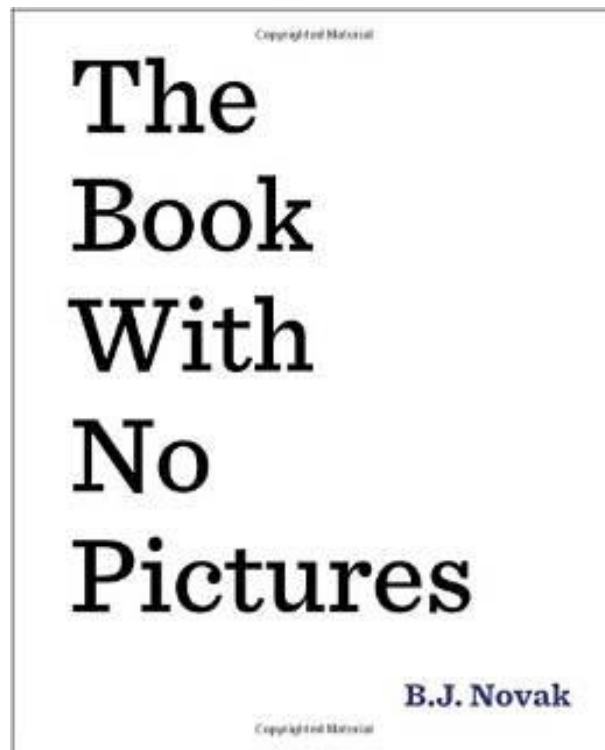


Children and Young Adult Book Review
Elementary School
The Book With No Pictures

Educator Reviewer: Khanh Bui
Student Reviewer: Ja'Saya Muckle



Novak, B.J. (2014). *The book with no pictures*. New York, NY: Dial Books.

ISBN: 978-0803741713

Pages: 48

Educator Review:

What do you think about reading a book without any pictures? Have you ever thought about a narrator speaking directly to you? Just explore the book titled *The Book with No Pictures* written by B.J. Novak. Novak created a very unique picture book, although it does seem strange to put it in the picture book category since there are no pictures in it. The fundamental message is reading is fun, and silly stories are fun. Novak makes an enthralling case that a book without pictures can be as interesting and fascinating as one with pictures.

Yes, I am a monkey.

The Book with No Pictures carries no specific plot but simply contains nonsense sentences jumping from one page to another. It is unique in that it does not have any illustrations but a judicious use of colorful words, varied typeface and font size to visually convey a changing tone to guide readers. Moreover, the text implies a shared reading transaction in which an adult has to read the text aloud, no matter how ridiculous it is. Meaningless words, petty words to be sung and even a bit of trivial talk for good measure all join together for an undisciplined read-aloud performance. What is fun for both the reader and the listener is that the reader must say (no matter what!) what the words in the book say. So when the pages turn, adult readers must speak out loud words such as “blook” and “bluurf.” They must speak in a monkey voice and then a robot voice. Even though the closing section asks for the child reader to “please please please please/please/choose a book with pictures” for subsequent reading, there is a likelihood that this request will be denied.

This book is particularly suitable for families or teachers to talk about silly words and noises. Moreover, it also gravitates to children’s interest in amusing sounds, made-up words, and unbecoming words such as “butt.” The reader (one assumes an adult) is supposed to change voices and tones according to the words described in the book to make the child laugh. This book, therefore, will be more effective and more entertaining when read to a large group of children. The domino effect of laughter will make the children and the atmosphere of storytelling more cheerful.

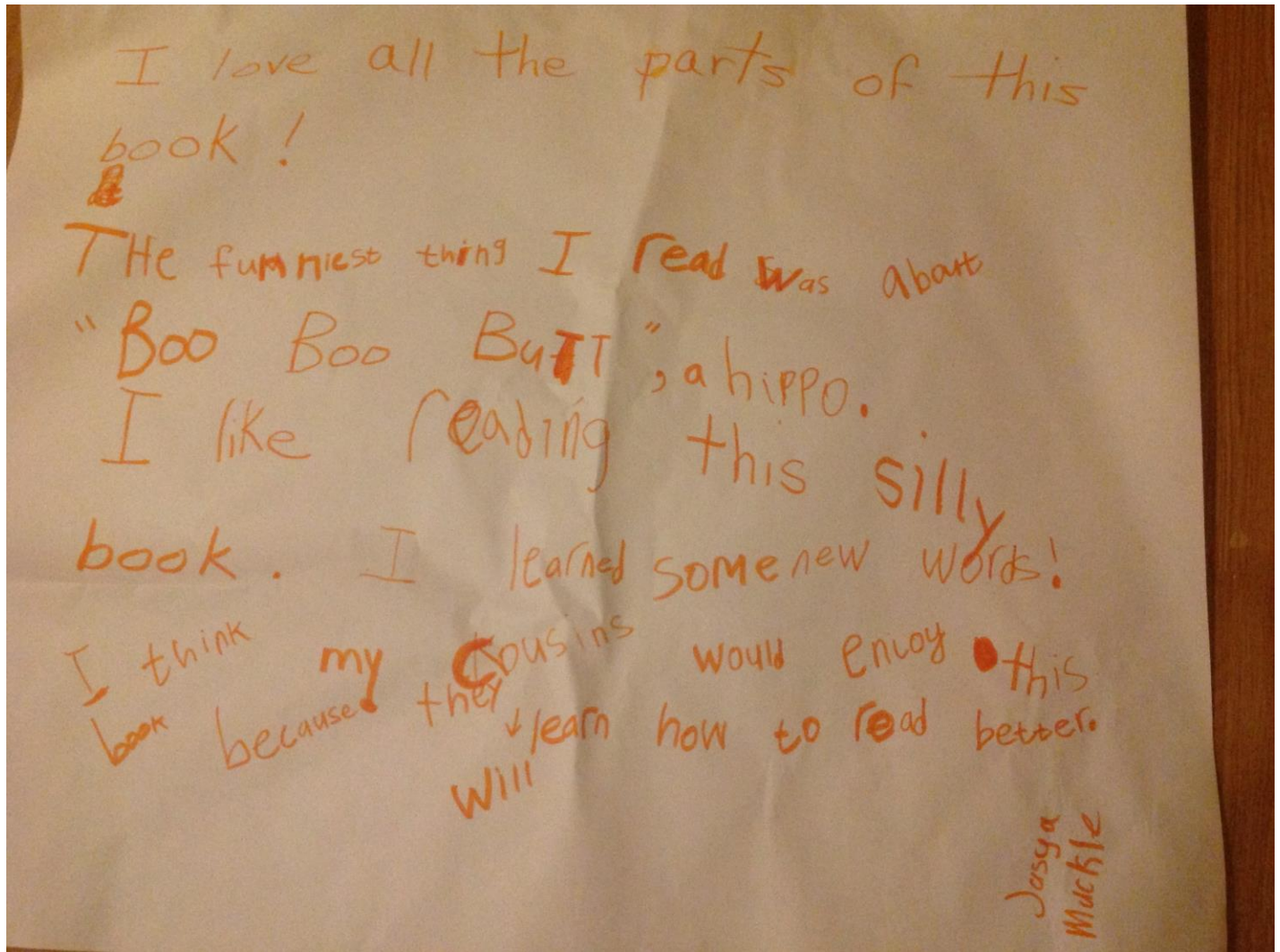
This book also has an educational value. The uncomplicated words may be accessible to newer readers. Young readers can decide if made-up words such as “blurff” convey any meaning. Young children may even be inspired to create their own words and sounds or tell a story with made-up words.

The most important attribute that makes this book successful is the reader’s competence in terms of humor and story-telling techniques. When I gave the book to my nephew, he read through some pages and then threw it aside. I was so surprised. Then I read the book to him. With my elicitation, mimicking and singing, he became more interested in the book. Thus, the book requires the strategies of more expert readers in order to help engage younger children.

Children will love listening to their teachers or other readers who are forced to say ridiculous things such as “Yes, I am a monkey,” and “my head is made of blueberry pizza.” This complete non-picture book goes a long way toward stimulating a love of reading.

Khanh Bui
The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Student Review:



Translation: I love all the parts of this book! The funniest thing I read was about "Boo Boo Butt," a hippo. I like reading this silly book. I learned some new words! I think my cousins would enjoy this book because they will learn how to read better.

Ja'Saya Muckle
J.J. Harris Elementary, Athens, GA
Kindergarten