulle die wonderlike geheime wat tussen die boekkrakke wegkruip. Hulle neem deel aan sport, hardloop weg vir groot dinosourusse, skiet pyl-en-boog saam met Indië en ontmoet selfs 'n spook of twee. Bertus vind dat die grootste avonture en verrassings juis vir hom wag in die boeke van die biblioteek. 'n Prettige en boeiende prentboek, pragtig in kleur geïllustreer, wat veral geskik is om kinders aan die biblioteek bekend te stel. (Stanley Jonck)

**Jeffers, Oliver.** *The incredible book eating boy*.- HaperCollins, 2006.

'Henry loves to eat books, and when he finds it makes him smarter he becomes truly voracious, gulping down several books at a time. He is hoping to become the smartest boy in the world. But it does lead to acute indigestion, and Henry is told to stop. Fortunately, he discovers that reading books is pretty good too. Quirky, distinctive figures are set against a background of printed pages from books, giving a really bookish feel.' (*School Librarian*)

**Kirk, Daniel.** *Library mouse: a friend's tale*.- Abrams Bks., 2009.

'Sam is a library-dwelling mouse. He writes and illustrates books that he leaves for Mrs Forrester and the children to read. This pleasant book features a bashful boy named Tom, who is a member of the Writers and Illustrators Club. He discovers that the mysterious author is a mouse and leaves him treats in an effort to make friends. Sam is able to bypass the cheese and crackers, but when he finds the story Tom wrote, he cannot



resist. When the club meets again, Mrs Forrester finds a new book written by Tom and illustrated by Sam, featuring two friends drawn as mice. When asked to identify his collaborator, Tom keeps his new friend's secret. Kirk's anthropomorphic mouse lives in a realistic-looking library, and his drawings of the librarian and children are incredibly lifelike. Tom's facial expressions and body language aptly convey his shyness and concern about Sam. The illustrations alternate between full-bleed drawings and spotlight cameos, and the perspective changes to show the story from the points of view of the two main characters.' (*School Library Journal*)

**Knudsen, Michelle.** *Library lion* / illustrated by Kevin Hawkes.- Walker Bks., 2006.

'Miss Merriweather, head librarian and decorum-keeper, first meets Lion when he saunters past his stone counterparts and into the stacks. Scowling circulation assistant Mr McBee seems intent on having the enormous cat ejected, but his boss declares that as long as he breaks no rules, he is welcome.



The beast does misbehave though, roaring loud displeasure when story time ends. At Miss Merriweather's reprimand, the contrite-looking lion promises to reform. In fact, he becomes something of a fixture in the building, dusting with his tail, licking envelopes, and serving as a step stool for small patrons. Everyone appreciates him - except Mr McBee. When Lion

lets out another tremendous "RAAAHHHRRRI," the man bursts into Miss Merriweather's office to snitch - and there he finds her in distress, having fallen from a stool and broken her arm. Lion, a la Lassie, saves the day, but he is so chagrined by his own rule-breaking behaviour that he doesn't return to the library. People miss him. Even Mr McBee. A feel-good ending and a reminder that "sometimes, there is a good reason to break the rules" bring the story to its most-satisfactory conclusion. Hawkes's deft acrylic-and-pencil pictures have appeal for generations of library lovers. They are rich with expression, movement, and detail.' (*School Library Journal*)

**McGee, Marni.** *Winston the book wolf* / illustrated by Ian Beck.- Bloomsbury, 2007.

'This is a picture book for sharing - and it will help if those sharing the story are familiar with some of our more popular traditional tales because Ian Beck has reworked old favourites in response to Marni McGee's amusing story line. Winston the hungry wolf, banned from the library for literally eating words, is rescued by Rosie (a very feisty Red Riding Hood) who teaches him to eat the words with his eyes. After lots of practice reading the words, they are ready to return to the library, the wolf disguised in Rosie's Granny's clothes. "Granny" Winston ingratiates himself with the intimidating librarian and finds a role providing endless story sessions for the children.' (*Children's Bookseller*)

**McQuinn, Anna.** *Lola at the library* / Rosalind Beardshaw.- Charlesbridge, 2006.

'Lola loves Tuesdays because that is the day she and her mother go to the library. Everything about the trip is an exciting adventure - from packing her backpack with books and her all-important library card, to story times and singing, to choosing new books and the walk home, when they always stop for a special treat. But the best

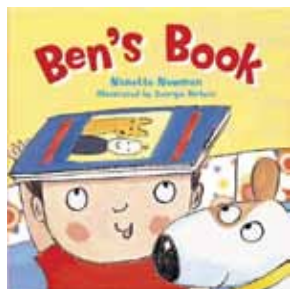
time of all is when Mommy reads her a story at bedtime. Simple text and large, bright acrylic illustrations of this engaging African-American child make this selection just right for sharing. Perfect for instilling a love of libraries and books in the youngest patrons, it's a winner.' (*School Library Journal*)

**Myron, Vick; James, Steve; Witter, Bret.** *Dewey: there's a cat in the library!*- Simon, 2010.

'This heart-warming picture book is based on the authors' adult title, *Dewey: the small-town library cat who touched the world*. It describes how, on a cold night, Myron found a tiny kitten in the return box at Spencer Public Library in Iowa, and this feline's impact on the library community. Called Dewey Readmore Books, he overcame unpleasant encounters with young children who picked him up upside down or petted him the wrong way and eventually settled in, happy to help people. The realistic illustrations, done in vibrant watercolours, bring the tale to life (the orange cat's expressions are priceless). The story moves along swiftly, and will be a hit with readers requesting animal books.' (*Publisher's Weekly*)

'This genial if cutesy adaptation of the authors' bestselling *Dewey: the small-town library cat who touched the world* gets an energetic boost from James's digitally rendered art. Animal-loving readers will be charmed by the realistic, close-up depictions of young library patrons and their tender (and sometimes not-so-tender) interactions with Dewey, who is based on a real-life feline.' (*School Library Journal*)

**Newman, Nanette.** *Ben's book* / illustrated by Georgie Birkett.- Pavilion Children's Bks., 2005.



**Ben's book** teaches children about the joys of reading and sharing stories. When Ben receives a book for his birthday, he's not sure what to do with it! Maybe it would make a good tunnel for his cars or an exciting new hat. But none of the uses he comes up with seem quite right – until he shows it to his older sister Lulu, who knows exactly what a book is for. An amusing story

to encourage young readers, enlivened by Georgie Birkett's bright artwork. (Sabrina Gosling)

**Parr, Todd.** *Reading makes you feel good.*- Little Brown Bks., 2009.

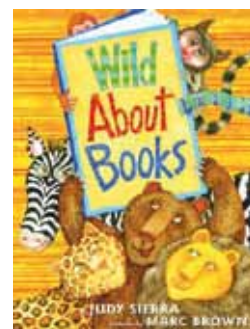
**Reading** ... is a great book for young children, to get them motivated about reading. The pictures are bright and with lots of activity. The focus is on how reading makes you feel and everything that you can do with reading. The language is simple and relates to young children, such as how reading helps you make pizza, takes care of your pet, makes a new friend, and teaches new things. There is also reading within the pictures: the buildings are named, street names, animal names at the zoo, and posters in a classroom. (Nomonde Ngqoba)

**Rey, Margret; Rey, HA, Weston, Martha.** *Margret & H.A. Rey's Curious George visits the library.*- Walker Bks., 2008.

Here Curious George, the monkey, visits a public library for the first time. He attends the story hour and causes chaos when he uses the book trolley for his own personal use, riding it up to the check-out counter and crashing into the reference section. (Johanna de Beer)

**Sierra, Judy.** *Wild about books* / illustrated by Marc Brown.- Knopf, 2004.

'This book tells the tale of librarian Molly McGrew who mistakenly drives the bookmobile to the zoo. The various denizens are attracted to her read-alouds and soon are reading, writing, rhyming, and going wild about those wonderful books. With Molly's encouragement, the animals start their own Zoobrary so they can read to their hearts' content. Sierra's text has a wacky verve and enough clever asides and allusions to familiar characters to satisfy bibliophiles of all ages. The author's sense of playfulness in plot and language creates a lavish literary stew. Comic moments abound, including bugs writing haiku and unruly bears licking illustrations right off the page. Brown's cheerful, full-colour illustrations stretch his trademark art with ever-so-slightly stylised spreads that are rich in pattern, texture, and nuance. On each spread, he plays with perspective and layout to create an electric sense of excitement as the animals discover what kids have known for a long time – that reading is fun.' (*School Library Journal*)



**Spanyol, Jessica.** *Carlo and the really nice librarian.*- Walker, 2004.

'Carlo's dad takes him and his cat, Crackers to the new library. Carlo finds Mrs Chinca, the alligator librarian, scary. Later, when she shows him some lovely books, he sees how helpful she is and he loses his fear of her. By the time he leaves with his new library card and a pile of books, he and Crackers are great friends with Mrs Chinca.' (*School Library Journal*)

**Tibo, Giles.** *Too many books* / illustrated by Bruno St-Aubin.- Scholastic, 2004.

People are always giving Nicholas how-to books: how to tie his shoelaces, clean his teeth, look after his cat, and ride a bike. Nicholas is getting sick and tired of books. But when his friend Veronica introduces him to taking out library books to read for pleasure, he changes his mind. Lively, comic illustrations feature bright colours and cartoon-style characters. This book offers a fun way to encourage children to read. (Margaret Iskandar)

**Willis, Jeanne.** *Delilah Darling is in the library* / illustrated by Rosie Reeve.- Puffin, 2006.

'Delilah is queen of a far-away country (she says), so when she goes off to the library, she expects it to conform to the rules in her country where singing and running are allowed, and free sticky buns are handed out. Asked by the librarian to point out her country in an atlas, Delilah cannot find it. An extremely funny text; Delilah seems a little like a cross between Eloise and Clarice Bean. New illustrator Rosie Reeve serves up a perfect blend of realism and fantasy.' (*Bookseller*)