

# An Educator's Guide to How a Bear Became a Book

## The Collaboration That Created Winnie-the-Pooh



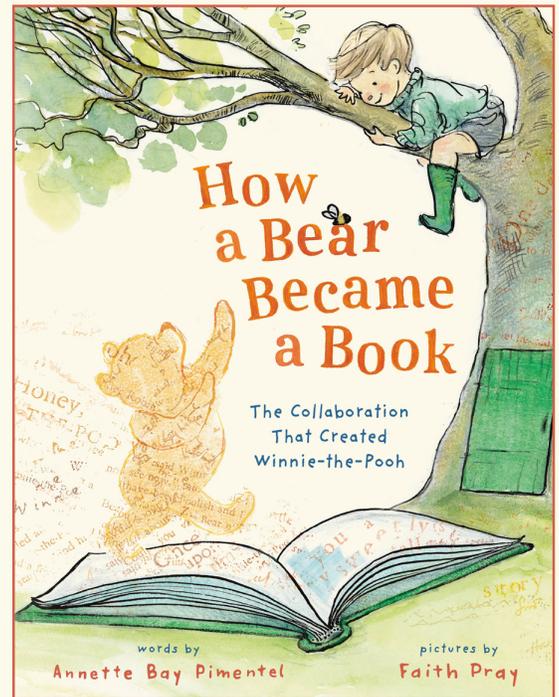
“And ideas that you think . . . become stories you tell, which . . . become words you write, which . . . become books everyone can read.”—*How a Bear Became a Book*

## ABOUT THE BOOK

In 1926, the very first Winnie-the-Pooh book was published. One hundred years later, generations of kids have grown up in the Hundred Acre Wood.

*How a Bear Became a Book* tells the story of how writer, illustrator, and editor came together to craft Pooh's first adventure. But deeper than that, this book introduces our youngest readers to how stories begin and where they can go. As Pooh's voice enters the text, he slowly comes to life in the art.

Textually delightful and visually stunning, this is a picture book about the making of picture books, but it is also a masterful exploration of ideas, storytelling, collaboration, art, and most importantly, honey.



9781250358448 | Ages 4-8

## ABOUT THE CREATORS

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**ANNETTE BAY PIMENTEL** is the author of several nonfiction picture books, including the Schneider Family Book Award honor book *All the Way to the Top*, *Pura's Cuentos*, and *Before Colors*. She lives in Moscow, Idaho.

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**FAITH PRAY** is the author-illustrator of *The Day We Got Lost*, *Perfectly Imperfect Mira*, and *The Starkeeper*, among others. She comes from a family of talented children's book creators, but her extraordinary talents for capturing light and shadow and conveying emotion and story through line work are all her own. She lives in the Pacific Northwest.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Pre-Reading

1. Look carefully at the front and back covers of the book and the opening end papers. What clues can you find about the story? What do you know about these characters?
2. Have you ever wondered how a story becomes a book? What do you think the steps are to get from an idea in your head to a book you can hold?
3. The opening of the book introduces two narrators using two different typefaces. Who are the narrators of the story? What do you notice about how they are shown in the illustrations? Teachers: You can emphasize the different narrators by having two people read the story aloud, one for Christopher Robin and one for Winnie-the-Pooh, or by using two distinctive voices when reading.

## During Reading

4. “Pictures show what’s not in the words.” Reread this spread and look at the illustration carefully. What is shown in the illustration that is not revealed in the words? How would the spread change if the pictures only showed what is described in the words?
5. “But together, they frolicked.” What does “frolicked” mean? Could you tell the meaning from the illustration? What other word could Annette Bay Pimental have used? How would a different word have changed the illustration?

## After Reading

6. Faith Pray illustrates our bear in a special way as the book progresses.
  - a) “A bear?! Where? Oh. Me!” Describe the bear at the very beginning of the story, when he is just an idea.
  - b) “A curve, a squiggle, a blur of fuzz.” What do you notice about the illustrations of the bear once Ernest Shepard enters the story?
  - c) “I spy readers.” Now that readers have found the story, what happens to the illustrations of the bear? Why do you think the bear finally looks complete?
7. Compare the closing end papers with the opening end papers. Do you notice anything new about the opening end papers now that you have finished the book?
8. What does the changing look of the bear add to your understanding of the story? Why does the boy in the story stay the same, rather than changing like the bear?
9. Do you have any ideas for a character that could become a book?
10. After reading the back matter of the book, are you surprised at how many people work as a team to make just one book? Do any of these jobs sound interesting to you?

Want to know more about Winnie-the-Pooh? Check out *Winnie: The True Story of the Bear Who Inspired Winnie-the-Pooh* by Sally M. Walker, illustrated by Jonathan D. Voss.



# ACTIVITIES

## Around the Room Idea Building: An Exercise in Creativity and Collaboration

Use *How a Bear Became a Book* to encourage creative storytelling and collaboration in your classroom. Print the downloadable **Around the Room Idea Builder Cards** at the end of this guide for your class. Divide the class into at least four groups. Explain that groups are to work together to fill out each section of the cards, collaborating to be as creative as possible.

### Step 1: Who is the story going to happen to? Build a character.

Give each group a mix of *Human*, *Animal*, and *Object* cards. Working as a team, students write a brief description of a character for each card. Rotate cards to the next group.

### Step 2: Where is the story going to happen? Establish a setting.

Students collaborate to create an unexpected, creative setting for each of the characters. Rotate to the next group, giving each student an individual card to work on.

### Step 3: What happens in the story? Start a plot.

Allow some time for groups to discuss possible plot ideas for their character/setting pairs, and then set a timer for quiet writing time. Students write a two-to-three sentence plot sketch focusing on the problem the character will have to solve. They include their name as the author. Collect cards and rotate to the fourth group.

### Step 4: What will the story look like? Sketch an illustration

Give each student one of the cards and a half-sheet of drawing paper for a preliminary sketch of an illustration. They should sign the drawing as the illustrator.

### Step 5: Where can an idea go? Display an Idea Builder Gallery.

Display the **Idea Builder Cards** with the illustrations. Give students time to admire their classmates' creativity, and to see what became of their group's character and setting ideas.

## Modification for Younger Students

Develop ideas for a *Human*, *Animal*, and *Object* character as a class. Each student can choose one to illustrate. Alternatively give each group only one card to work on collaboratively.



## From a Sketch to a Story

Expand the **Around the Room** sketches into full stories. Take inspiration from the collaboration of Alan and Ernest by having your authors and illustrators work together to expand their plot and illustration sketches into a full, illustrated story. Explain that revision is a key part of the creative process, so those sketches are only a starting point. Bind the stories and illustrations into a classroom book.

## Art vs. Illustration: Appreciating the Role of Illustrations in Picture Books

Ernest Shepard revolutionized the interplay between art and stories, ushering in a new age of picture books for children. Emphasize the role of illustration by choosing a beautifully illustrated picture book to read to your class. Hide the cover and do not show the illustrations as you read. Have students draw an illustration for a favorite part of the story. Then, re-read the story, showing the illustrations. What do the illustrations add to the story? How do they differ from the drawings the students made? What would the students change about the illustrations in the book?

Over the course of a week, read five picture books with different illustration styles. Discuss how the illustrations support the story and what is unique in each one. At the end of the week, have students vote on the book they think best shows the importance of illustrations in a picture book for your own Classroom Caldecott.

## GUIDE AUTHOR

Sara Hudson was an early-childhood educator for sixteen years and worked for five years for a literacy nonprofit, developing book-related materials for schools. She is now a bookseller and freelance writer.



# AROUND THE ROOM IDEA BUILDER CARDS

## Human Character

Setting Description

Two-or Three Sentence Plot Idea

## Animal Character

Setting Description

Two- or Three Sentence Plot Idea

## Object Character

Setting Description

Two- or Three Sentence Plot Idea