

## How a Book is Made: More to Explore

*Note: This guide is intended for use with the diagram of the book-production process posted at [www.lynneberry.com/howabookismade.pdf](http://www.lynneberry.com/howabookismade.pdf).*

### *How a Book Is Made: page 1*

- In the diagram, it might look as though the author and illustrator work closely together to create a story, and then send their work to the publisher. Many people think this is the way the process works. In fact, publishers tend to keep authors and illustrators far apart, to ensure that each has his or her creative freedom. At times, authors and illustrators do collaborate closely. In the more common process, however, the steps are:
  1. The author writes a story. This step has many sub-steps, which may take months or years to complete: idea, first draft, *many* revised drafts, and final draft.
  2. The author submits the story to an editor at a publishing house, to be considered for publication. Publishers receive *thousands* of stories every year from hopeful authors. From these thousands of stories, they are able to choose only a few to publish, as each book costs a lot of money to produce.
  3. If the publisher decides to publish the book, the publisher chooses an illustrator for the project.
  4. If the illustrator agrees to take on the project, he or she reads the story, develops a vision for the book, and illustrates accordingly—with no input or right of veto from the author! (There is some oversight and input from the publisher.) The illustrator, like the author, goes through many steps: initial small ("thumbnail") sketches, full-size sketches, and final illustrations.
  5. The author receives an early version of the final words together with the final art and—if all goes well!—loves the vision the illustrator has brought to the book.

### *How a Book Is Made: page 2*

- Color separation for printing provides an interesting opportunity to talk about primary colors vs. combined colors. For example, in the color separation, why does the hexagon appear on both the yellow plate and the blue plate? Why is there no green plate?

### *How a Book Is Made: page 3*

- Students might wonder: if all of the colors are going to be recombined to take us back to where we started, why bother separating the colors in the first place? The answer, of course, is that color separation allows for every possible color to be printed, using only four colors of ink (and four plates): red, yellow, blue, and black. Every possible hue and shade of color can be produced, without mixing up a million different inks (with a million corresponding plates)—just by printing red, yellow, blue, and black on the page. How does this work?
  - This type of printing uses tiny dots of color. These dots trick our eyes. For example, if more blue dots are printed in a certain amount of space, we don't see this as more blue dots, we see this as a *darker* shade of blue.
  - If both blue and red dots are printed, we don't see this as red and blue dots, we see this as purple. If the same number of red and blue dots is printed, we see this as a basic purple. With more red dots than blue, we see this as a different shade of purple, a warmer shade. With more blue dots than red, we see this as a cooler shade of purple. And so on.

- In my diagram, I suggest that pages are printed one at a time. This is a simplification for the purpose of explaining color separation and offset printing. In fact, pages are printed 16 at a time, on master sheets called signature sheets. Eight pages of the book are printed on one side of the sheet, the sheet is flipped, and eight pages are printed on the other side of the sheet—for a total of 16 pages of the book. The master sheets are then folded, bound, and trimmed to produce the book. You can demonstrate this to your students in a simple way using the model signature sheet on my website (download from webpage [www.lynneberry.com/howabookismade.htm](http://www.lynneberry.com/howabookismade.htm)). The model sheet uses 8.5" x 14" paper (legal size), so it produces a tiny "book." Ask your students to consider how big an actual signature sheet must be to produce an ordinary-sized book. (Note: the signature sheet demonstration is the one thing I do during school visit programs that always receives spontaneous applause. It seems almost like magic to the kids, I think!)

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- Students might notice there is a fifth tower or station in the actual printing press—not accounted for by the yellow, red, blue, and black plates. Some presses include an extra plate for various reasons—but the three primary colors and black are still the basis for this type of printing.