

Some Ideas for Tactile Books



The ClearVision children's braille library would welcome donations of hand-made tactile books. Over a thousand books have been hand-made and donated since 2000 but we need many more if we are to supply appropriate books to everyone who can benefit from them.

Until now volunteers have come up with their own ideas for books but we are often asked for ideas and story plans by people keen to make a book but unsure about designing one from scratch. We hope this handout will give you some ideas and that it will inspire you to make a book for the ClearVision library.

For important information and general guidance on designing and making a tactile book please ask for our handout *Making Tactile Books for the ClearVision Library*. You will also need a Health & Safety label for the back cover of your book.

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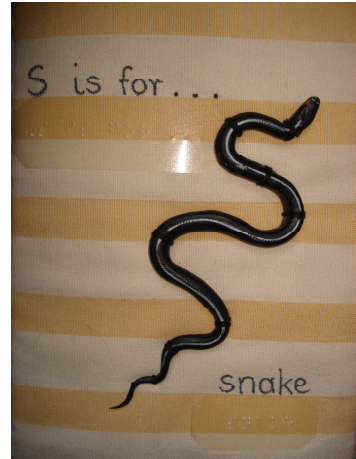
The Scarecrow's Hat

Henry Jack

A Book Based on a Letter of the Alphabet

When children are first learning to read it is important that they learn about letters and the sounds that letters make. They need to listen carefully to the way in which words start and notice similarities and differences. Alphabet books are always useful at home and at school.

To avoid overloading the young tactile reader it is a good idea to make simple alphabet books concentrating on just one letter. Use real objects where possible, or miniature versions (a doll for a person). The starting point is a collection of objects and textures which are safe, robust and relatively flat, which can be sewn or stuck straight into a book. Toy shops and joke shops are a good source of small items, body parts, etc. Artificial leaves and flowers can often be found at pound shops; pet shops sell a variety of plastic fish tank foliage.



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Try to ensure that your objects feel very different to each other. Aim for a variety of materials - fabric, metal, wood, plastic, etc. Interactive items are always popular: a scarf which can be tied, a flap to lift, or a wheel to turn. Five or six illustrations is quite enough.



Some letters of the alphabet are difficult to illustrate and some are impossible! When you have chosen a letter make sure that all the items chosen as illustrations start with the same *sound* as well as the same letter; do not put a cat and a cherry in the same book, or a key and a knot!

Here are some suggestions:

A anchor, animal, ant, apple, arrow

B badge, badger, bag, ball, bandage, basket, bee, beard, beetle, bell, belt, bird, biscuit, blanket, book, bracelet, brooch, brush.

C cape, camel, carpet, cat, caterpillar, clothes, collar, comb, cow, crab, cross, crown, curtain, cupboard.

CH chain, cherry, chicken, chips, child, chestnut, chocolate.

D daisy, dinosaur, dish, dog, doll, door, duck, duvet.

F face, fairy, fan, feather, finger, fish, five, flower, flag, fly, fork, fur.

G gap, gate, girl, glasses, glove, goldfish, gorilla, grapes, grass

H hair, half, handbag, hat, head, heart, hedgehog, hole, holly, hood, hook, house.

K kangaroo, kennel, ketchup (sachet), key, king, kite.

L lace, laces, ladder, ladybird, lamb, lavender, leaf, leather, leg, lemon, lid, lion, lips, lizard, loop, lump.

M magnet, man, mane, mat, medal, mermaid, microphone, mint, mitten, monkey, mouse, moustache, mouth, mushroom.

N nail, necklace, nest, net, nine, nose.

P packet, paintbrush, pants, parrot, peg, pencil, perfume, pillow, plant, plaster, plastic, plate, puppet, purse.

R rabbit, rattle, reindeer, ribbon, ring, rocket, robot, rope, rubber, ring.

S sack, sausage, seven, six, snail, sock, spice, sponge, star, stick.

SH shapes, shark, sheep, sheet, shell, shield, shoe, shorts.

T tadpole, tail, tambourine, teddy, teeth, telephone, ten, tent, tie, tongue, toothbrush, tortoise, towel, twig, two.

W wand, web, wheel, whiskers, window, wings, wood, wool, worm.



A Book of Poems

Select five or six of the following poems (or choose any short poem you think will be suitable). Put the text on the left-hand page and make a very simple illustration on the right-hand page.

Here is the Beehive

**Here is the beehive,
Where are the bees?
Hidden away
Where nobody sees.**

**Soon they come creeping
Out of the hive,
One, two,
Three, four, five.**

Suggested illustration: a simple beehive shape with five bees coming from the entrance. The bees should be roughly positioned in a line so the child's finger can track along and find all five; bees dotted around the page will be hard for the child to find and it will be difficult to work out which ones have already been counted.

One, two, three four, five

**One, two, three four five,
Once I caught a fish alive.
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten,
Then I let it go again.**

**Why did you let it go?
Because it bit my finger so.
Which finger did it bite?
This little finger on the right.**

Suggested illustration: padded fish (decorated with sequin scales?) attached to the page by a line coming from its mouth. The line could be attached to a 'rod' sewn firmly onto the page.

Incy Wincy Spider

**Incy wincy spider
Climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain
And washed the spider out.**

**Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain.
Incy wincy spider
Climbed up the spout again.**

Suggested illustration: a large spider!

The Man Who Wasn't There

**As I was going up the stairs
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today.
Oh, how I wish he's go away!**

Suggested illustration: a triangle with the long edge cut into four or five steps to represent the staircase

Two Little Dickey-Birds

**Two little dickey-birds
Sitting on a wall
One name Peter
One named Paul.**

**Fly away, Peter!
Fly away, Paul!
Come back, Peter!
Come back, Paul!**

Suggested illustration: two birds on short threads, velcro-ed to a wall. The birds need to be attached by threads or they will inevitably 'fly away' for ever and never return to our library!

What's the Time?

What's the time?

Ten to nine.

Hang your knickers

On the line.

When they're dry

Bring them in

And put them in

The biscuit tin.

Eat a biscuit.

Eat a cake.

Eat your knickers

By mistake.

Suggested illustration: a pair of knickers on a washing line.

Algy Met a Bear

Algy met a bear.

The bear was bulgy.

The bulge was Algy!

Suggested illustration: a furry bear with a very fat, lumpy stomach.

One, two ...

One, two, buckle my shoe.

Three, four, knock at the door.

Five, six, pick up sticks.

Seven, eight, close the gate.

Nine, ten, a big fat hen.

Suggested illustration one of the following: a shoe with a buckle which can be fastened and unfastened **or** six sticks attached to the page on short threads **or** a wooden gate which can be opened and closed **or** a big fat hen. One illustration only is enough.

I Must Go Down to the Sea
by Spike Milligan

**I must go down to the sea again,
To the lonely sea and the sky;
I left my shoes and socks there -
I wonder if they're dry?**

Suggested illustration: a pair of child's socks (and shoes?)

A Mouse Lived in a Little Hole

**A mouse lived in a little hole,
Lived softly in a little hole,
When all was quiet as quiet can be ...
OUT POPPED HE!**

Suggested illustration: finger puppet mouse made of thin fabric and attached to a circular hole (with a surround, perhaps?) in the page so that it can be made to pop out by inserting the finger from the back of the page. This may need to be the last page in the book so that the back of the hole doesn't interfere with text on the next page.

A Puzzle Book

Puzzle books are quite simple to make and are very useful in helping children develop their tactile skills in an enjoyable way. See if you can find some interesting shapes and textures for the items you use. You may well have most of the items you need already! Tell the child what they need to do on the left-hand page and construct the very simple puzzle on the right-hand page – or put a puzzle on each page.



You will only need five or six puzzles in each book. Try to make sure they are of similar difficulty. Here are some suggestions:

Find the odd one out

Attach three to five identical buttons (or key fobs, phone charms, buckles, wheels or whatever) to the page, along with one very different one.

A variation on this might have all items the same, but with one much bigger than all the others.

Spot the differences

Make two very simple images (a person, perhaps, or a house, a face, a lorry, or a monster). See our handout *Making Tactile Books for the ClearVision Library* for guidance on this. The two images should be

identical apart from one to three differences, which should be quite easy to find. Specify how many differences the child needs to find.

Find the pairs

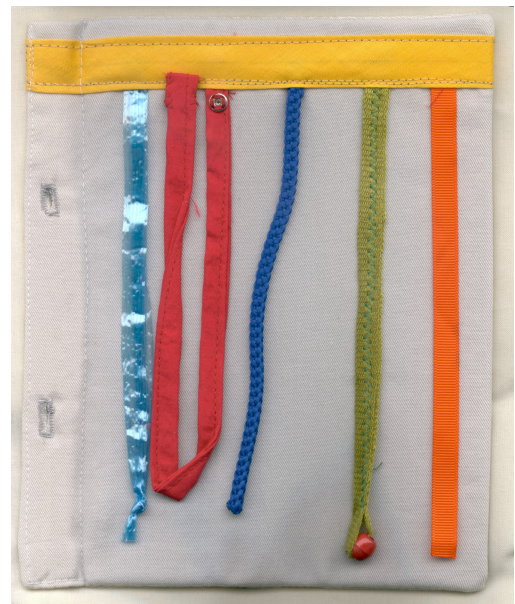
First find four to six pairs of items, each pair quite different and distinctive (beads, buttons, flowers, toggles, stars, pom poms ...). Sew them onto the page in two vertical columns so that one of each pair is in each column, but in a different order. The child will then need to use both hands to find the pairs – which is good preparation for learning to read braille.

A variation of this would be ‘Find the pairs. Which is the odd one out?’ with an extra item in one of the columns.

An alternative would be to sew stripes of very different textures to the page, with matching pairs to be found.

Which one is the longest?

Attach a row of ribbons, strings, tapes, chains, etc to the page, with one significantly longer than the rest. If the long one is longer than the page, you may like to secure it in a loop with a press stud so that the teacher or parent can unfasten it ready for the child to find.



Find the spider

Attach three or four large leaves (eg made of kite fabric) to the page and sew a little plastic spider under one of them.

This can obviously be changed to ‘find the beetle/key/earring or whatever, depending on what you have to hand. Or you may like to replace the leaves with some other kind of flap.

Help rabbit find his lunch

In the top left hand corner of the page, sew a small bit of fur to represent the rabbit. (It doesn't need to look like a rabbit.) Near the rabbit, start three trails (either embroidered, or by sewing braid or cord to the page) which do not cross over each other but do meander around a bit. Only one leads to a little sewn-on leafy lettuce; the rest stop dead – or lead to another rabbit, or anything else which is clearly not food – a hole perhaps? Following these trails is good practice in tracking skills which will be useful in reading braille.

Variations could be *Which string leads to the kite?* or *Which wire leads to the headphone?* using a cheap or free earpiece!

Which lace has the most knots?

Sew one end of two short pieces of shoe lace to the page. Tie very tight knots in both laces, one with more knots than the other. (Make sure they do not dangle beyond the edge of the page.) You may like to put a stitch in the knots to make sure they cannot come undone.

A variation could be 'which bracelet has the most beads' or 'which belt has the most holes,' or whatever.

Where's Wally's washer?

Wally needs two washers for the kitchen taps. He has got one. Can you find another one? Sew a rubber washer to the text page, at the end of this message. On the facing page, sew several very distinct items including a washer. Try to find toolkit items rather than, say flowers or beads.

There are obviously many possible variations on this theme.

Bugs in a Blanket

This is a shortened version of a board book by Italian author Beatrice Alemagna. It is important to make each bug very different so that the young reader can easily tell them apart by their distinguishing features.

For guidance on making a tactile book please ask for our handout *Making Tactile Books for the ClearVision Library*. Please also ask if you would like us to supply the text of this book printed onto fabric, ready for you to cut it up and sew it to your pages.

Front cover

Bugs in a Blanket
based on a book by Beatrice Alemagna
(pub. Phaidon Press Ltd)

Pages 1-2

At the bottom of the garden there is an old blanket on a bed. That is where the little bugs live, each little bug snug in his hole in the rug. They have never met each other.

(Holey fleece or blanket fabric sewn onto the page with, two bead eyes in each hole)

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Page 3-4

Today is Little Fat Bug's birthday. The little bugs have all been invited to a party in the big hole in the middle of the blanket. At last the doorbell rings.

'Hurray!' cries Little Fat Bug. 'My guests have arrived!' And he runs to open the door.

(Big hole with a flap – and possibly a bell of some kind?)

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Page 5-6

But instead of welcoming everyone in, he just stands there staring in surprise. He thought the other little bugs would be all fat, just like him. What a disappointment!

He looks at the little bug standing in front of him and asks, 'Why are you as skinny as a string bean?' He sounds quite cross.

(Skinny bug)

.....

Page 7-8

Little Thin Bug doesn't know what to say. So he looks at the bug next to him and asks, 'Well, why are your eyes so big? You look like an owl.'

(Big-eyed bug)

.....

Page 9-10

Little Big-Eyed Bug can't think of a good answer, so he looks at the bug next to him. 'Why do you have such long legs?' he asks. 'They look like sticks!'

(Long-legged bug)

.....

Page 11-12

Little Long-Legged Bug is upset. He looks back at Little Fat Bug and asks him, 'Why are you as fat as a hippopotamus?'

'What a silly thing to ask!' says Little Fat Bug, forgetting that he was the one who asked the first question. 'I was just born like this, a little bit fat.'

(Fat bug)

.....

Page 13-14

'And I was born a little bit skinny,' says Little Thin Bug.

'I've got my Mum's eyes,' says Little Big-Eyed Bug.

'I had these long legs when I was born,' Little Long-Legs explains.

'Come in everyone!' says Little Fat Bug. 'We can't help the way we are, so let's all dance!'

(All bugs on v. short bits of elastic so they can be jiggled)

.....

Page 15-16

Because in a blanket, just as in the rest of the world, we can't choose what we look like. We are all born the way we are, and we are all different.

Only a little bug wouldn't know that.

(Different bug)



The Scarecrow's Hat

This is a shortened version of a lovely picture book by Ken Brown. Keep the illustrations very simple and make sure the item mentioned in the text can be easily found on the page.

For guidance on making a tactile book please ask for our handout *Making Tactile Books for the ClearVision Library*. Please also ask if you would like us to supply the text of this book printed onto fabric, ready for you to cut it up and sew it to your pages.

Front cover

The Scarecrow's Hat based on a book by Ken Brown (Peachtree Publishers)

Pages 1-2

“That’s a nice hat,” said Chicken to Scarecrow.

“Yes, it is,” replied Scarecrow. “But I’d rather have a big stick to lean on when I get tired. I’d swap my hat for a big stick any day.”

Now Chicken didn’t have a walking stick, but she knew someone who did.

(Scarecrow with a brimmed hat)

.....

Pages 3-4

“That’s a nice stick,” said Chicken to Dog.

“Yes, it is,” replied Dog. “But I’d rather have a warm blanket to put in my basket. I’d swap my big stick for a warm blanket any day.”

Now Chicken didn’t have a warm blanket, but she knew someone who did.

(Dog with a wooden stick in his mouth, or by his feet)

Pages 5-6

“That’s a nice blanket,” said Chicken to Donkey.

“Yes, it is,” replied Donkey. “But I’d rather have a few long feathers to tie to the end of my tail so that I could flick the flies away. I’d swap my blanket for a few long feathers any day.”

(Donkey with a blanket over his back)

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Pages 7-8

Quick as a flash, Chicken pulled out one, two, three of her longest feathers and tied them to Donkey’s tail. Then, true to his word, Donkey gave her his blanket.

Chicken took the blanket to Dog and, true to his word, he gave her his stick.

Chicken took the stick to Scarecrow and, true to his word, he gave her his hat.

(Three long, shop bought feathers. Feathers picked up in the park are not sufficiently hygienic!)

.....

Pages 9-10

Chicken took the hat and filled it with fresh, sweet-smelling straw.

“This is a lovely nest,” said Chicken. “And I wouldn’t swap it for anything!”

(Hat with straw sticking out and the hen nesting in it)

Henry Jack

This book, designed and created by Margaret Sharp, won the international Tactus competition in 2011. The ClearVision library would love to have more copies of this brilliant book. We can supply the hard-to-find components – such as the plastic crocodile - and the print text printed onto fabric for you to sew to the page.

For guidance on making a tactile book please ask for our handout *Making Tactile Books for the ClearVision Library*. Any method of binding is OK, provided the book will open and lie flat at each page opening. Pages should, if possible, be stiffened with plastic canvas.

Whatever plain fabric(s) you choose for the pages, please make sure it offers a good contrast to the illustrations.

The size of the book is not crucial but approximately A4 or a bit wider would probably be ideal. Please make sure the pages are large enough to accommodate a panel of braille text 10 cms wide by 20 cms deep without covering the print. The braille text will be added by ClearVision. The print text should be towards the top of the left-hand page.

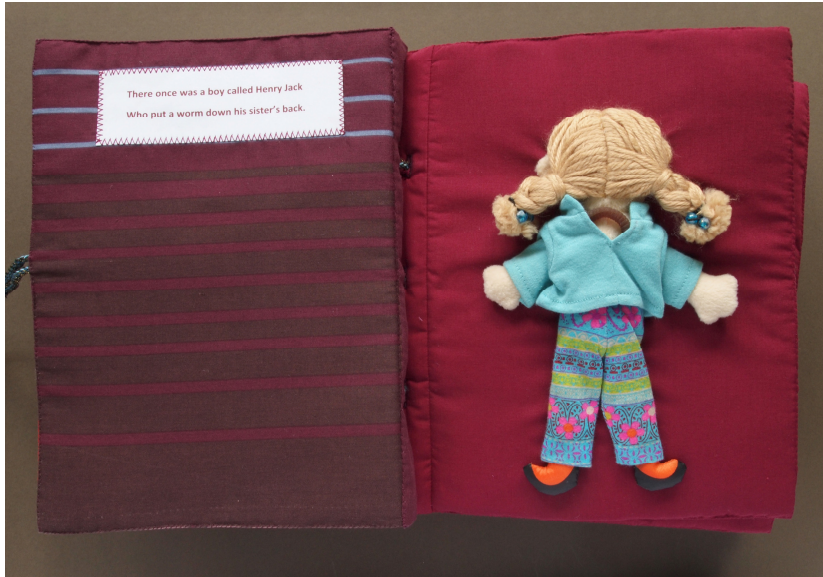
If you are willing to make a copy of *Henry Jack* please ask us for the component parts listed at the end of the instructions.

Front Cover

Henry Jack
designed by Margaret Sharp
based on a poem by Janet A. Smith

Back cover

A health and safety label is provided, to be ironed or sewn to the centre top of the back cover. Please feel free to write 'made by n' at the bottom of the back cover.



**There once was a boy called Henry Jack
Who put a worm down his sister's back.**

(Back view of girl with a worm sticking out of the top of her clothes.)



**“You're a horrible boy,” his sister said,
And she put a worm in Henry's bed.**

(Pillow and duvet which can be lifted to reveal the other half of the worm.)

Page 5-6



**Henry, mad with rage and shock,
Put a slug in his sister's sock.**

(Child's socks with rubber slug poking out of one.)

Page 7-8



**His sister said, "The little pest!"
And put a spider in Henry's vest.**

(Child's vest with spider inside)



**Henry, without more ado,
Put a snail in his sister's shoe.**

(Child's shoe with snail sewn inside it. You may need to drill or pierce a hole in the shell to attach it securely.)



**His sister said, "He must be stopped,"
And into Henry's room she popped
A crocodile, that with one crunch,
Ate Henry's trousers for his lunch.**

(Crocodile with pair of trousers sticking out of its mouth. First remove the ring from the throat of the crocodile (if this has not been done already) so that it will lie flatter. You may also like to flatten the crocodile a bit, by warming it and then placing it under a heavy object overnight.)



**So remember what happened to Henry Jack
Before putting a worm down your sister's back!**

(Henry Jack in his underpants, with a worm in his hand.)

Materials Supplied

Full text, printed onto 'pabric' which can be sewn to the page

Two worms, to be cut in half.

A slug

Two socks

Two shoes

A snail

A crocodile

A health and safety label for the back cover.

Available on request: plastic canvas to stiffen pages; pattern for making boy and girl figures and clothes; refunds for anything you have to buy for this book (please send a receipt).
