An outstanding picture book is a result of both spontaneity and careful planning. The tools for planning such a book are the storyboard and book dummy. The storyboard gives you a bird's eye view of the whole book: it shows all the pages of the book, greatly reduced, on a single sheet of paper. The book dummy, on the other hand, is a preliminary model of the book—with the same number of pages, either the same size or smaller.

A rough book dummy is sometimes shown to an editor or art director to help them decide if they want to publish your book, or to give them a better idea of how you conceive it, or how your project is progressing. But this is not its chief purpose. The storyboard and book dummy are primarily thinking tools for the author-illustrator.

Putting together the storyboard and book dummy is a necessary process—it is the foundation for your book and lies at the heart of good bookmaking. It is also enjoyable because it allows you to watch the book take shape. The thinking and planning that go into a storyboard and dummy will guide and affect the pictures, design, and mood of the completed book.
How to Make a Storyboard

Before a house is built, the architect draws a plan of the house. Similarly, in creating a book, the illustrator first draws a plan—the storyboard.

The storyboard is a two-dimensional model, with all the pages of the book laid out on one piece of paper. You can see the whole book at a glance, how each page relates to another and the whole. This overview of the entire book facilitates the planning of the main visual elements.

To make a storyboard, take a sheet of paper and draw postage-size rectangles on it to represent all the pages of the book. Remember that, except for the first and last pages, the reader will see the book as a series of double spreads—that is, pairs of facing pages. Therefore, your storyboard must also be divided into double spreads. As you can see in Figure 1, each larger rectangle is divided into two smaller ones.

Now mark the page numbers clearly below the appropriate rectangles. Because books always begin on a right-hand page, cross out the left-hand side of the first spread and begin on the right with page 1. Books always end on a left-hand page, so there the right side is crossed out.

In planning a picture book, stick with 32 pages whenever possible, as this is the length most publishers prefer. If 32 pages is not long enough, you can expand to 48 pages. On the other hand, if 32 pages is too long for your story, you can shorten this by using each double spread as if it were a single page, thus reducing the number of illustrations by about half.

Actually you don’t have 32 pages for your story. The first two to four pages in a picture book are used to convey necessary information, called front matter. These pages contain the book title, the names of the author and/or illustrator, the publisher’s name and location, the copyright notice, and sometimes a dedication or a brief author’s note. Leave the first four pages blank for now and begin the story on page 5. If you are pressed for space, you can begin on page 3, but the book will look more attractive if the full four pages are used for front matter.
Taking a Bird's Eye View

The storyboard allows you to approach the book as though you were viewing it from a great distance and could see only the larger elements. You can even view the entire book as if it were one picture made up of smaller units—the double spreads.

A good way to begin is with the large elements—concentrate on the overall idea and visual concept. Sketch out the entire book with very rough black-and-white drawings, and avoid getting distracted by details or by color. Preoccupation with detail, color, and a polished appearance at the beginning stages is detrimental. It is easier and more efficient to think about one aspect of the book at a time, such as overall design, visual movement, and rhythm.

Figure 2. These four double spreads are from one of many storyboards I made for Dawn in order to determine the shape and size of each picture in relation to the page and to the other pictures. My aim was to establish an overall pattern and rhythm through the increasing size of the pictures. At this point I concentrated only on shape and size, without going into the content of the pictures at all. On pages 5–7 the oval grows larger. Then, on page 8, the oval changes to a vertical oval, with page 9 showing a smaller version. Finally, on pages 10–11, the oval expands to a double spread.

Figure 3. In this more developed storyboard for Dawn, it becomes clear how the design of the ovals works with the pictures and the telling of the story. On pages 5–7 we gradually see more of the landscape as the oval grows larger. On page 8 we move in close on the tree in the scene, while page 9 zooms in on the figures under the tree. Then, as the oval spreads across pages 10–11, we pull back and see the entire scene. In the final version—discussed at the end of this chapter—the basic design and flow of the pictures remain the same.
Figure 4. In this early storyboard for *One Monday Morning* the drawings are quite rough but readable. They are a means of visualizing the story. By focusing on the essential visual aspects and avoiding detail, I could see at a glance how the pictures worked together. Many elements were later changed.

Creating Visual Movement

Because the storyboard shows you all the pages together, it helps you to observe their overall visual pattern. You can plan the general progression of the double spreads and the visual movement of the book.

Figure 5. These six double spreads from *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* show the broad movement and design of the illustrations. In the story, it is a mystery where the princesses go every night and why the soles of their shoes are worn out every morning. On pages 14–15 the text describes how the princesses jump out of bed every night and dress in their finest gowns. The design of this double spread guides the eye diagonally from the top left to the bottom right-hand corner. Page 16 picks up from that corner of page 15 and guides the eye up in an arc and then plunges it down again, while the text describes the descent of the princesses into a magical underground world.

Pages 18–19 and 20–21 constitute one sweep broken down into two double spreads, depicting the continuation of the underground journey. The shape at the edge of page 19 is a tree, divided in the middle—the other half appears on page 20, emphasizing the connection between the two spreads. At the end of their long walk, the princesses come to a lake, where twelve small boats are waiting for them. Pages 22–23 and 24–25 depict the progress of their boat ride, moving in a diagonal from the bottom left to the top right-hand corner. In these two spreads, the direction of the action is away from the viewer, up and up, until the princesses reach their destination—a brilliantly lit castle (which is reflected in the water at the edge of page 25).
Checking the Rhythm

By seeing the book as a unified visual entity, you can also review and improve its rhythmic pattern. You may, for instance, decide to change the size and shape of the pictures, or the "visual beats" created by the main elements.

Figure 6. Simplifying the elements in my storyboard for One Monday Morning made me more aware of the rhythm, which was especially important since the story is based on a rhythmic song. On pages 12–13, the king is moving into the picture, but only half of him can be seen. Pages 14–15 show the other half of the king, followed by two other figures—the queen and the little prince. The transition between these two spreads suggests movement and the ground covered by the king and the two figures. If we think of the king on pages 12–13 as one visual "beat," then pages 14–15 have three beats, each represented by a figure. Placing the second and third figures (or beats) farther apart than the first and second creates not only a greater visual distance, but also a longer rhythmic pause between them.

Pages 16 and 17 show two contrasting pictures. On page 16 the figures are stationary, and from the words we learn that the hero of the story was not at home for the royal visit. On page 17, however, the movement of pages 14–15 continues. It is now Tuesday, and the king, the queen, and the little prince have returned. Pages 18–19 reverse the direction of the movement and add a new figure, increasing the number of beats to four. The increasing number of visual beats reflect the additional days on which the characters come back to look for the hero. Thus, rhythm is an integral part of the action.

Seeing Similarities and Differences

Once the storyboard is done, you can readily see the similarities and differences between the most outstanding components of the pictures. Although this may seem similar to what we have discussed, it is slightly different. You can decide, for instance, if there is too much repetition between pictures, or not enough. The
storyboard also permits you to recognize static and dynamic elements easily. You may ask, for example: What differences do you want? When does sameness help the story, and when is some variation needed?

How to Make a Book Dummy
Like the architect, the illustrator also makes a three-dimensional model—a dummy with the same number of pages as the printed book. This dummy immediately conveys how the book will read when printed. Turning the pages allows you to experience the story's progression and the pages' relation to each other as the reader will.

To make a dummy, staple or sew 8 sheets of white paper together in the middle and then fold them in half to make a 32-page booklet (Figure 7). (For a 48-page book dummy, use 12 sheets of paper.) Mark the page numbers clearly on both sides of each leaf, from 1 to 32. The dummy's usefulness depends on the correct and clearly marked sequence of pages—otherwise, you cannot accurately evaluate the relation of one page to another.

Thumbnail Dummy
A thumbnail dummy is smaller than the actual book will be—the pages may be 3 by 4 inches, or even smaller. It may have the same proportions as the final book, but this is not necessary. A rough, thumbnail dummy is useful because its small size compels the artist to concentrate on the essentials of the pictures without being sidetracked by details.

Using the storyboard as a guide, prepare the entire dummy with rough black-and-white sketches. While drawing, imagine that you are seeing the printed book. When this is done, read your dummy as the reader will the book and make the necessary adjustments.

The distribution of words on their proper pages shows how they relate to the pictures—something you can't see so well in the storyboard, where all the text is on a single page. Alternating between storyboard and dummy, you can work out the best progression of pages, constantly changing and revising. The joy of these two planning aids is that they enable you to see and to test your future book while it is being conceived.

Figure 8. Here is a spread from one of the rough thumbnail dummies I made for One Monday Morning. The drawings are done roughly, to show essentials—they need only be readable. It is a kind of functional thinking: the intent is not to make a finished picture, but rather to put down the basic idea so that you can see where you are and determine where you want to go.
Actual-Size Dummy

An actual-size dummy is the same size and has the same proportions as the final book. If the final book will measure 8 by 10 inches, so should this dummy. With the actual-size dummy, you can get as close as possible to the finished book, short of seeing the final product itself. It allows you to visualize the book and experience it as the reader will when turning its pages. With this dummy you get the feel of the book in its entirety and the details that make up the whole.

Actual-size book dummies may be executed with rough sketches or with finished ones. Some artists make their dummies quite finished-looking for their own visualization or for presentation to an editor. As a beginner, I felt the need to produce a finished dummy to compensate for my lack of experience, and I took the dummy as close as possible to the finished book. Arnold Lobel, however, sees a danger in expending too much creative energy on an excessively finished-looking dummy. He feels it can make the preparation of the final art anticlimactic, with the result that the art loses the vitality of the original sketches.

Figure 9. In this spread from my actual-size dummy for One Monday Morning, the sketch from the rough thumbnail (Figure 8) has been elaborated. The figures have been enlarged in relation to the building, for instance. Even though this drawing was quite finished, I still made a few more changes as I prepared the final version.

Figure 10. Because Charley Sang a Song was an early book I illustrated, I felt the need to make a finished dummy. This picture is almost the same as the final picture, while in later books the dummy was a stage in the progression from idea to finished book.

Figures 11–14. In preparing the illustrations for Hanukah Money (a story book), I did several actual-size drawings, starting with a rough pencil sketch and progressively clarifying the image I wanted. Figure 11 shows the first step: a bold statement of the main elements. Figure 12
is an intermediary step. One change here involved moving the beds slightly deeper into the picture and away from the viewer. With the final dummy sketch—Figure 13—a lot more detail was added, but this was still a working sketch. Only in the final line drawing for reproduction—Figure 14—did I put in small details like the patches on the quilts.

From Rough to Finished Sketches
Like the storyboard, the rough dummy is seen as if from a distance; you can see the overall composition with its larger elements, but cannot make out the details. You perceive them as you come closer; as you progress from rough to finished sketches, you introduce and sharpen the details until everything in the picture is clearly defined.

Figure 15. In these very rough, preliminary sketches for another illustration in Hanukah Money only the large elements are shown. The figures are simple shapes. The emphasis is on the overall composition.

Figure 16. Here I began to explore the possibilities of the sketch at the lower left of Figure 15. You can see how the view sharpens as the previous sketch begins to come into focus. Specific items of furniture emerge and the forms become more human.

Figure 17. Now the view moves even closer. If you look at the men at the table or the women with the trays, you can see their features and the beginning indications of character.

Figure 18. The focus here has been sharpened a little more. There are also subtle changes in the composition. The man in front, for instance, is now looking in a different direction.

Figure 19. With this drawing, I made a major change. I wasn't satisfied with the composition and decided to shift the position of the door and the direction of the women carrying the food. By drawing this possibility—instead of simply thinking of it—I could actually see the effect.
Figure 20. Drawing for a dummy is a concrete way of testing out different possibilities. It is hard to know the visual impact of a change unless you can see it. Here I went back to my conception in Figure 18, but I used the perspective of Figure 16. I also turned the two men at the bottom toward each other so that they appear to be conversing.

Figure 21. This composition worked best in terms of the effect I wanted. The scene is more compact, with less space than the one in Figure 20. As a result, the picture has a more intimate, homey feeling, in keeping with the story.

Figure 22. In this, the final dummy version, I focused in on the scene and added many details. If you look from Figure 19 to Figure 21 to this drawing, it is as if you were moving from far away to up close. The image becomes sharper and sharper.

Figure 23. The final line drawing for the printer brings everything into focus. It is here that finishing touches, like the men’s dark hair or the women’s patterned scarves, were added.

Working Procedure

Creating a picture book presents the same problems as composing a painting: how to arrange the parts into a whole. The storyboard and book dummy complement each other and allow you to transform all the pages into a unified book. Different authors, however, use these tools in different ways.

Arnold Lobel, for example, begins by making very rough, postage-size squares, storyboard style, which only he can read. They enable him to get a tangible feel for the text breakdown from page to page. From there he moves on to make the sketches. Then he makes a “flat” dummy, consisting of double spreads, by tracing his sketches onto sheets of white paper. From this dummy he goes on to make the finished art.

Jose Aruego also begins by making a rough storyboard. He shows this to his editor, who is familiar with his work. He then blows up the rough drawings of the storyboard with an enlarging machine (a “Lucy”) and makes the final art. When Aruego first entered the field of illustration, however, he made actual-size dummies that looked very finished.

M. B. Goffstein, on the other hand, does something rare among illustrators: she visualizes her dummy in her mind, without actually making one. She then does the finished art and makes photocopies of it for a dummy, which she shows to an editor.

My own working procedure has changed since I first began illustrating books. For my first book I made several actual-size, finished dummies; for subsequent books I made small, rough dummies and storyboards only. Generally, I like to make as many storyboards and small, rough dummies as necessary and go back and forth from one to another as I plan the book. I prefer to start by making a storyboard, however, and I recommend that beginners start this way too.

Sometimes, after having made a storyboard and a rough thumbnail dummy for my own use, I paste down the final sketches (or photocopies of them) with masking tape onto an actual-size dummy to show to the editor or the designer. In any case, I find that a readable dummy is the most helpful tool for communicating how you see the book. For picture books, which rely so much on the visual aspect, some editors require it before giving you a contract. They also want to see how you are progressing. On many occasions, I show my dummies to the editor to convey how I envision the book. The editor can then give me criticism, which in turn enables me to go back and work on my book idea further.
From Words to Dummy in Story Books

When you conceive your own picture book visually, you put it directly into dummy format—that is, you actually write the words on their respective pages while visualizing the pictures. When this has been done, a few changes or adjustments may be needed to perfect the words, and to make sure they are on the most suitable pages and the text divisions are natural.

On the other hand, when you illustrate a story book that is already in manuscript form, it is necessary to organize the words into a dummy format. In this case, it is appropriate to use an actual-size dummy, because you need enough space to paste down the words. (For picture books it is best to follow the method described above, but if you have written the words in manuscript form, you can follow the same steps as for a story book, but apply the picture book concept.)

Before you begin dividing the text, read it until you understand it thoroughly. Grasp the tone and the mood of the story. Live with the words for a while and let them sink in. Read them both silently and aloud. Try to visualize them; see the pictures inherent in them.

As you get to know the text, you will begin to see its structure. You will discover that it consists of units and sub-units. A unit may be a complete situation, scene, or tableau. The words describing it may suggest natural pauses that will allow readers to catch their breath. Subunits, the shorter units within the larger units, can bring out the meaning or emphasize the drama of a scene. Listen for those natural pauses and divide the text accordingly. This will help ensure that your breakdown of the text into pages is the best possible, and it will help you make better decisions about what to illustrate.

Once you have worked out your basic divisions, you then create an actual dummy. To do this, cut up the typed manuscript and attach the units or sub-units to the appropriate pages of the dummy. Be sure to cut up and attach the text to the dummy pages in a way that allows you to make changes if necessary. You may have to move the words back and forth until the division and progression of the text make sense. At this point, however, if any adjustments are necessary, it is unlikely they will be arbitrary because you already have a thorough understanding of the text. This understanding makes the text breakdown more likely to be an outgrowth of its own structure, rather than an imposition from without.

Your dummy serves as a guide in planning the book. If better ideas come up in subsequent stages, you can adjust and improve once more. You may discover later on that you are unable to keep your initial subdivisions of the text; you may have to make additional changes so that the words are in accord with the dummy. This decision, however, will have been reached through an approach to the whole book and not merely as a matter of whim or convenience.

This is how I broke down the beginning of The Treasure into pages. Compare this breakdown—which shows sequential progression—to the way the story reads when it is placed on a single page. Notice the difference in the way it reads when pauses are created by dividing the text into pages.
The Treasure

There once was a man and his name was Isaac. He lived in such poverty that again and again he went to bed hungry. One night, he had a dream. In his dream, a voice told him to go to the capital city and look for a treasure under the bridge by the Royal Palace. “It is only a dream,” he thought when he woke up, and he paid no attention to it. The dream came back a second time. And Isaac still paid no attention to it. When the dream came back a third time, he said, “Maybe it’s true,” and so he set out on his journey.
The divisions and subdivisions in the text will help you visualize the content. Look for the most crucial or dramatic elements of the story; they will tell you what to illustrate, and a natural division of the text will follow.

My decisions about where to break the text affected the way I illustrated *The Magician*. The first eleven pages of the book are actually only a lengthy introduction to the main action of the story.

**Page 5.** These words constitute a complete unit, introducing the magician. A pause is natural here.

**Pages 6–7.** There could have been a pause after “He was traveling on foot,” but there was a space problem—it would have meant adding a page to the book. Also, it was not as crucial to break the text here as it was to give the dramatic line on page 11 a page to itself: “Yet he looked poor and hungry.” And since the seven lines on page 6 do work together, I decided to keep them all on the same page.

The first three lines on page 7 constitute a subunit; space permitting, it could have been on a page by itself. But for the same reason that I combined the lines on page 6, I opted for including the whole unit, which calls for a longer pause than the subunit. Thus, combining the seven lines on the same page emphasizes the drama of the magician’s disappearance.

**Pages 8–9.** Lack of space also prompted me to combine two actions—“pulling ribbons out of his mouth and turkeys out of his boots”—on page 8. My solution was to depict the magician doing both actions at once—after all, if he can do one kind of magic, why not both at the same time?

Page 9 also has two actions: (1) the appearance and dance of the rolls and loaves of bread through the air, and (2) their disappearance. The first action is pictorial, but the second would have been most difficult to illustrate in a still picture. It was logical for the text to tell of both actions here: while the picture shows only the appearance of the bread, the words tell of their disappearance.

**Pages 10–11.** Page 10 prepares the reader for page 11. These two pages are the most dramatic part of the book so far and constitute the climax of the introduction to the action that will take place. It was very important to give these three lines their own double spread. If the sentence “Yet he looked poor and hungry” had not been surrounded by clear-cut pauses, both before and after, its dramatic impact would have diminished considerably.

Now try to visualize *The Magician* in dummy form, and imagine what effect turning its pages would have on the rhythm of reading it.
The Magician

One day a magician came to a small village. He was traveling on foot. "Where from?" the villagers asked. "Far away," the stranger replied. "Where to?" they wanted to know. "The big city," he said. "Then what are you doing here?" they asked. "I lost my way," he replied. He was an odd fellow. He was ragged and tattered, yet he wore a top hat. He gathered people around him on the street. One minute he was full of tricks and the next, he disappeared. Just like that. He pulled ribbons out of his mouth and turkeys out of his boots. He whistled, and rolls and loaves of bread danced through the air. He whistled again. Everything vanished! He scratched his shoe and there was a flood of gold coins. Yet he looked poor and hungry.
An Example of Planning

*Dawn* is an example of how important planning is to a picture book. The slightest inconsistency or deviation from its visual code would have distracted from the mood and feeling of the completed book.

The *visual code* of a book consists of the shape of the pictures; the way they are drawn; their mood, pace, and rhythm, plus any other visual means used by the artist. Established at the beginning of the book, the visual code should be adhered to consistently throughout.

In *Dawn*, for instance, the pictures are mostly oval in shape or derived from the oval. The horizontal page emphasizes both the calm of the ovals and the landscape depicted in them. The corners of the pictures are always rounded and the edges irregular, never angular or razor-sharp. Introducing a rectangular picture with sharp edges for no apparent reason would have contradicted the visual code of the book. Close attention was also paid to the relationship between the constant (static) and changing (dynamic) elements throughout.

The book opens with the words “Quiet. Still.” The problem was how to portray quiet and a lack of movement without boring the reader. To depict this mood, static elements were necessary. But to keep the reader’s interest, change and dynamic elements were also required. Whatever my solution, I had to make the art conform to the mood.

**Pages 5–7.** On these pages there are both static and dynamic elements, but I made them as subtle as possible in order not to introduce too much “visual noise.” The static elements are the oval shapes of the pictures, the repetition of the same scene, and the horizontal stripes. A dynamic feeling is added by the ovals growing larger as the scene gradually comes into focus from picture to picture (similar to the way our vision increases as our eyes grow accustomed to the dark). In the third picture, a tree emerges as a result of the movement of our eyes over the landscape from left to right.
Pages 8–9. The tree becomes the center of attention on page 8. Focusing on the tree, we can start to discern figures, and we move closer to them on page 9. So far, nothing new has been added to the pictures; the only movement is that of the viewer discovering new facets of the same scene.

Pages 10–11. In this double spread the scene is fully established. As a result of the preceding pages, it is already familiar.

Pages 12–13. At this point I felt I could not continue to repeat the same scene without it becoming boring so I decided to show only the reflection in the water. It almost looks like the scene on pages 10–11 turned upside down. This constitutes a very dramatic change in the visual progression of the book, and it could have broken the quiet mood maintained so far. The shock of this drastic change, however, is softened by our familiarity with this scene from the preceding pages. As a result, this visual leap reads as a zooming in on the reflection.

Pages 14–15. The picture on pages 12–13 prepares the reader to recognize at once the subtle change on pages 14–15—caused by “a light breeze”—which otherwise might have gone unnoticed. This movement within the picture heralds a shift in pace.
Pages 16–17. Although there has been no noticeable change in the shape or size of the pictures on the last spreads, the slow pace established in the beginning is starting to change. The movement of the breeze begun on the previous spread continues on pages 16–17, only now vapors rising slowly over the lake are introduced into the picture.

Pages 18–19. As the day grows lighter, and as more life awakens, there is an increase in movement. This is reflected in the size and shape of the pictures on pages 18–19: the breakdown into smaller pictures helps to quicken the pace and echoes the break of day.

Pages 20–21. These pictures grow larger to reflect the increasing visibility as the day grows lighter. The movement from one scene (the bird in the landscape) to another (the old man waking his grandson) continues the movement begun on pages 14–15 and picks up the faster pace of pages 18–19.
Pages 22–23. The pictures continue to increase in size. They show the old man and his grandson moving, but at a slow pace—as is true of people who have just gotten up. The strong horizontal band of the distant mountains is static. It runs through both pictures as if attaching one to the other. The even shades of the sky and water also help to suggest the morning calm, which in turn emphasizes the slow pace. The light of the fire hints at the ball of fire in the sky—the sun—which will appear later.

Pages 24–25. This spread begins the final sequence of the action—the boat ride. Page 24 concludes the previous sequence (rolling up the blankets after the night’s rest) and is the transition to the next sequence (getting ready for the boat ride). In order to emphasize their movement into a larger space, I placed the figures in the foreground of the picture in a relatively closed-in area—near the tree—on page 24. On page 25, they move away into the distance, into a more open space, which in turn suggests the spread that will follow.

Pages 26–27. Here I achieved a somewhat quicker pace by showing the old man and the boy on the lake with no land in sight, implying that they have gone some distance since the previous spread. The even color of the lake surrounding the boat suggests quiet.
Pages 28–29. At this point I imagined the old man rowing, absorbed in the effort and looking down, not paying too much attention to his surroundings. That is why I chose to zoom in on the boat on page 28. This also enabled me to emphasize the pools of foam in the water. The visual movement of the foam surrounded by the quiet blue of the lake emphasizes the noise of rowing in the surrounding quiet. Page 29 reminds us of pages 26–27, but here the boat is farther away, becoming smaller—leading us into the next spread.

Pages 30–31. Here I saw the old man taking a break from rowing, lifting his head, and seeing the climactic spectacle. In the book, which is in color, pages 30–31 are a dramatic visual change. Until this point the pictures have been almost monochromatic, with only subtle color shifts. Now the scene appears in vivid yellows, blues, and greens. This sudden burst of color, however, is justified by the content of the story and does not jar the reader.

Page 32. I could have ended the book on the previous spread, but I added this last page so as not to cut off the enjoyment of pages 30–31 too abruptly. This smoother ending is more consistent with the pace and mood of the book—its visual code.