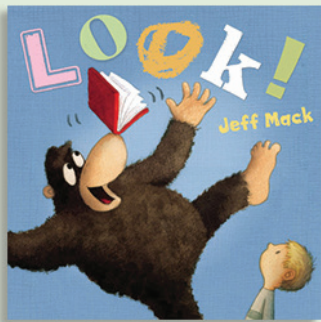


# Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



## Turning Book Reading into a Conversation with *Look!*

While it can sometimes be nice to read a book straight through without stopping, book reading can also be a great time to encourage a back and forth conversation. In fact, conversation is the very best context for children to learn all of the early literacy skills that will prepare them for school.

In this Book Nook, we'll look at how you can turn book reading into a conversation with your child, and we'll talk about just a few of the things your child might learn when you do this.

### The Book

*Look!*, by Jeff Mack

### Why we chose it

*Look!* Is a funny story about a monkey who really wants to share a book with a little boy, but the boy is far more interested in watching TV. The monkey tries all kinds of increasingly silly ways to entice the boy to read with him.

This is a great book for turning book reading into a conversation because there's hardly any print in it. This encourages you and your child to focus on the pictures and talk about what's happening, using your imaginations to fill in parts of the story.

## Getting the conversation started

The first step in turning book reading into a conversation is to OWL. This is a Hanen strategy that stands for “Observe, Wait and Listen”. When you turn a page, pause and wait quietly for your child to say something or for him to point or laugh at something.

The purpose of OWL is to find out what interests your child because, just like adults, kids will be much more likely to talk about something when it’s related to their interests.

Once you know what has caught your child’s attention, the next step is to Follow Your Child’s Lead. This means responding with interest to what your child said or pointed to, and making a comment or asking a question about it. Then wait again for your child to reply, and there you have it – the conversation has begun!

## Keeping the conversation going

Once you have a conversation started about something, you’ll want to keep it going for as long as your child is interested in talking about it. The more back and forth turns your child takes, the more opportunities he’ll have to learn.

There are so many different directions the conversation could take, but here are a few examples of what you could talk about to get your child thinking, talking and learning:

### **Talk about what’s happening in the book**

Talking about what’s going on in the book and why things might be happening is key to helping your child understand the story.

If your child shows interest in the page where the monkey is balancing a book on his head and tapping the boy on the shoulder, you could make a comment like, “I think the monkey is trying to get the boy’s attention”. You could also ask a question like, “Why do you think he put the book on his head like that?” Wait to see if your child has a response, and feel free to add your own comment if he doesn’t. For example, you could say, “I think he really wants to read with the boy and he’s trying to be funny so the boy notices the book!” Then wait again because your child may have something to add!

### **Talk about solving problems**

Most stories revolve around a problem, and helping your child understand the problem is important for his understanding of the story. If your child says something like, “Oh no” or “he fell down” when the monkey falls to the ground after trying to stand on a bunch of books, you could take this opportunity to talk about the problem. You could say, “Uh-oh, it looks like the monkey has a big problem. He’s trying really hard to get the boy to read with him, but the boy just wants to watch tv.” Then you could ask something like, “What do you think the monkey could try next to get the boy’s attention?” This could lead to a funny back and forth conversation as you use your imaginations to think about what the monkey might try next.

### Talk about emotions

Recognizing characters' emotions is another important part of understanding stories. This book provides many opportunities to talk about emotions because there are lots of clear facial expressions. If your child points at the monkey on the page where the TV crashes, you could say, "Oh, no, look at his face. He looks sad and sorry that the tv broke". Or if your child says something about the monkey walking away near the end when the boy yells at him to leave, you could ask a question like, "how do you think the monkey is feeling now?". The monkey's slumped shoulders and tears should give your child some good clues.

You can then keep the conversation going by relating the character's emotions to your child's own experience. For example, you could ask, "was there ever a time you felt sad and disappointed like the monkey's feeling?". You could even talk about a time when you felt that way to help your child connect the book to real life experiences.

### Talk about print

Since there is so little print in this book, the little bit that's there really stands out. On the page where the monkey rides into the room on a tricycle juggling books, the word "Look" is big and repeated many times in different colors. If your child notices this and points at the word, you can help him understand the meaning of the print. You could say, for example, "Wow, it says 'Look' so many times on this page. It must mean the monkey is trying *really* hard to get the boy's attention. Look, look, look!" This might prompt your child to talk about what the monkey is doing on this page, which will make the print even more meaningful to him

These are just a few examples for how you can turn book reading into a conversation with your child. Reading this way not only helps your child learn early literacy skills, but it can also make the experience more fun and interesting for both of you!

**We hope you enjoyed this Book Nook post.**

**If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, feel free to [send us your feedback](#).**