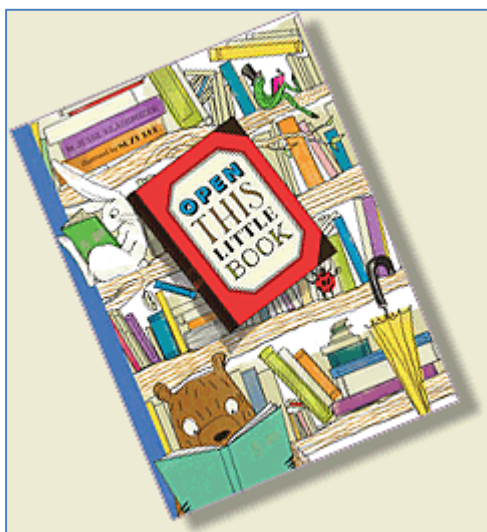


# *Open This Little Book* by Jesse Klausmeier, illustrated by Suzy Lee



This is one of those picture books that's a surefire hit with every group, every time. Its innovative design makes terrific use of the materiality of the book, driving home the point that although there are potential benefits to screen-readers, there are many books that rely upon their physicality and what scholar Barbara Bader calls "the drama of the turning of the page." Furthermore, Klausmeier and Lee's collaboration offers all sorts of intertextual delights, so even after the initial surprise and delight of a first reading, students will enjoy returning to the book to examine how it references other books and stories that they are familiar with.

## BOOK DESIGN ELEMENTS TO HIGHLIGHT

- trim size
- jacket art and title
- endpapers
- materiality
- front matter

## QUESTIONS TO PROMPT DISCUSSION

### **trim size, jacket art, and book title**

Although I often don't read a book's title right away, instead preferring to let kids read the jacket art with support from questions inspired by Visual Thinking Strategies, I love to start storytimes with this book by holding it up for all to see and pointing to each word in the title while saying, "*This book is called Open This Little Book. What do you think of that title?*"

Oftentimes, children will remark that the book itself that I hold in my hands is not little, but that the book illustrated in the jacket art, where the title is printed in display type, *is* a little book. I would paraphrase such a response with embedded design terminology, like so: "*I hear you noticing that the book I am holding in my hands has a large trim size, even the title says, 'open this little book.' But then you also noticed that the display type of the title is printed on a little book that is illustrated in the jacket art.*"

Then I might say, "*Would you like to see the back of the jacket, too? Count to three with me, and I'll show you: one, two, three.*" On three, I would open up the book to show the

wraparound jacket art, leaving time for children to respond to its illustration. If children seemed eager to discuss the picture, I would turn to VTS-inspired questions:

- *“What do you see happening in this picture?”* This question grounds them in the visual and prompts thinking about narrative, as opposed to mere listing.
- *What do you see that makes you say that?* This question engages evidentiary thought, a cornerstone of critical thinking.
- *What else can we find?”* This question asks the group to dig deeper and to notice more about the picture they are reading together, inviting collaborative meaning-making.

### **endpapers**

Pause briefly at the front endpapers and invite the group to describe what they see. They will likely say that it looks like it’s raining, or that they see teardrops or raindrops. Whatever the response is, tell the group: *“Let’s remember what these endpapers look like so that when we get to the back endpapers we can compare them.”*

### **front matter, materiality, and trim size (again!)**

Turning to the title page will likely provoke a big response when students see that it has a smaller trim size than that of the endpaper flyleaf. Pause to let them take this change in, and reinforce the use of book design terminology as you paraphrase their reactions. For example: *“Wow! A lot of you are noticing that this title page has a smaller trim size than the flyleaf of the endpaper. And there’s the title of the book printed again, Open This Little Book. So it’s like this part of the front matter shows us a little book within the book. Should we keep reading? Does anyone have predictions about what will happen next?”*

With a closing prompt like that, students will often guess (correctly) that the page trim size will continue to decrease, showing progressively littler books nested within each other.

### **moving through the book proper**

During the first reading or the hundredth reading of this little book, you may field the following responses:

- some students may notice that the successive colors used in the sequence are in the order of the color spectrum.
- others may start to make intertextual connections and wonder if the various depicted animals are from other stories they know.
- some students may be interested that the feminine pronoun “she” is applied to the blue giant who first appears toward the middle of the story.

It’s worth exploring any and all of these responses as you read the book. You might also fall back on VTS-inspired questions noted above to discuss the closing picture or any other one that grabs your group’s attention.

### **endpapers (again!)**

When you reach the back endpapers, you might have a student spontaneously remark that the raindrops or teardrops they saw on the front endpapers are now multicolored instead of gray. (If you don't get a spontaneous response, prompt one). Once everyone realizes the change from front to back endpapers, ask them, "*Why do you think that the artist Suzy Lee decided to make this change?*" Students will likely remark that the multicolored raindrops are the colors of the nested books found in the book proper. Others may offer a more symbolic reading, or you can provide one, perhaps saying that the change from grayscale to rainbow-colored endpapers is a metaphor for the change that reading can have on our hearts and minds when we read a book that we love.

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

- Invite students to make their own "little books" by nesting progressively smaller papers within each other. What story can they come up with that would first show something growing smaller, and then have it grow bigger?
- Or, experiment with other kinds of innovating bindings. An accordion book, a tunnel book, or a book that opens top to bottom (with the gutter between a top and bottom page, kind of like a typical calendar on a wall) are all easy possibilities to play with, and templates are readily available online.

Open This Little Book and you enter the rabbit hole of finding another little book and then another. A delightful and clever twist to the classic repetition format children love and youâ€™ll LOVE the background story of how this little book came about. The author Jesse Klausmeier first created her "little book" at age five that became published 25 years later for all of us to enjoy. You must see the absolutely adorable "original work" here! (Scroll down to the second part of the article after enjoying "Chu's Day" by Adam Rex) There is a pure sense of delight that a child enjoys when holding a bo... In this mini-book, students will read about a bat, a boy, a bug, a bed, a bike, a ball, and a baby. Kindergarten to 2nd Grade. View PDF. Mom, mug, mop, mess, mat, milk, and mug are all featured words in this marvelous little book. Kindergarten to 2nd Grade. View PDF. "Kate can open the gate. Kate is late." The featured words in this mini-book all end with ATE. opened, looked, was, sighed, had, had, was, nodded, thought, have seen. Some people even say that radiation from mobiles causes cancer. Teenagers are among the biggest users of mobiles, and "texting" is creating a new language full of abbreviations such as "How RU?" in Japan, Surveys show teenagers are reading less and mobile use is affecting the marks of secondary school learners. Open This Little Book book. Read 453 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. What will you find when you open this little book? A fun sto... This little book celebrates the power and the actual physical act of turning pages and conducting the story manually. It is a true visual treat and encourages the reader to go forth and discover a whole new world of books. The reader opens an increasingly tiny series of books within a book- each adding a layer of colour and script until the whole book itself displays a rectangle of rainbow colours. The pencil and watercolour illustrations are created with soft colours and then digitally manipulated. This little book celebrates the power and the actual physical act of turning pages and conducting t Just bought "Open This Little Book" for my almost 3-year old daughter, and before I even read her the title, she shouted "Look at this little book inside this big book!" Such a fun read for both of us. The smaller the pages got, the more fascinated she became, and the overall message of encouraging reading resonated with me as a parent. Open This Little Book is a wonderful and imaginative way to both tell children a cute story and encourage them to read and enjoy the world of books. This book clearly comes from the minds of two women who grew up loving books and want to share that passion with us. Anyone who likes to read and wants to foster a love of books in their children would benefit from this book being added to their collection.