Why Picture Books?  Excerpts from Picture Book Month Teacher’s Guide

For ELA…
*Picture books are wonderful tools for teaching story structure, key ideas, and details because of their simple linear plot lines and setting, with a few highly developed characters.
*Picture books prompt a variety of creative writing assignments.
*Picture books lend themselves nicely to technical writing assignments, including but not limited to letters to authors or illustrators, book reviews, research papers based on a theme found within the story.
*Due to the concise and simple nature of the genre, word choice and structure is extremely important.
*Picture books are meant to be read-aloud, which automatically makes them a social experience. The very nature of reading a picture book invites conversation and questions that support students developing understandings of language and their world.
*Picture books contain many literary conventions including but not limited to, rhyme, onomatopoeia, alliteration, hyperbole.
*Visuals in the illustrations build skills for determining meaning through context.

For Math…
*Picture books aid students in visualizing mathematics within a narrative context.
*Picture book illustrations lend themselves nicely to counting exercises (“how many apples can you find?”).
*Picture books help students visualize number quantities and number comparison (“how many more apples does this tree have than that tree?”).
*Picture books provide excellent scenarios for word problems, using a plot line and characters that students know and relate to.
*Picture book illustrations serve as wonderful models of how shapes are used to create pictures.
*Picture books help students visualize what they are reading and make sense of the content which is a big component in spatial learning and problem solving.
*Picture books provide context, which supports developing understandings of mathematical concepts such as measurement and time

For Science…
*Children are born scientists; and picture books, like Science, are about the spirit of curiosity and exploration.
*Although fiction picture books provide fantastical elements, these stories provide wonderful springboards for conversation about fact vs. fiction and can spark the desire for further research.
*Literature takes us to places we cannot go when inside a classroom; and additionally, through the use of illustrations and photographs picture books can show us places we are unable to go to ourselves.
*Picture books offer a narrative and humanization to several scientific concepts.
*Picture books give us a more intimate look at scientific concepts that are often abstract and difficult to understand.
*Picture books provide opportunities to develop students’ background knowledge.

For Social Studies…
*Picture books allow students to have vicarious experiences through characters who are not like them.
*Picture books teach the universality of many experiences.
*Picture books help students make sense of the world.
*Picture books help students develop empathy.
*Picture books place a human face to historical, political, environmental, and cultural events. *Picture books provide an emotional core which helps connect the students to the content. *Picture books not only tell a story of a culture or historical time, they also provide a visual into the world through illustrations.
*Picture books provide opportunities to develop students' background knowledge