

Author Studies

Targeted skill

Young children are expected to distinguish between the roles of author and illustrator. They are further expected to identify elements of authors' (and illustrators') style and characteristics.

Materials

- ◆ several books by the same author (such as Eric Carle, Marc Brown, or Kevin Henkes)

What to do

Read to your child two books by the same author. Talk with your child about the things that are similar in the two books. For example, if you're reading books by Marc Brown, talk about how D. W. always does something to be the annoying little sister or how Francine always seems to know more than Arthur. Continue to read and compare characters, settings, themes, and so on. Help your child understand the similarities between these books by the same author.

Extending the activity

- ✦ Studying various illustrators in the same manner helps your child understand the difference between the author (the one who has the idea and writes the words) and the illustrator (the one who creates the pictures or illustrations).
- ✦ If your child has trouble remembering details from the books, make a chart to record them. For example, write a character's name at the top of a sheet of paper. Then as you and your child read books with that character, add details about that character to the list. Reread the list with your child and talk about the way the character reacts in particular situations. As occasions arise, ask, "What would ___ do if ___ happened?" to bring your child's attention to the way the character would respond.

What your child is practicing

By focusing on a favorite author (or illustrator), your child is learning to remember details from a book and to relate those details to other books as well. Your child is learning that authors and illustrators have a particular style that makes them different from other authors or illustrators. As your child learns to read and write, he or she learns to develop an individual sense of style as well.