

# The Ladybug Companion

## Dear Friend of *Ladybug*,

Thank you for sharing this guide with a young storyteller! Whether you're a parent, teacher, grandparent, or caregiver, your time together turns reading into shared discovery.

This issue of *Ladybug* asks: **Where do stories come from, and how do we tell them?** Together, you'll explore stories told through puppets, pictures, poems, and plays—and see how imagination helps stories grow.

Inside this guide, you'll find playful prompts and hands-on activities inspired by the issue:

### ■ A World of Wonderful Stories

Use puppets and simple props to explore storytelling traditions from around the world.

### ■ Imagination

Turn everyday household objects into the building blocks of a pretend adventure.

### ■ Click and the Kids

Dream up a story idea and design your own book cover—title, artwork, and all.

### ■ The Story of Books

Explore early book forms and try a simple printing activity inspired by early bookmakers.

### ■ Plus: Word Time with *Ladybug*

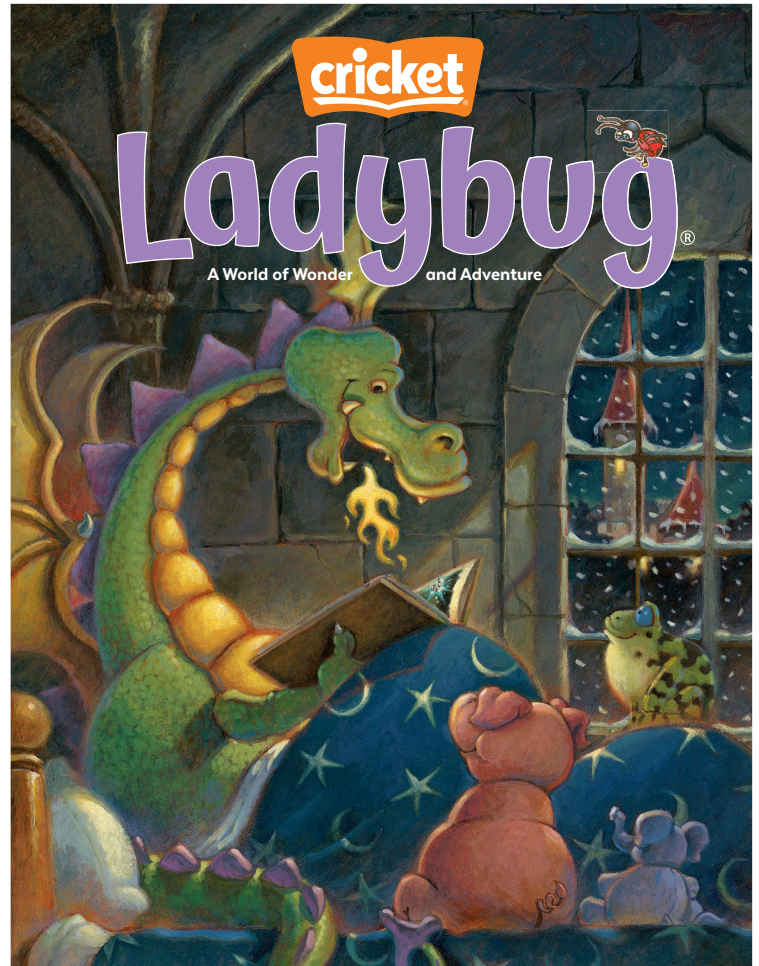
Read, trace, write, and draw three travel words from this issue.

Each activity includes **Caregiver Notes** with easy ways to support younger children or add an extra stretch for eager learners. Look for the **print icons** to find ready-to-use pages and worksheets.

We hope this guide invites you to wonder, create, and tell stories side by side. Some of the best tales begin with imagination—and with time shared together.

With warm wishes,

Your *Ladybug* Companions



# A World of Wonderful Stories

The article “A World of Wonderful Stories” (page 6) shows that people tell stories in many ways—through puppets, pictures, plays, and more. In this activity, children get to try storytelling for themselves.



## Let's Talk!

- We saw stories told with puppets, pictures, plays, and shadows. Which way looked the most fun?
- The article showed stories from many places around the world. Which picture or scene made you curious?
- Some stories are real, and some are pretend. What kinds of stories do you enjoy most?



## Tell a Story with Puppets and Shadows

Use the four stick puppets to create a simple story—just like storytellers have done for a long time.

**You'll need:** the four puppet cutouts on page 3 (Ladybug, Muddle, Click, and Thud), craft sticks (or chopsticks or straws), tape, and a clear space to play

1. Color and cut out the puppets.
2. Tape each one to a stick.
3. Choose one puppet to start the story.
4. Add another character and let them interact.
5. Keep the story going with movement, sounds, or feelings.



Print page 3 for this activity.



## Let's Keep Going!

- Draw and add new characters to the story.
- Try making shadows with hands, toys, or simple shapes.
- Tell the same story in a new way.



## Caregiver Notes

**Support:** Keep stories short and playful. Offer simple prompts like, “Who comes next?” or “What is the puppet doing?”

**Stretch:** Try describing actions or feelings (“Thud is excited,” “Ladybug is sleepy”) or encourage adding a beginning, middle, and end.

# Puppet Play



Color Ladybug, Muddle, Click, and Thud. Cut them out along the solid black lines. Tape each one to a craft stick to make your puppets. Use them to act out favorite stories—or create brand-new adventures together!



**Click**



**Muddle**



**Thud**



**Ladybug**

## Story Starters:

Try one to get your story going!

- "Ladybug hears a strange sound. What could it be?"
- "Click is going on an adventure! Who does he meet first?"
- "Muddle has a surprise for Thud. What is it?"
- "Two friends are looking for a missing clue. Where will they search?"





# Imagination

The poem “Imagination” by Lauren Sopanarat (page 10) celebrates how everyday objects can become something new in a story. With a little pretending, ordinary things turn into adventures.



## Let's Talk!

- Which part of the poem reminded you of something you've played before?
- What object at home would you like to turn into something new?
- If you could make an object magical, what would it do?



## Turn Objects Into Something New

Use simple household items to build a pretend story—just like in the poem.

**You'll need:** pillows, blankets, boxes, scarves, or other safe household items

1. Pick one object and decide what it could become.
2. Choose a pretend-play theme together:
  - Pirate adventure
  - Jungle hike
  - Spaceship launch
3. Set up a small scene using your objects.
4. Act out a moment—move, pose, or make a sound.



## Let's Keep Going!

- Add a new object and see how the story changes.
- Combine two objects to make something unexpected.
- Switch roles or settings and keep playing.



## Caregiver Notes

**Support:** Start with just a few objects. Model a simple idea like, “This blanket could be a river.”

**Stretch:** Encourage adding characters, a setting, or a short sequence (first, next, last).

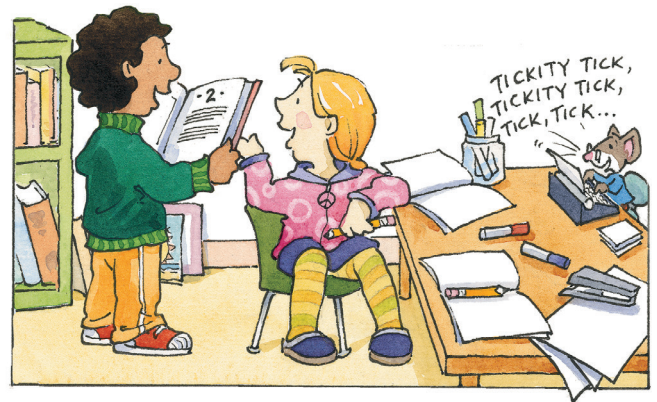
# Click and the Kids

In “Click & the Kids” by Betsy Page Brown (page 21), Amy and Martin can’t get to the library—but they still find a way to make books of their own. This activity invites children to become book creators too.



## Let’s Talk!

- What part of a book do you notice first—the cover, the pictures, or the title?
- If you made your own book, what would it be about?
- Who would you want to read your story?



## Design Your Own Book Cover

Dream up a story and create a book cover that gives readers a peek inside!

**You’ll need:** crayons or markers, and the printable book cover (page 6)

1. Think about a story you’d like to tell.
2. Write (or dictate) the **title** at the top of the page.
3. Add your **name** as the author or illustrator.
4. Draw a big picture that shows what your story might be about.



Print page 6 for this activity.



## Let’s Keep Going!

Go on a **book scavenger hunt** with a grown-up. Look through books at home or at the library.

Can you find these parts?

- **Cover**
- **Title**
- **Author**
- **Illustrator**
- **Dedication page**

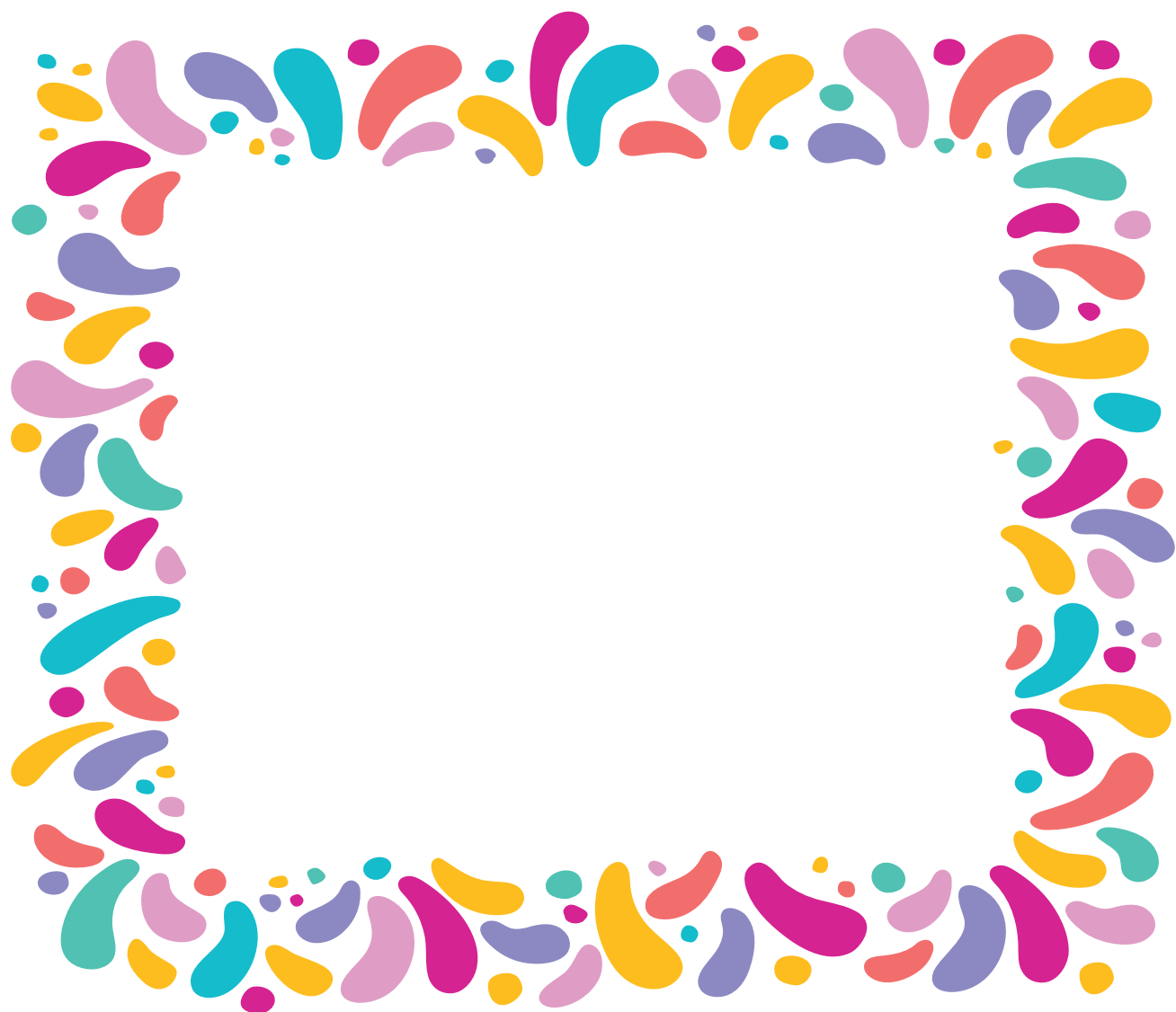
Talk about what each part tells you about the story.



## Caregiver Notes

- **Support:** Invite your child to talk about their story before drawing. If writing is tricky, write down their words while they focus on the artwork.
- **Stretch:** Encourage adding details that show action or feeling. Some children may enjoy creating a back cover with a short description of the story.

Book Title



By: \_\_\_\_\_



# The Story of Books

“The Story of Books” by L. N. Chao (page 26) shows how books have changed over time—from clay tablets and scrolls to the books we read today. In this activity, children explore early book forms by making their own.



## Let's Talk!

- Which kind of old book surprised you the most?
- Would you rather read a scroll, a clay tablet, or a modern book? Why?
- How do you think people shared stories before printed books?



## Make a Book from Long Ago

Try one or more ways people made books in the past.

**You'll need:** clay or dough, paper, crayons or markers, tape, string or yarn, and items for pressing shapes (like magnetic letters or blocks)

### Clay Tablet

- Flatten a small piece of clay.
- Press pictures or shapes into it.
- Let it dry.

### Paper Scroll

- Tape two or more sheets of paper together.
- Draw or write a story across the strip.
- Roll each side toward the middle.

### Folded Book or Accordion Book

- Fold paper back and forth to make pages, or
- Stack pages and fold them in half to make a book.
- Draw pictures or symbols on each page.



## Let's Keep Going!

Long ago, people used printing blocks to make many copies of a page. Try a safe version at home.

**You'll need:** a clean foam tray, a dull pencil or pen, washable paint, and paper

1. Gently press lines or shapes into the tray.
2. Brush on paint.
3. Press the paper onto the tray to make a print.
4. Try again with new colors or designs!



## Caregiver Notes

- **Support:** Choose just one book style to start. Remind children that early writing often looked like pictures or symbols.
- **Stretch:** Compare the books you made. Which was easiest? Which was most fun to “read”? Try adding a simple sequence (first, next, last).



# Word Time with Ladybug®



Read, trace, and write the words. Then draw a picture of each word.

Read	Trace	Write	Draw
sun	sun	---	
book	book	---	
lion	lion	---	



# Standards Alignment

Activity	Key Skills/Focus	Aligned Standards
<b>A World of Wonderful Stories</b>	Oral expression, story structure, creative dramatization, comparing storytelling forms	CCSS.ELA.SL.K.1; CCSS.ELA.SL.K.4; CCSS.ELA.RL.K.7
<b>Imagination</b>	Pretend play, vocabulary development, flexible thinking, narrative creation	CCSS.ELA.SL.K.1; CCSS.ELA.L.K.5; SEL (imaginative play & expression)
<b>Click and the Kids</b>	Concepts of print (title, author, cover), purposeful writing, visual storytelling	CCSS.ELA.RF.K.1; CCSS.ELA.W.K.2 (drawing/dictating); CCSS.ELA.SL.K.5
<b>The Story of Books</b>	History of books, making models, sequencing, simple printing techniques	Science & Engineering Practices (Modeling; Planning & Carrying Out Investigations); CCSS.ELA.SL.K.1
<b>Word Time with Ladybug</b>	Vocabulary, handwriting, letter formation, early phonics	CCSS.ELA.RF.K.1; CCSS.ELA.L.K.1.a; CCSS.ELA.L.K.5

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