

Book Jacket Design

with Ellen Rockell and
Charlotte Stroomer

This workshop is designed by Charlotte and Ellen. Charlotte and Ellen are Norwich graduates and now work as Book Cover Designers at Little Brown Books Group. They have designed covers for a range of household titles including Ant and Dec's Once Upon a Tyne, Tade Thompson's Rosewater, Rachel Clarke's Dear Life and Beth Reekles Love Locked Down.

Objective

This workshop will help you to realise and understand the type of considerations that publication designers face on a day-to-day basis. You will learn and apply a simple ideation process where you'll use images and text to pose a question, reveal a secret or ultimately invite the reader into the story.

YouTube workshop link

 [Youtube workshop video](#)

Workshop duration

This activity should take approximately 1-1.5 hours to complete. Please adapt to your circumstances.

What materials do I need?

Digital drawing

- Digital art program such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator or InDesign or similar tools.
- Access to free stock images Flickr / Google Search (*optional*)

Traditional drawing

- Paper
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Pen
- Colouring resources (*optional*)



Ideation

We encourage you to take a title of a book (we are using *Alice in Wonderland* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) and start to write down 3-4 ideas around the following categories:

- Typography (Type) – what type of fonts do you associate with the story? (a specific font or what shapes could compliment the plot, i.e., rounded, square, angular, Italic...)
- Colour palette – which colours are synonymous with the world, environment or key characters or plot lines.
- Imagery – are there any key symbols, objects, landscapes or silhouettes from the narrative that stand out to you.
- Mood (what do we want to convey?) – what type of aesthetics, themes and atmospheres do you think are prominent in the narrative.

This selection of ideas will help to be a reference point for how to design, curate and style your book jacket.

TOP TIP: Read the synopsis of the story you are designing for to identify with the narrative.

Task one: identifying the image

Draft three to four sketches of icons from the narrative. Iconic images, objects and silhouettes from this could include; a pack of cards, a top hat, a cat or cat's tail, a crown, hearts...

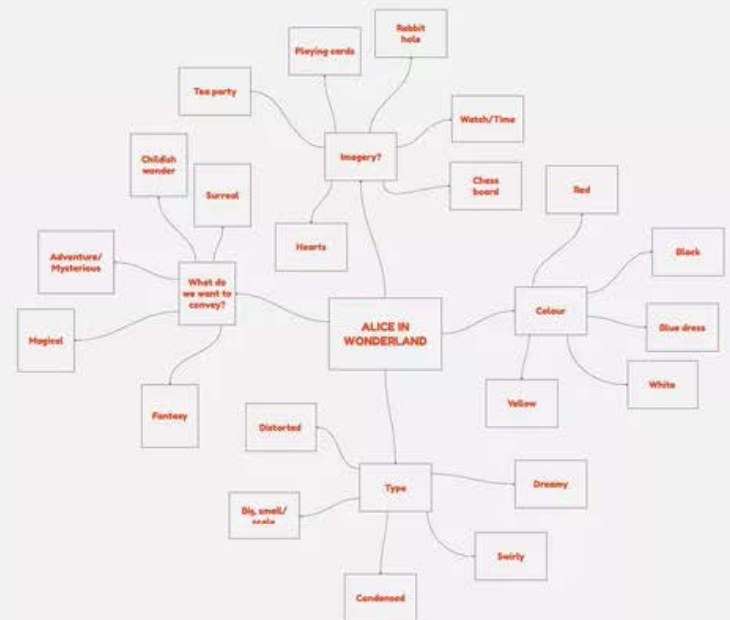
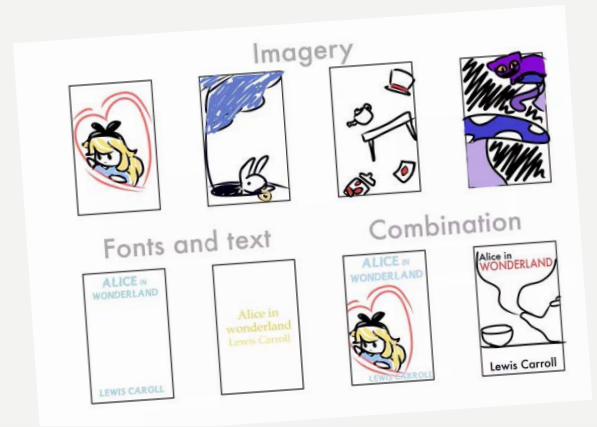
Consider...

What do each of these reflect about the narrative or 'mood' of the story?

Being suggestive can often be more powerful than being literal as it leaves more to the viewer to solve.

Catch up on the recording:

▶ [Timestamp: 20:34](#)



Task two: finding the font

Typography is not just about being legible, it can tell more of the story and set the mood itself!

What type suits your narrative? Draft 2-3 ideas that complement the mood of your story.

Here are some examples of how type can communicate the mood or atmosphere of the narrative.

Perhaps you can use an existing typeface, edit one, draw or invent a new one?

Catch up on the recording:

▶ [Timestamp: 34:50](#)

TOP TIP: Think about the size of your font. Is it more important to highlight the name of the author or the name of the book?

Task three: combining the components

It's time to refine the book jacket!

How can you reposition the imagery or text on a book jacket to make these elements tell the story? You may want to use all of your elements or just your favourite font.

We suggest creating 1-2 designs.

Once your designs are composed, consider finishing them by adding colour if it's appropriate for your cover.

Catch up on the recording:

▶ [Timestamp: 44:52](#)

TOP TIP: Think about how you can capture some subliminal messages or details of the story in the design



Next steps:

Step back from your work and consider:

- What matters most about communicating this story?
- Is this an engaging design that the target audience could identify with?
- Is there a way I could improve my design (perhaps ask friends and family that you trust)?
- How could I apply this approach and ideas to other projects to refine my ideas?

Conclusion:

We hope it has given you an insight into the power of text and images and how they can interplay.

In the industry your initial concepts are given feedback by others, such as the author and publishing house. You are likely to be asked to amend your ideas to it's great to develop a collaborative and flexible approach to your creative work.

Storytelling is one of the most important parts of the human experience, we hope you will be able to apply these skills to your story and have fun along the way!

Find out more about Ellen Rockell and Charlotte Stroomer

 [@ellenrockell_design](https://www.instagram.com/ellenrockell_design)

 [@charstroomer](https://www.instagram.com/charstroomer)

 [Charlotte's website](#)

Find out more about where they work

 [Little Brown Book Group website](#)

 [@littlebrownbookgroup_uk](https://www.instagram.com/littlebrownbookgroup_uk)

 [@studio_of_ideas](https://www.instagram.com/studio_of_ideas)

We would love to see your work! Share it with us on Instagram:

 [@norwichuni_outreach](https://www.instagram.com/norwichuni_outreach)

 [@takeyourplace_he](https://www.instagram.com/takeyourplace_he)

Take a look at our Padlet board from the live session to see how others responded to the workshop!


 [View our Padlet board here](#)


Further resources

 [*Front Cover*, Alan Powers](#)

 [*A Smile in the Mind*, Beryl McAlhone](#)

 [*A Book on Books*, Victionary](#)

 [*Front Cover, Great Book Jacket & Cover Design*, Alan Powers](#)

 [*Look of the Book: Jackets, Covers, and Art at the Edges of Literature*, Peter Mendensund and David J. Alworth](#)

Type foundries

 [The Designers Foundry](#)  [VJ Type](#)

 [R Typography](#)  [Nuform Type](#)

 [My Fonts](#)  [Sharp Type](#)

Useful links

 [@norwichuniarts](https://www.instagram.com/norwichuniarts)  [Creative Career Paths](#)

 [Take Your Place](#)  [Norwich Uni Arts](#)