

BIC Children's Book Marketing Categories

User Notes for Allocation of Categories

Version 1: First Definitive Release (March 2000)

Introduction

For any Children's Book, the Marketing Category is indicated by the allocation of ONE and ONLY ONE value from each of five sections, covering different aspects of the book.

The five sections (shown in full on page 2) are:

1. INTEREST LEVEL – indicating the age range for which the book is intended.
2. BROAD SUBJECT – indicating the broad subject area of the book.
3. TYPE / FORMAT – indicating the physical format or special features of the book.
4. CHARACTER – indicating whether the book features an established children's character.
5. TIE-IN – indicating whether the book is a film or TV tie-in edition.

To aid the user, and to promote consistency of use, the Guidance Notes (page 3) are designed to lead the user step-by-step through the available options. Worked examples are included.

In some sections, a potential conflict of classification is possible where a book has more than one feature from a single section: for example where a book is both an annual *and* an activity book. This conflict is resolved by use of flowcharts, which give priority to those characteristics which are most unusual, most precise in scope, or most significant from a marketing point of view.

Generally speaking however, each book should be classified using the category in each section which best describes the book.

The priority sequence given to the categories in the flowcharts is thus only helpful when several characteristics have comparable importance.

CBMC values are generally held and displayed as five-character codes, comprising a single character code representing the appropriate value from each of the five sections eg A3M68.

Notes

Note that throughout this document, the term "book" should be taken to mean any product in any medium produced by publishers and sold through recognised book trade channels. Nonetheless, the term "item" is also used where "book" is clearly inappropriate, eg when specifying multimedia features.

Note that the values listed in the BROAD SUBJECT section are for marketing and sales information purposes only. They are linked to BIC Standard Subject Categories but are in no way intended to replace them. Certain values in the TYPE / FORMAT section also have direct correlations in the BIC Standard Subject Categories scheme.

Note that for purposes of automatic conversion of backlist titles ONLY an additional Code of "X" (indicating "Value Unknown") may be allowed for each section. It is essential that publishers resolve all "Value Unknown" issues as soon as possible if complete and reliable sales and marketing statistics are to be derived from the Children's Book Marketing Categories.

Tables of BIC Children's Book Marketing Categories, Version 1

Section 1. INTEREST LEVEL

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>CODE</i>
0-5 years	A
5-7 years	B
7-9 years	C
9-11 years	D
12+ years	E

Section 2. BROAD SUBJECT

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>CODE</i>
Poetry & Plays / Songs & Music	1
Home / Early Learning	2
Fiction	3
Reference	4
Non-fiction	5

Section 3. TYPE / FORMAT

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>CODE</i>
Electronic Format	F
Annual	G
Treasury / Gift Anthology	H
Novelty Book	J
Board / Bath / Rag Book	K
Activity Book	L
Picture Book	M
Ordinary Printed Book Format	N
Stationery & Other Merchandise	P

Section 4. CHARACTER

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>CODE</i>
Character	6
Non-character	7

Section 5. TIE-IN

<i>CATEGORY</i>	<i>CODE</i>
TV / Film Tie-in	8
Non Tie-in	9

Guidance Notes

Section 1. INTEREST LEVEL

Each book should be assigned the age range value that *most closely* reflects the intended interest / readership age of the work.

Where the interest / readership age range straddles two values equally, eg for ages 4-6, classification is at the discretion of the user. Bear in mind other titles against which you would wish to compare the book and check which age range has been used for these titles.

Examples for Section 1 INTEREST LEVEL

Walk with a Wolf

by Janni Howker / illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies (Walker Books)

A picture book for 4-7 year olds. The Interest Level that best covers the intended reading age range of the book is "5-7 years".

Assign code "B".

A Cheese & Tomato Spider

by Nick Sharratt (Scholastic)

A split-page picture book for pre-school children, who can make different pictures by turning over different halves of the pages.

Assign code "A".

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

by Lewis Carroll / illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)

This classic story appeals to readers from about 7 years upwards. In such cases, it is best to assign the single value that defines the "core" of the potential reading age - in this case, 9-11.

Assign code "D".

Section 2. BROAD SUBJECT

Assign the single category that best describes the subject of the book. If in doubt, follow the flowchart below, and assign the FIRST APPROPRIATE VALUE reached.

	QUESTION	RESULT	CODE
Q1	Is the text a playscript of any sort (ie with dialogue designed to be acted or to be read out by different voices), or is the item a recording of a play?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q2.	1
Q2	Does the majority of the text (or spoken word in audio material) comprise poems or verse of any sort, including nursery rhymes and humorous verse such as limericks?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q3.	1
Q3	Does the item primarily comprise songs or music (whether songbooks, sheet music or recordings)?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q4.	1
Q4	Is the book specifically and primarily designed to aid learning (including Early Learning concepts such as recognition of shapes, opposites, sizes, etc); to supplement school study; or to develop particular skills (such as reading, counting, etc)? <i>Note: books with a strong pictorial and story component with some incidental "learning" features should be classified as 3 (Fiction)</i>	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q5.	2
Q5	Is the book a novel or storybook of any description, including heavily illustrated picture books?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q6.	3
Q6	Is the book a dictionary, encyclopedia or any other reference work (ie designed to be accessed through individual entries as required, rather than "read through")?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q7.	4
Q7	Does the book cover any other subject not included above?	Assign code shown.	5

Examples for Section 2 BROAD SUBJECT

The Weatherbirds

by Ted Dewan (Puffin)

A picture book containing a mix of fiction and factual information. On balance though, the book is primarily non-fiction.

Assign code "5".

First Steps ABC Reader

by Lesley Clark / photographs by Garie Hind, illustrated by Terry Burton (Ladybird)

An early learning ABC book and reader.

Assign code "2".

I Was a Teenage Worrier

by Ros Asquith (Transworld)

Although containing a wealth of factual information, the character presenting the advice and the story-line are fictional. It is presented and read as fiction.

Assign code "3".

Section 3. TYPE / FORMAT

Assign the single category that best describes the physical features of the item. If in doubt, follow the flowchart below, and assign the FIRST APPROPRIATE VALUE reached.

	QUESTION	RESULT	CODE
Q1	Does the item have <i>any</i> electronic, multimedia or audio-visual component, even if in pack with a standard book (eg CD-ROM, video cassette, audio cassette, book & cassette pack, e-book, software)?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q2.	F
Q2	Is the book an annual or yearbook? (ie has a year in the title, one of a series issued each year)?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q3.	G
Q3	Is the book a collection described as a "treasury" or "gift anthology", or packaged as a gift item?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q4.	H
Q4	Is the dominant aspect of the book any "novelty" feature (eg die-cut, pop-up/lift the flap, has moving parts, makes a sound, scratch & sniff, etc)? <i>Note: books with a strong pictorial and story component with some incidental "novelty" features should be classified as M (Picture Book)</i>	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q5.	J
Q5	Is the book a board book (stiff pages made of board); a bath book (made of waterproof or inflatable plastic material); or a rag book (made entirely of soft fabric)?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q6.	K
Q6	Is the book designed to be used for a specific activity (eg sticker book, colouring book, join-the-dots, puzzles, press-out or kit book)?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q7	L
Q7	Is each page spread dominated by colour illustrations, with little or minimal text?	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q8	M
Q8	Is the item a standard book (not a diary or other stationery) published in a traditional format (such as paperback, hardback, ring- or comb-bound)	If YES, assign code shown. If NO, go to Q9	N
Q9	Is the item a stationery item (eg diary, record book, etc) or any other printed material (eg flashcards, wallchart) or any other merchandise format to be included in the exercise?	Assign code shown.	P

Examples for Section 3 TYPE / FORMAT

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle (Puffin)

Although this contains some novelty elements (cut-outs in pages), it is most noted for the quality of illustration, so is designated a picture book.

Assign code "M".

Arthur's Valentine Countdown

by Marc Brown (Red Fox)

Along with the fact that this is a picture story book, it has lift-the-flap features and stickers, and is also a board book. Overall, the novelty aspect predominates.

Assign code "J".

Bedtime Story

by Richard Fowler (Transworld)

Picture book with die-cut slots and a separate cardboard mole which the child fits through the slots. Clearly considerable novelty element.

Assign code "J".

Tellastory book & tape packs

by various authors (Tellastory)

A series of picture story books with audio cassettes. The audio cassettes mean these packs are classified as having an "electronic" element.

Assign code "F".

Phonics Flashcards

(Ladybird)

Any flashcards or other non-book printed material are classified along with "Stationery & other merchandise".

Assign code "P".

Section 4. CHARACTER

A “Character Book” is defined as featuring any recognised *illustrated* character or group of characters who has/have featured in several books (and who may also be associated with other merchandise, eg toys, videos, etc).

Examples of “Characters” include: Spot the Dog, Postman Pat, Noddy, Mr Men, Teletubbies, Winnie the Pooh, all Beatrix Potter, Asterix, Tintin.

Because of the requirement for the character to be “illustrated”, fictional personae such as Harry Potter, William Brown, Buffy, Worst Witch, etc do *not* qualify as “Characters” for this purpose.

Any Character Book should be assigned the Value “CHARACTER” (Code: 6).

All other books are designated “NON-CHARACTER” (Code: 7).

Section 5. TIE-IN

The following books should be designated “TV / FILM TIE-IN” (Code: 8):

- Any book published specifically to “tie-in” (ie follow or coincide) with the release of a film or TV programme or series;
- Any book that is a direct spin-off from a film or TV, featuring characters who originated in film or TV;
- Any previously existing book reissued, eg with a cover featuring a film or TV still, to link with a film or TV release; *
- Any novelisation of a story that first appeared in film or TV form.

** Note: common practice is to re-issue such books under a new ISBN, to be replaced by the standard edition under the original ISBN once it goes OP. Where books with a new film or TV tie-in cover are reissued under the same ISBN as the standard edition, ie where an ISBN/book becomes a tie-in edition temporarily, it may not be practicable to amend its Tie-In / Non Tie-In status. Generally, the CBMC code should not change over the “life” of a book.*

All other books should be designated “NON TIE-IN” (Code: 9).

Examples for Section 4 CHARACTER and Section 5 TIE-IN

Stuart Little

by E.B. White (Puffin)

This is the original novel which preceded the film, but reissued with a cover to tie in with the film. Whereas the animated figure from the film would be deemed a “Character” in a picture book format, this does not apply to the standard novel here.

Assign codes “7” and “8”.

The Official Pokémon Collector’s Sticker Book

(Scholastic)

Clearly based on the Pokémon characters, but not specifically tied to the film release.

Assign codes “6” and “9”.

The Tigger Movie: Book of the Film

(Ladybird)

Drawn directly from the Disney film and character.

Assign codes “6” and “8”.

Shooting Star: the Ewan McGregor Story

by Janine Pourroy (Transworld)

Although this book is the unauthorised biography of a film star, it is not specifically tied to any film or TV release.

Assign codes “7” and “9”.

Complete Worked Examples

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

by Lewis Carroll / illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (Walker Books)

A heavily illustrated edition of the classic. As well as the reading age problem discussed in Section 1 above, this book raises other issues. Despite the fact that the illustrations are what makes this particular edition special, this is still a novel rather than a picture book. Alice does not qualify as a "Character" in CBMC terms, as she is illustrated variously and has no single visual image. Also, although there have been several film versions of the story, this edition is not linked to any.

Interest Level: 7+
Broad Subject: Fiction
Type / Format: Ordinary Printed Book
Character?: No
Tie-In?: No

Assign CBMC code: D3N79

Maisy's Bus

by Lucy Cousins (Walker)

A picture book featuring the little mouse from an animated television series.

Interest Level: 0-5
Broad Subject: Fiction
Type / Format: Picture Book
Character?: Yes
Tie-In?: Yes

Assign CBMC code: A3M68

The Horribly Huge Quiz Book

by Terry Deary (Scholastic)

A quiz book based on the Horrible Histories series.

Interest Level: 9-11
Broad Subject: Non-fiction
Type / Format: Ordinary Printed Book
Character?: No
Tie-In?: No

Assign CBMC code: D5N79

The Great Grammar Book

by Kate Petty / illustrated by Jennie Maizels (Bodley Head)

A grammar book which uses novelty devices such as flaps, tabs, pop-ups and wheels to get across each point.

Interest Level: 7-9
Broad Subject: Home / Early Learning
Type / Format: Novelty Book
Character?: No
Tie-In?: No

Assign CBMC code: C2J79

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

by J.K. Rowling (Bloomsbury)

The first novel featuring the young trainee wizard.

Interest Level: 9-11
Broad Subject: Fiction
Type / Format: Ordinary Printed Book
Character?: No
Tie-In?: No

Assign CBMC code: D3N79