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WORDLESS BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

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Wordless books are plentiful and vary widely in their presentation of concepts and plot complexity. Below are some recent wordless books appropriate for a wide range of age/grade levels.

Anno, Mitsumasa. Anno's Britain. Philomel, 1982. \$10.95

As in Anno's other "journey" books, Anno's Britain offers something unnoticed each time the reader examines the illustrations. In this book, Anno is traveling by boat, then horseback, through England, Scotland and Wales. The highly detailed, watercolor paintings are filled with familiar characters, real and fictional, past and present. In the countryside, Anno sees Jack climbing the beanstalk as Sir Isaac Newton is watching an apple fall from a tree. Likewise, Alice and the Cheshire Cat can be spotted near Stonehenge, and Christopher Robin attaches Eeyore's tail as Mary Poppins sails by. In the city, a crowd gathers to watch the Beatles perform, while others view an artist's renderings of King Henry VIII, Shakespeare, and Winston Churchill. Anno's Britain is indeed a book for all ages; however, older students with a wider experiential background will likely have greater appreciation for the content. The book would fit nicely with a social studies unit on Great Britain.

Goodall, John S. Paddy Goes Traveling. Atheneum, 1982. \$6.95

Fans of earlier "Paddy" books by Goodall will enjoy the lively pig's action-packed and humorous adventure in this volume. Paddy is vacationing on the French Riviera when a young pig's kite flies away. Paddy tries to rescue it, and in the process finds himself on a truck being transported to the Swiss Alps. A frozen and lost Paddy is befriended by a family of bears, and ultimately becomes a contestant in a sled race. Beautiful representational paintings convey the story well. The format of half pages within double page spreads adds to the uniqueness of the book. Older students would probably have a greater appreciation for the sophistication of the tale and the detail used in telling it.

Hoban, Tana. Round & Round & Round. Greenwillow, 1983. \$9.50

Known for her wordless books depicting basic concepts through black and white photographs, Hoban has created yet another superb book. This is her second illustrated with full color photographs. (The first, a color concept book, was Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue?) A variety of objects that are round are presented:

Swiss cheese on a bun, raindrops on a puddle, a raccoon's eyes, to name a few. The photographs are idea stimuli for language experience activities, both oral and individually written. Older students will surely appreciate the quality of the photography and Hoban's unique perspective on the environment. All of Hoban's books contribute a great deal to the development of visual literacy in students of all ages.

Keats, Ezra Jack. Clementina's Cactus. Viking, 1982. \$11.95

Clementina discovers "her" cactus on a walk with her father in the desert, and she is enchanted with it from the beginning. After a sudden desert storm and a calm starry night, Clementina runs to the desert and finds, to her extreme delight, that the cactus has bloomed. Various emotions are expressively portrayed on Clementina's face. Vividly colored paintings depict the desert terrain well. (One particularly "positive" illustration shows the father reading to Clementina.) The book has appeal for many ages. The plot line is simple enough for young children to comprehend. Older readers could respond to the theme that we must go beyond the exterior to find real beauty.

Ormerod, Jan. Sunshine. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1981. \$9.50

Moonlight. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1982. \$9.50

These companion volumes feature a warm, loving family whose everyday activities are realistically portrayed in beautifully detailed illustrations. In Sunshine, soft shades of yellow start the day for the little girl who awakens first, then wakes Daddy, helps him make breakfast for Mommy, and then sees that they get off to work on time. In Moonlight, shades of blue and purple highlight the end of day which includes dinner, bath, and many excuses for not going to sleep (the obligatory drink of water, for one). Many positive models are presented in the two books. The father is nonstereotypically depicted in the nurturing role, helping with the household chores. Books liberally appear in the illustrations. All three people are shown reading, and both parents read to the little girl. Sunshine and Moonlight are truly for all ages. They could be used to prompt children's language experiences about the beginning and ending of their days. Highly recommended!

Spier, Peter. Peter Spier's Rain. Doubleday, 1982. \$10.95

This wordless adventure begins on the book's front endpapers as rainclouds gather above a brother and sister playing in their backyard. As rain begins to fall, the children put on their rain gear and head out to explore the neighborhood in the rain. When the wind begins to blow, the children go home to a warm bath, a good dinner, and an evening indoors playing and reading. It rains all night, and the book's endpapers show the sun shining on the children's puddle-filled backyard. The brightly colored illustrations are loaded with the details characteristic of Spier's work. Small pictures and half-page pictures mixed in with full page and double-page spreads carry the reader along with the children. The book, as a whole, is idea for oral and written language experiences as the sequence of the plot is clearly presented.