



Children's Picturebook Price Guide, 2006-2007: Finding, Assessing, & Collecting Contemporary Illustrated Books

Linda Zielinski, Stan Zielinski

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The *Children's Picturebook Price Guide* provides values for nearly 23,000 books, covering over 700 children's book illustrators dating from 1929 to 2006. For owners of picturebooks, the price guide is an essential tool to identify and assess their value.

Today's picturebook collecting market is similar to where the comic book market was in 1970, when Bob Overstreet published his first price guide. The *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* became the definitive guide to the hobby and helped to institutionalize values. The general population now has an understanding of the value of collectible comic books. James Beckett published his first price guide to baseball cards in 1979. Once considered a child's plaything, hardly anyone would now sell their Mickey Mantle or Willie Mays cards for pennies. In the case of both comic books and baseball cards, a large and vibrant collector base existed at the time of the respective price guide's publication--however the general population was not aware of the value for either. The price guide helped to get the message out.

According to the *Children's Picturebook Price Guide*, the most valuable picturebook is *Where The Wild Things Are*, with a first edition copy valued at over \$10,000 in today's market. The price guide lists forty-four picturebooks with a market value over \$1,000.

The *Children's Picturebook Price Guide* is more than a price guide, as the book's first 100 pages provides an overview to collecting children's picturebooks. This overview includes a brief history of how the picturebook came to be the picturebook, and concludes with an explanation for why today is the golden era of the picturebook. Today there are more illustrators and authors who make their living by creating picturebooks than at anytime in the past.

Chapter 2, "Factors Affecting Collectibility", provides details about the six key factors which impact a first edition book's collectibility and value. This is important, since it clearly and concisely provides the reader with information to assess a book's collectibility. Usually, a first edition book's value is *prescribed* through some altogether unknown process. By providing factors the reader can weigh, they can make more educated purchase decisions--and acquire books they feel the market is currently undervaluing.

Subsequent chapters describe different strategies or approaches to collecting picturebooks; identifying first editions; grading books; and also discussion/lists of the most valuable children's picturebooks, categorized by decade (i.e. "The Most Valuable Picturebooks of the 1990's").

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