READ@HOME

Guidance Note on the Production of Reading Books

October 2021

©2021 International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank
1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000; Internet: www.worldbank.org
Some rights reserved.

This work is a product of the staff of The World Bank with external contributions. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of The World Bank, its Board of Executive Directors, or the governments they represent. The World Bank does not guarantee the accuracy of the information included in this work.
Nothing herein shall constitute or be considered to be a limitation upon or waiver of the privileges and immunities of The World Bank, all of which are specifically reserved.

Rights and Permissions

This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 IGO license (CC BY 4.0 IGO) https://creativecommons.org/ licenses/by/4.0/, with the following mandatory and binding addition:
Any and all disputes arising under this License that cannot be settled amicably shall be submitted to mediation in accordance with the WIPO Mediation Rules in effect at the time the work was published. If the request for mediation is not resolved within forty-five (45) days of the request, either You or the Licensor may, pursuant to a notice of arbitration communicated by reasonable means to the other party refer the dispute to final and binding arbitration to be conducted in accordance with UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules as then in force. The arbitral tribunal shall consist of a sole arbitrator and the language of the proceedings shall be English unless otherwise agreed. The place of arbitration shall be where the Licensor has its headquarters. The arbitral proceedings shall be conducted remotely (e.g., via telephone conference or written submissions) whenever practicable, or held at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, DC.

Attribution – Please cite the work as follows: World Bank (2021). Read@Home: Guide for Writers, Illustrators, and Designers of Books for Young Readers. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
Translations – If you create a translation of this work, please add the following disclaimer along with the attribution: This translation was not created by The World Bank and should not be considered an official World Bank translation. The World Bank shall not be liable for any content or error in this translation.
Adaptations – If you create an adaptation of this work, please add the following disclaimer along with the attribution: This is an adaptation of an original work by The World Bank. Views and opinions expressed in the adaptation are the sole responsibility of the author or authors of the adaptation and are not endorsed by The World Bank.

Third-party content – The World Bank does not necessarily own each component of the content contained within the work. The World Bank therefore does not warrant that the use of any third party-owned individual component or part contained in the work will not infringe on the rights of those third parties. The risk of claims resulting from such infringement rests solely with you. If you wish to reuse a component of the work, it is your responsibility to determine whether permission is needed for that reuse and to obtain permission from the copyright owner. Examples of components can include, but are not limited to, tables, figures, or images.
All queries on rights and licenses should be addressed to Marcela Gutierrez, The World Bank Group, 1818 H Street NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA; e-mail: mgutierrezb@worldbankgroup.org

Supported with funding from the Global Partnership for Education GPE

This guide was commissioned by the World Bank for the Read@Home project, and was written by Charles Temple, Ph.D. Lynn O'Rourke, publications specialist at CODE of Canada, contributed on the technical details of publishing, and Penelope Bender of the World Bank offered editorial suggestions. Thanks to both.

Earlier versions of the guide were developed with support from CODE of Canada, and from USAID and Chemonics International.
Many thanks to all three.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION iv

PART I: Learning to Read, and the Books That Support It 1

PART II: Genres of Books to Support Reading 9
- Concept Books 9
- Picture Books 12
- Wordless Picture Books 14
- Big Books 16
- Leveled Books 17
- Decodable Books 20
- Informational Books 21
- Transitional Books 24
- Chapter Books 25
- Readers' Theater Books 27
- Poetry Books For Choral Reading 28
- Read-Aloud Anthologies 30

PART III: Notes for Authors 32

Addressing Cross-Cutting Issues 34
- Quality Criteria for Manuscripts 35

PART IV: ON ILLUSTRATING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN 36
- Quality Criteria for Illustrations 39

PART V: MANANGING A PUBLISHING PROJECT 41
- Working with Authors 41
- Working with Illustrators 43
- Technical Aspects of Producing Books 44

Appendix A: Criteria for Book Levels 50

Appendix B: Further Resources 54

Appendix C: Inside Cover Notes to Parents 56

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook was created for the Read@Home project to help writers, illustrators, and designers create books for young children to share with their families at home. Of course, such books may be used in schools as well. In either case, these will be enjoyable books that children will want to read, so they will learn to love reading and develop the life-long habit of reading.

In schools, such books may be placed in school libraries for students to choose to read on their own. They may be collected in classroom sets and used for reading lessons. Especially in classrooms with many students, the texts may be bound together into longer anthologies to reduce the numbers of different copies to be distributed and stored. Such anthologies may have common themes, and may contain a careful mixture of texts from different genres.

What Good Children's Books Do

There are many good reasons why children need good books. The most salient reasons are that children's books--

- **Support reading.** Being a reader is as much a matter of interest and habit as it is of skill. Trade books---works of fiction and non-fiction, and poetry--- are generally more interesting to read than textbooks. They provide much-needed motivation and practice for reading. Textbooks rarely provide as many pages of connected text for children to read if they are to become skilled and habitual readers. Thus, while the books described here are often called "supplemental," they should be considered essential to children's development as literate people.

- **Stimulate the imagination and curiosity**—whether fictional or informational, books give children good and important things to think and wonder about. Because books are more participatory than television or films, they encourage children to think. Informational books can greatly extend the coverage of topics from the curriculum, and cover interesting topics that may not be included in the curriculum.

- **Expand children's awareness**— Even works of fiction can explain more about the reality of our own lives and the world around us than children are likely to learn otherwise.

- **Offer occasions to get to know other people**—when books realistically display events from human life, and when young people are encouraged and allowed to respond freely and honestly to them with other students, the books make interpretive communities of groups of people, and enable young people to understand each other's varying perspectives on life.

- **Provide a rich source of language**—whether they are written in a reader's first or second language, books are the richest source of vocabulary we have.

Who Can Write Good Books for Young People?

Some people believe that only a few very gifted people can write good books for children. Others believe that writing for children is trivially easy, not worthy of a serious person's efforts. Neither view is correct. Writing an excellent children's book is like writing an excellent book for adults—it's just that the scale is smaller. If writing were painting, children's books would be small paintings.

Undeniably, some degree of talent helps a person write or illustrate a children's book. But mostly, creating good books for children requires five things:

1. Reading as many children's books as you can of the kinds you intend to write or illustrate,
2. Some training,
3. A great deal of practice,
4. Helpful but critical responses from knowledgeable readers, and
5. Willingness to rewrite, and rewrite, and rewrite—and, if you are an artist, to revise your drawings, too.

PART I

LEARNING TO READ, AND THE BOOKS THAT SUPPORT IT

In the following section we discuss stages in the process of learning to read and aspects of reading ability. Those stages can be called emergent literacy, beginning reading, and beyond beginning reading. The aspects of reading ability are concepts about the purposes of reading and the natures of print, language awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. We also discuss the types of books that are most helpful at each stage of learning to read. The formats and genres we will explain here are concept books, picture books, wordless picture books, big books, leveled readers, decodable books, informational books, transitional books, chapter books, readers' theater texts, poems for choral reading, and read-aloud anthologies.

A Note On learning to read

Talking about learning to read with an audience drawn from different communities where different languages are spoken and written with different writing systems is admittedly an ambitious task, because different languages and writing systems may present different challenges to young readers. But we can say some things about learning to read that have been found generally true of all children.

Pre-readers

Pre-reading or emergent reading refers to the phase of learning that begins in early childhood and ends when children begin seriously studying to learn to read words.

Whether we call the earliest phase of literacy learning pre-reading or emergent reading, we know that at the very beginning children need to know what literacy is all about. Imagine for a moment that we were talking not about educating future readers and writers, but future drivers. And suppose those future drivers had never seen a car! They would need to know what a car is, and what it is used for. They should know that passengers sit in it so they can go from place to place, and that one spot in the car is reserved for the driver, who must coordinate different mechanisms to make the car go, travel safely, and stop. Only then will it make sense to the learner to introduce the steering wheel, the gearshift, the clutch, the throttle, and the brake pedal. Similarly, when we teach beginners how to read and write, we begin by demonstrating what people are doing when they read and write, why they do it, what is enjoyable about it, what written texts are, and some idea of how texts work. When children have a basic introduction to the nature and purposes of reading and writing, we then call their attention to the "parts." Among these parts are the idea that writing records speech. Children's words can be written down! And someone can read them back! Even much later! Writing uses words and language in ways that are different from speech, though. When we speak to each other, there is usually a context around us that makes clear what we are talking about. We can point to things and make gestures and facial expressions that make our meaning clear. The language we write, however, usually lacks those supports. Imagine that you are in a bedroom reading these words aloud to a child:

---

1 These genres and formats are widely used in the field of children's literature. See, for example, Temple, Martinez, and Yokota (2018). Children's Books in Children's Hands. New York: Pearson.

> *Iyemia was skinny and four and a half feet tall. She was fair with dark shaggy hair. She walked on her toes and bounced like springs. In her daily activities she ran more than she walked. Iyemia's mother was stout and tall. She tied a purple wrapper round her and had a brown head tie.*[2]

There is no Iyemia in your bedroom, and no mother with a purple wrapper around her (unless you happen to be wearing one). The child has only the words to guide her as she envisions those people. Children need much practice listening to texts real aloud to them, or stories told to them, to be able to use this "decontextualized" language to create scenes and understanding in their imaginations. The language of print differs in other ways from speech, too. Consider this passage:

> *Once upon a time a small boy named Hassan was happily walking with his mother through a deep, dark forest. Suddenly a large golden lion leapt right into their path.*
> *"Who are you? And where are you going?" asked the lion.*
> *Astonished, the mother replied, "We mean you no harm. Please leave us be."*

The passage is made up of words ("suddenly," "astonished," "replied") and structures ("asked the bear") that are rarely if ever used in speech, though they commonly occur in written language. Again, children will need considerable experience listening to such language to be comfortable with it.

While we are speaking of language, as children are oriented to reading, they need to become aware that their speech is made up of words. This fact is not obvious, because in everyday speech we run our words together without pauses between them. When a child is learning to read, though, she will need to be able to match spoken words in her head with printed units of words on the page. Then, especially after reading instruction begins, children may need to be able to break spoken words into syllables ("table" = ta + ble), and in some languages, break syllables down further into phonemes ("cat" = /k/ + /æ/ + /t/).

What do learners need to know about print? They need to know that books have covers, with pages inside. The pages are read in a certain order, depending on the writing system, front to back or back to front. Pictures on covers are a way to recognize a book that they like, as the book's title will soon become. The titles of books and the name of the author and usually the illustrator are found on book covers, too. Adults can point those out to children, both so they can later ask for the book, the author, or the illustrator by name, and so they will understand that somebody worked to produce the book.

---

[2] Brito, R. *Lanti sprinters.* PEN-Sierra Leone: TGEP, 2020.

When they look at a page in a book, their eyes will naturally be drawn to the picture, but the print is what they must read to access the words. Unlike talking about pictures, they should say exactly the same words each time they read the print. They should learn that print is arranged a certain way, depending on the writing system. Print in European languages is written from left to right, back to the left, and top to bottom. Arabic script is written right to left, back to the right, and top to bottom. (We say "back to the left" or "back to the right" because some ancient writing systems actually zigzagged across the page, and some children write that way, too, when they are first experimenting with writing[3]). Chinese characters, and writing systems derived from Chinese, are traditionally written in columns that are read from top to bottom and right to left; although they are sometimes written horizontally.

In alphabetic writing systems, words in print are clusters of letters with spaces between them. Words in those systems are made up of letters, and though to a young child there may seem to be a baffling number of them, especially since different fonts can the same letter look different,[4] each writing system has a fixed number of letters or characters. Letters in European writing systems, but not in some others, have two versions: upper and lower case. In alphabetic writing systems, letters relate to sounds in one way or another.

What kinds of books are best for pre-readers or emergent readers?

First, we should point out that children need to develop their language—their vocabulary, their knowledge of syntax, and their comprehension and meaning-making skills—even before they are first becoming acquainted with literacy. Listening to books read aloud is an enormously valuable source of vocabulary, syntax, and general knowledge. It has been demonstrated in English that nearly any written text, including preschool books, has a richer vocabulary than the conversations of college-educated adults, or the television programs they watch for entertainment.[5] Interacting with adults about a text they have

---

3 See Temple, C., Nathan, R. and Temple, C.F. (2018). *The beginnings of writing,* 4th edition).

4 See Clay, M. (1975). *What did I write?* Heinemann.

heard read aloud to them builds children's skills of comprehension, reasoning, and communication. Thus, children need books, including **anthologies**—collections of texts—to be read aloud to them, either in close personal encounters or via the radio or other media. **Picture books** are needed, too, especially since the pictures help children page through and retell the stories or recount the information themselves. Along the same lines, **wordless picture books** have no printed words, but they invite children, teachers, and caregivers to tell stories as they work through the highly evocative pictures to explain what is going on in them and create stories.

Early readers

Early readers are learners who are ready to be taught the "mechanics" of reading words. These "mechanics" include learning the letters of the alphabet or a beginning set of characters in their writing system. They include learning to recognize many words at sight, or as wholes, much as they learn to recognize people's faces. Having a store of words in their memories is important when leaners reach take on the next challenge: learning to decode: to relate written symbols to spoken sounds, and so they can recognize words they had not already memorized.

Concentrating on the fine details of the writing system may temporarily distract children from seeking the meaning of what they read, so their books should be meaningful and engaging to allow teachers to remind them of the main purpose of reading, which is to get ideas from print. It is important for adults to read aloud to early readers, too, because for years learners will better understand the language they hear compared to the language they read.[6] Even after children develop the pre-reading or emergent literacy concepts described above, they will need to continue to grow their vocabularies, their knowledge of syntax, and their knowledge of the world.

Once teaching focuses on the ways written letters or characters represent words or parts of words, it becomes harder to generalize a description of learning to read across languages and writing systems. Much of the research into learning to read has been conducted with English-speaking children. English uses an alphabet that relates not always reliably to speech sounds at the phoneme level. But because English spelling is "historically phonetic" (that is, words are spelled the way they were pronounced many centuries ago), and because the English language is an amalgamation of Germanic and Romance sources, English is said to have a "deep orthography"—a spelling system in which letter-to-sound correspondences face various detours. Spellings of English words become more predictable when the focus is on clusters of letters called phonogram patterns[7] or rimes,[8] such as

b + at, c + at, c + at; s + ight, r + ight, t +ight)

---

5 Hayes and Ahrens, cited in Studying the consequences of literacy within a literate society: the cognitive correlates of print exposure. Stanovich KE, Cunningham AE. *Memory and Cognition.* 1992 Jan;20 (1):51-68.

6 Loban, W. (1976). *Language development: Kindergarten through grade twelve.* NCTE Committee on Research Report No. 18. National Council of Teachers of English.

7 Wylie, R.E., and Durrell, D.D. (1970). Teaching vowels through phonograms. Elementary English. Vol. 47, No. 6 (October, 1970), pp. 787-791.

8 Treiman, R. (1985). Onsets and Rimes as Units of Spoken Syllables: Evidence from Children. Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, v39 n1 p161-81 Feb 1985.

Spanish and Kiswahili are said to have "shallow" or "transparent" orthographies, spelling systems in which most letters match only one sound and vice-versa. On the other hand, words in Spanish and Kiswahili are comprised of relatively few open syllables (consonant plus vowel), and teachers are attracted to the strategy of having students decode words by matching groups of letters to syllables, rather than by letters to phonemes, as is recommended in English. Some research suggests that stressing syllables rather than phonemes when teaching literacy in the Spanish language, at least, can be as effective as stressing phonemes, or more so.[9]

Some other important features of words beyond phonemes and syllables are represented by letters. Words in Bantu languages such as Kiswahili have noun-class systems. Words in many languages are composed of smaller meaningful parts called morphemes that determine the words' meanings; and in some "agglutinative" languages such as Armenian, many morphemes can be combined into a single word that conveys the same meaning that would require an entire sentence in other languages.

All that is to say that books that set out expressly to teach children to practice reading words may vary considerably from language to language.

What kinds of books are best for early readers?

Read-aloud books, including anthologies, should continue to be provided for early readers, as should picture books. Note that many picture books may contain words that beginners cannot yet read for themselves; still children can learn vocabulary and syntax and gain world knowledge from listening to such books read aloud, and they can enjoy paging through the books by themselves.

It is especially important that children have **leveled books**: these are carefully written on stair-steps of difficulty with strong patterns and high picture support so that children can practice reading them by themselves. Leveled books need not all be works of fiction. They can be informational as well. Criteria for texts written on different levels are found in **Appendix A** below.

In classroom teaching in some settings (generally where class sizes are small enough for all students to be able to see the print in a book being held by a teacher), big book versions of leveled books are helpful. These can be made by teachers themselves, or created by publishers.

Decodable books are made up of high concentrations of words that exercise aspects of word recognition that are being taught in school. In languages with alphabetic writing systems, these can be words that begin with the same letters, called **alliterative** books, or words that contain the same phonogram patterns, or other letters and sounds that children have been taught. In Spanish, Portuguese, or Kiswahili, they could be books with the same syllables (syllables children have learned during reading instruction) repeated often.

---

[9] Goldenberg, C., Tolar,T.D., Reese, L., Francis, D.J., Bazán, A.R., and Mejía-Arauz, R. (2014). How important is teaching phonemic awareness to children learning to read in Spanish? *American Educational Research Journal,* Vol. 51, No. 3 (June 2014), pp. 604-633.

Beyond Early Reading

Children who are successful early readers progress to independent reading and fluent reading.[10] These readers are learning to read longer words, including words composed of smaller meaningful parts called morphemes. They are learning to read longer sentences with more complicated syntax, including sentences with embedded phrases or clauses. They are learning to read fluently, which means they can read at a good pace, accurately, with intelligent phrasing, and with proper expression.[11] Children gain fluency by reading a great deal, and especially by practicing reading some of the same passages repeatedly. That is because reading one passage fluently transfers to reading other passages fluently, too.[12] Reading fluency correlates highly with comprehension, presumably because like anything else we do automatically, reading texts without having to think about identifying each word frees up attention for higher order thinking.[13] Though parents and teachers can help develop children's skills at comprehension by reading to them before they can read themselves, teachers of independent and fluent readers place more and more emphasis on teaching the skills of reading comprehension.

Comprehension has many aspects. It relies on having and activating background knowledge—the more students know, the more they can understand. Comprehension includes vocabulary, because words we know are building blocks of understanding: they store what we know, and they provide templates for understanding new things.[14] Comprehension involves perceiving main ideas and supporting details. It includes making inferences. It involves the ability to visualize what words suggest. It relies on our ability to follow the patterns and structures of texts--whether they be the plots of stories, the unfolding of an explanation, or the waging of an argument. It may involve understanding figurative language, and emotionally experiencing the evocative language of poetry. It may culminate in our ability to apply what we understand, or to innovate on those ideas to create something new.

Note that comprehending an informational text requires different kinds of thinking from following the plot of a story. Stories introduce characters in settings with problems that the characters make suspenseful and dramatic attempts to solve. Informational books use very different patterns: question and answer, cause and effect, true or false, chronological sequences, or arguments and reasons. They use language differently, too, such as the passive voice ("Climate change is caused by greenhouse gasses") and nominalizations ("precipitation" rather than "rain falling").

What kinds of books are best for independent and fluent readers?

Readers beyond beginners may have graduated from leveled books to what we call **transitional books:** books of a few dozen pages with several very short chapters and occasional illustrations. By the time they are fluent readers, they will be ready for **chapter books,** works of up to 80 pages or more with longer chapters and fewer illustrations.

---

10 The terms for the stages of learning to read are from The World Bank Group (2021), Read@Home Materials Guidance, p. 13..

11 Rasinski, T. (2010). *The fluent reader* (2nd edition). Scholastic.

12 LaBerge, D., & Samuels, S. J. (1974). Toward a Theory of Automatic Information Processing in Reading. *Cognitive Psychology, 6,* 293-323. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(74)90015-2

13 Perfetti, C. (1985). *Reading ability,* 2nd Edition). Oxford University Press.

14 Brown, R. (1968). *Words and things.* The Free Press.

Older students need to practice reading for fluency, too, and for that we should provide collections of **poems for choral reading,** and **readers' theater texts.**

While many adults enjoy reading fiction, most of the demands of adult life require reading and thinking about informational text. Students traditionally were taught to read only stories, but then they struggled to read and learn from textbooks in later grades. As a remedy for that problem, writers in many countries are now producing highly engaging informational books, for the youngest readers right up through secondary school, and teachers are balancing the reading of fiction, informational works, and poetry. **Informational book**s are not textbooks: students read them because they want to, not because they have to. The best informational books are designed to be engaging, attract students' attention, and to deepen content area knowledge that may or may not be addressed in textbooks.

Children with Special Needs

Children may have difficulty learning to read for many reasons, but one general point can be made about all of them: relatively simple learning problems experienced early in schooling, if not corrected, tend to compound into more serious and complex problems in later years. That is because early problems may cause children to avoid reading, and unless they practice their reading skills, they will not develop them normally, and will fall behind their peers and suffer frustration, and avoid reading even more. Through extensive practice, normally developing readers learn many words they can recognize automatically, gain skills at decoding words with more complex spelling patterns, learn hundreds of vocabulary words and more sophisticated syntax, acquire knowledge about the world that they need to understand more topics, and gain skills and strategies for comprehending many kinds of texts. A child who doesn't practice reading will likely show deficits in all these areas, when the original problem may have been much more limited, such as not learning letters, or not learning to decode simple words.[15]

What kinds of books are best for children with special learning needs? Children with special learning difficulties benefit from the same books normally developing readers enjoy, with some provisions.

For younger readers, these are books with

- few words per page
- high picture support (the illustrations show clearly what the words say)
- large print, with extra spaces between words—three letter spaces rather than a single space.
- simple, unembellished fonts (for example, Arial or Andika)
- short, familiar words
- highly patterned texts with many words repeated frequently
- decodable texts (texts with many words that use the same spelling patterns)

---

15 Stanovich, K.E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly,* Fall 1986 XXI/4; Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 1988. Vol. 80. No. 4,437-447.

For older readers, these are books with

- high interest (age-appropriate topics) but low reading levels (shorter and grammatically simple sentences, and shorter and more common words)
- some picture support
- slightly larger than normal fonts and extra spacing between words
- patterned texts
- decodable texts

Recommended for all struggling readers are texts that can be read aloud to them. Students who cannot easily read words can still gain vocabulary and other language skills, as well as knowledge of the world, from being read to.

Second Language Learners

Many students are schooled in languages they do not speak at home. While all students are challenged by vocabulary, sentence grammar, and text structures in books that are different from ordinary speech, second language learners must learn basic vocabulary and grammar in the second language as well.

What kinds of books are best for second language learners? **Concept books** for second language learners can contain pictures of common places, things, and activities grouped by themes and labeled with useful words. **Wordless picture books** invite readers to supply their own narration and can be useful when there is a reasonably competent speaker of the target language (the language that students are learning) available to provide words in the target language. **Picture books** can be read to second language learners and then they can page back through them and retell the story as best they can. **Leveled books,** especially those with strong patterns, can be designed to practice target language functions and structures, such as measuring, comparing, describing, and explaining.

Now that we have discussed the process of learning to read through different stages, let us turn to a closer look at the kinds of books that have been mentioned so far.

Note, too, that there is a discussion of selection criteria of books for children in Section I of the *Read@Home Guidebook.*

PART II

GENRES OF BOOKS TO SUPPORT READING

Children need different books as they are learning to read. The kinds of books can be called genres or types of writing that serve different purposes and have different structures. Books also differ according to the levels of the writing and illustrations: that is, the amount of challenge they pose to readers. In this guide we will be concerned with writing books in several different genres and on many different levels. The formats and genres we will explain in detail here are concept books, picture books, wordless picture books, big books, leveled readers, decodable books, informational books, transitional books, chapter books, readers' theater texts, poems for choral reading, and read-aloud anthologies. These types of books have proven helpful to children who are learning to read.

Concept Books

What are they?

Concept books are simply written, illustrated books that explain basic facts about the world with pictures and words. Concept books are short versions of informational books. They communicate much of their information through the illustrations, and they are limited to relatively few words on each page. Concept books for the younger children present basic orienting facts--like letters of the alphabet, numbers, colors, opposites, and feelings--in simple and straightforward ways. Those for not-so-young children can be more playful, or they may present more advanced concepts.

A simpler concept book on numbers, also called a counting book, may show one object, then two, then three, then four, and so on, with numbers written underneath the displays of objects. A simple book on alphabet letters may show one object at a time whose name begins the one letter that is printed near the object. Concept books for younger readers should present their ideas clearly and unambiguously.

Who are they for?

Concept books are meant for prereaders and early readers.

Why do children need them?

- They teach children that ideas and information can come from books.
- They engage curiosity and inquiry.
- They teach vocabulary.
- They teach classification, and school-oriented thinking.
- And, of course, they teach basic concepts.

---

16 These genres and formats are widely used in the field of children's literature. See, for example, Temple, Martinez, and Yokota (2018). *Children's Books in Children's Hands.* New York: Pearson.

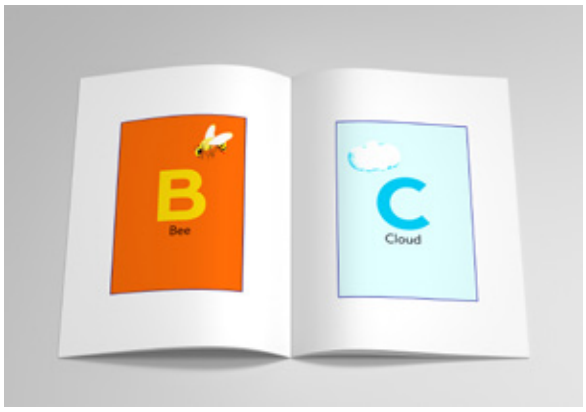
How Do You Prepare Them?

Concept books for younger children. Plan to introduce one idea per page, if possible. The illustration should clearly show what the text says, without showing other distracting information.

Some topics for writing concept books are:

Numbers—showing a number of objects on each page: one, then two, then three, and so on, with corresponding numerals on the page.

Letters of the alphabet—showing an object or group of objects whose names begin with the sound of one letter at a time, presented in alphabetical order.



Source: ABCD - A Nature Alphabet Book by Adrija Ghosh. © Pratham Books, 2020. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Colors, feelings, animals, and seasons of the year can be topics for the earliest concept books, too.

For their patterns, concept books may follow the logic of the topic: numerical order, alphabetical order, or the order of seasons of the year. They may also be written as rhymes.

Concept books for not-so-young children. Concept books for not-so-young readers are cognitively more challenging. Counting books may have pictures of objects to be counted, where the objects are slightly different from each other.

Source: Simple Counting is written by All Children Reading Cambodia. © The Asia Foundation , 2019. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Concept books for not-so-young readers may humorously portray one character who doesn't know how to count and another character who corrects him.

Source: ABCD - A Nature Alphabet Book by Adrija Ghosh. © Pratham Books , 2020. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Concept books for not-so-young readers may take on more advanced subjects, too, such as jobs, sports, food, houses around the world, community helpers, or landscapes. These books may present their topics in a logically-organized manner. For example, a book on jobs can present work people do by category: making or building things, producing and preparing food, helping professions, volunteering, and so on. The organization of the information into categories is an important feature of concept books, because it introduces young readers to the cognitive process of classifying.

Other concept books for not-so-young readers can show the steps in a process. Such books might work forward or backwards. For example, a book may show someone growing flax plants, then extracing linen fibers from the plants, then twisting fibers into thread, then weaving threads into cloth, then cutting and sewing cloth to make a shirt. Or it may work backwards, showing a shirt, then cutting and sewing, then weaving cloth, then twisting fibers into thread, then extracting fibers from flax, and ending with growing flax plants.

Alphabet books. Showing things that begin with each letter organizes alphabet books. Alphabet books may be themed, but don't have to be. It is more important that each picture clearly suggests a word that the child reader will associate with the object in the picture.

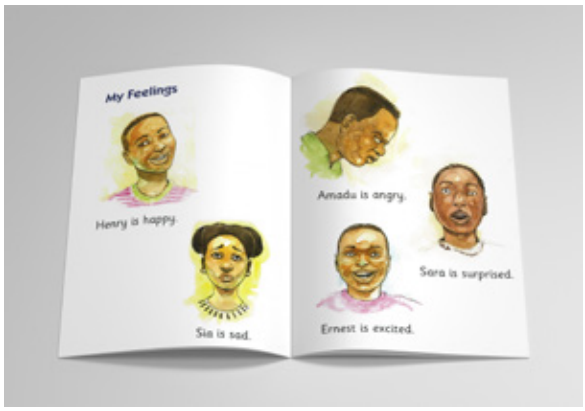
Alphabet books may show upper-case and lower-case letters.

Counting Books. Counting books usually show one to ten items with the numerals underneath. You may also write the number words ("one," "two," "three").

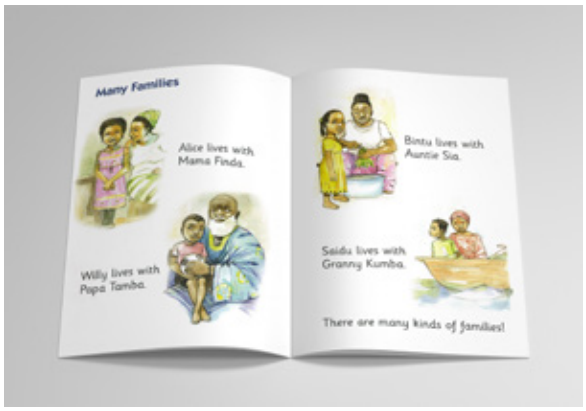
The lowest level counting books show the number with a picture of the corresponding number of objects.

More challenging counting books may show the number, then a picture of the corresponding number of objects that look slightly different from each other.

Source: Simple Counting by All Children Reading Cambodia. © The Asia Foundation, 2019. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.



Source: Sia and Friends, Book 1. CODE, 2019.



Source: Sia and Friends, Book 1. CODE, 2019.

Books About Opposites. These books show pairs of objects that are opposites: tall and short, heavy and light, hot and cold, thin and fat. In some languages, the comparisons invite rhyming. Books about opposites are especially useful for teaching vocabulary to second language learners.

Books about feelings and moods. Children need to know words for feelings so they can understand their feelings and those of others.

Other topics for concept books: colors, shapes, family members, foods, animals, jobs in the community, modes of transportation, and other basic topics are good fare for concept books.

How many pages are required? Concept book are usually 8, 16, or 24 pages long, but the manuscripts may be one type-written page or less.

Picture Books

What are they?

Picture books are usually 24, 32, or 48-page illustrated books, having at least one picture per page or double-page spread. A picture book is really a format rather than a genre, because just about any kind of text can be used in a picture book: information, fiction, or poetry.

In contrast to leveled books (see below), picture books may be written for adults to read to children as well as for children to read to themselves, so their vocabulary and story lines can be rich and challenging for children.

Source: Watch Out! The Tiger is Here!, by Sejal Mehta. © Pratham Books, 2017. Some rights reserved. Released under CC BY 4.0 license.

Picture books often feature an interesting interplay between text and pictures. For example, a picture may show a character's emotions, and otherwise illustrate things a text does not mention.

Who are they for?

Picture books are meant for children who are emergent, early, and later readers. They may be read aloud to emergent and beginning readers, and later reread or "pretend-read" by those readers themselves. Readers beyond the early stage may read picture books without support.

Why do children need them?

- To make learning to read attractive and enjoyable;
- To present stories, information or poetry;
- To teach vocabulary;
- To help children gain the habit of reading and invite them into the "culture of reading."

How Do You Prepare Them?

Texts for picture books can be prepared in a great number of ways. Suggestions to help write narrative picture books are found throughout this guide. For informational books, many of the suggestions under "Informational Books" below can be used. Whatever genre or topic is used, the text should be written with a strong pattern or plot that engages the reader from the first page and pulls her through the book to the end. In fictional works, the pattern can guide children to make predictions, but it should also provide a "twist" toward the end: a surprise that was not anticipated, that may sum up the meaning of the story. Picture books are like movies. The text and picture presentations and page turns hook readers' interest from the beginning, and pull them through the book page by page, just as a movie engages viewers from the beginning and keeps them watching attentively scene by scene. Writers of picture books should think visually, too: imagining the readers' path through the book scene by scene as you create the text. In terms of their illustrations and design, picture books can engage readers by posing an implicit question on one page and resolving it on the overleaf. Another way of engaging readers is by setting up an ironic contradiction between the text and the pictures. Working such engaging features into books requires

close coordination between the text and the illustrations. Some of the best picture books are written and illustrated by the same person. But many good ones are created by different people, often with a skillful editor as the go-between.

How many pages are required? Picture books are usually 16, 24, or 32 pages long, but the manuscripts may be one or two type-written pages.

What are the special challenges of writing picture books?

Texts for picture books must be economical: writers are challenged to express the most information (characterization, actions, moods, relationships, and theme) in few words. Because the illustrations take up much of the page, a manuscript of only two typewritten pages can fill a 32-page book. Authors must write several drafts of a picture book manuscript, first to get the ideas out on paper, then to refine them again and again until the ideas are expressed with the clearest expression in the fewest and most vivid words.

One more challenge is to set up a pattern to the plot of a story that will engage readers and invite their predictions, but to add a surprise toward the end—otherwise, if the reader can accurately predict the ending as soon as she or he perceives the pattern, the book may be boring.

Another challenge for the authors of picture books is to think visually. How will the words march scene by scene through the pages of the book? The final design will be made by the designer and illustrator, but it helps if the author visualizes what the book will look like. Guidelines for layouts for different numbers of pages are found below in Part IV of this guide.

Wordless Picture Books

What are they?

Wordless picture books have pages of illustrations that demonstrate actions and evoke explanations from the reader in her or his own words. Some wordless picture books tell a story through pictures.

Source: Lost Toy by Sam Beckbessinger. Book Dash. Some rights reserved. This book is CC¬-BY¬-4.0 licensed.

Other wordless picture books contain page after page of busy scenes arranged by a theme: a classroom, a village market, a health clinic, a family at home, or a community scene.

A (nearly) wordless picture with lots to talk about. Source: Alan N. Crawford, Ph.D. (Used by Permission).

Who are they for?

Wordless picture books are meant for children from the emergent through the beginning reading stage and beyond. They are especially useful for second language learners.

Why do children need them?

- To practice using language that is relevant to different contexts and situations (for example, features and routines in a classroom, shopping at a market, mealtime at home, play and sports, travel and transportation, etc.)
- To help children realize they can get meaning from texts.

How Do You Prepare Them?

Wordless picture books may be created by illustrators working alone, or a writer may make suggestions for the illustrator to draw. To prepare a narrative wordless picture book, choose a series of events that introduce characters in a setting, present a problem, and show several events leading up to a solution. The characters should be recognizable throughout, and objects that child readers will name and talk about should be drawn clearly. Show emotional reactions on characters' faces.

To prepare thematic wordless picture books, choose a series of settings for child readers to talk about. An illustration can show one setting with different characters and many actions happening. The characters can show emotional reactions on their faces. Each page or double page spread should show a different

setting. Some of the same characters—preferably including a girl and a boy of the age of the readers--may appear in each scene.

How many pages are required? Wordless picture books are usually 8, 16, or 24 pages long.

What are the special challenges of writing wordless picture books?

The illustrator does most of the work in producing a wordless picture book, but the scenes may be well planned by a writer to include the topics and vocabulary that children need to learn.

Narrative wordless picture books must show recognizable actions and the reasons for them. For example, if a character wants something, it needs to be obvious from the scene why she or he wants it.

In thematic wordless picture books, the drawings may be "busy," with many things being shown on the same page, without being cluttered and confusing. Illustrators should draw scenes, characters, and important objects carefully—in suitable sizes and distinct from backgrounds so they will be recognizable. Humorous subtle features might be included, such as a pet pulling on a tablecloth in a dinner scene, or a police officer losing a shoe in a community scene. Characters' faces should show emotional reactions to actions.

Big Books

What are they?

Big books are picture books in a very large format—up to a meter tall. Big books may contain any one of many kinds of texts: information, fiction, or poetry. Big books are meant for a teacher and students to read together, so they are written at or near most children's reading levels. The type size is large enough to be read by a whole class of students, or a group of students seated near the book.

Who are they for?

- Children who are emergent and beginning readers, in classes small enough and with enough light for all children to see the book if the teacher is at the front of the class.

Why do children need them?

- To show children how print is arrayed on the page and other concepts about print.
- To have children participate in a group reading experience.

How Do You Prepare Them?

Big books are prepared the same way as picture books. The main requirement is that they can have

Tanzania: A boy enjoys a big book nearly his size. Normally big books are read with groups of children. Photo by Eliza Powell, courtesy of CODE (www.CODE.ngo).

only one or two lines of print per page, because the print must be large enough so that children can see the letters clearly from several meters away. Some books may be published in two versions: as picture books and big books. Pairing big books and "little books" is valuable in the classroom and can work even with larger classes, because the teacher can teach a reading lesson to the class with the big book and have children practice reading on their own with the little books.

How many pages are required? Big books require the same numbers of pages as picture books: usually 16, 24, or 32 pages long, but the manuscripts may be one or two type-written pages.

Leveled Books

What are they?

Leveled books—also called "easy reading books" --are short, simply-written but interesting books that beginning readers can read by themselves, with some support from an adult. Level books are written on several graduated levels of difficulty, from very simple to more complex and illustrated with pictures that directly support the text. The simplest books can be read by children from the very first days of school if teachers introduce them properly. Leveled readers for the emergent and beginning readers normally run eight or sixteen pages. If they are eight pages, they may be distributed as reproducible books—that is, books that are printed on two sheets of A4 paper printed on both sides and folded and stapled to make a book.

Liberia and Sierra Leone: Locally written and illustrated leveled books from Reading-Liberia and Reading Sierra Leone. Courtesy of CODE of Canada (www.CODE.ngo).

Who are they for?

- Children in who are prereaders/emergent readers and beginning readers.
- Any older children who need easier reading material.
- Children whose thinking is advanced beyond their limited ability to read.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To become readers as early as possible.
- To make learning to read enjoyable and attractive.
- To practice the reading skills that they are learning in class in the context of authentic reading matter.
- To give children appropriate support and challenge as their reading skills advance through the early stages.

How Do You Prepare Them?

Creating a leveled reader for the youngest students must be approached with great care, so the book will be simple but not simple-minded. Imagine that the reader is an intelligent person who can read very few words at first, and then gradually read more and more words until she or he becomes a fluent reader.

Much of the information will be conveyed by the illustrations, so those should be carefully drawn to support the meaning on each page. Illustrations may convey more than the words do. For example, pictures of facial expressions may show a character's feelings or reactions to events, so the text doesn't have to.

Early leveled books rely heavily on patterns, and repeated words or phrases. You may--

- plan a simple but meaningful sequence of objects, actions, or motions, leading to an interesting conclusion,
- create a very simple plot, or
- show a series of contrasts, such as describing words or feelings.
- Repeat key words frequently. For example, "Do you want ___?' "No thanks." "Do you want ____?" "No, thanks." "Do you want ___?" "Yes, please!"

The pattern should be strictly followed through the whole book. It usually works to end with an interesting twist or surprise.

Consider writing a series of books about a character or a pair of characters. There may be one character who does surprising or silly things, or a wise character and a silly one.

Some Examples of Texts for Leveled Books

1

One dog
Two cats
Three pigs
Four goats.
Five Sheep.
Six cows.
Seven hens.
A farmyard!

2

My dog wakes.
My dog jumps.
My dog runs.
My dog plays.
My dog eats.
My dog cuddles.
My dog sleeps.
Goodnight, dog!

3

Adama brushes her teeth,
but Abu eats candy.
Adama washes her hands,
but Abu plays with mud.
Adama washes her socks,
but Abu wears dirty socks.
Adama smells clean,
but Abu smells bad.
Adama combs her hair,
but Abu hair is messy.
Bintu is having a party.
Whom will she invite?

4

On a dark, dark night,
was a dark, dark road.
Down the dark, dark road,
there were dark, dark woods.
In the dark, dark woods,
was a dark, dark house.
On the dark, dark house,
was a dark, dark veranda.
By the dark, dark veranda,
was a dark, dark, door.
In the dark, dark door,
was a dark, dark hall.
In the dark, dark hall,
there were dark, dark stairs.
Up the dark, dark stairs,
was a dark, dark room.
In the dark, dark room
was a bright, bright cake.
Around the bright, bright cake,
There were candles and friends.
SURPRISE! HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

4

On Monday morning, the czar came to see me.
But I wasn't home.
On Tuesday morning, the czar and the czarina came to see me.
But I wasn't home.
On Wednesday, the czar, the czarina, and the duchess came to see me.
But I wasn't home.
On Thursday, the czar, the czarina, the duchess, and the duke came to see me.
But I wasn't home.
On Friday, the czar, the czarina, the duchess, the duke, and two princesses came to see me.
But I wasn't home.
On Saturday the czar, the czarina, the duchess, the duke, two princesses, and four princes came to see me.
I was home, so we had a party![17]

How many pages are required? Leveled books are usually 8, 16, 24, or 32 pages long, but the manuscripts may be one to three type-written pages.

What Are Reading Levels, and How Do You Write to Them?

Reading levels, or text readability, refers to the level of challenge that a text presents to readers. Reading levels are determined in two ways. Quantitative measures focus on the sophistication of the vocabulary and the complexity of the syntax. For some languages, programs or formulas have been created that measure quantitative challenges reliably, by comparing the words in the text and the length of the sentences to grade level norms. Words are usually rated by counting their syllables[18] or by using a computer program that compares each word to a large, leveled dictionary.[19] The number of words in the sentences serves as an index of their grammatical complexity (longer sentences normally contain embedded clauses and phrases, which make them more challenging to read), and together with word measures this number is compared to grade-leveled norms to arrive at a reading level estimate.

Readability formulas and programs have been prepared for few languages in the world, and the principles we just described often do not work well in some languages, especially at the word level. Writers are advised to use general guidelines presented below.

General guidelines of reading levels are presented here. More readable texts have:

- More familiar words, and usually (but not always) words with fewer letters and syllables ("be glad about" rather than "appreciate"), and concrete words ("house, "cottage," "hut") rather than abstract words ("dwelling," "abode," "domicile").
- Simple sentences ("Mice like cheese") rather than longer ones with complex grammar ("Cheese is the preferred food of mice").

---

17 Credit for the pattern is due to Uri Shulevitz for *One Monday Morning*.

18 The Fry Readability Graph is commonly used in English. See https://readable.com/readability/fry-readability-graph.

19 The Lexile system is widely used for measuring the readability of texts in English and Spanish. See https://Lexile.com.

- Highly patterned texts with many words repeated frequently.
- Familiar topics.
- Picture support for the text.
- Large print.
- Extra space between words
- Few words per page.
- Few pages per book; or books made up of several short sections.

(See Appendix A for more detailed guidance for writing on different levels).

What Are the Special Challenges of Writing Leveled Readers?

Like picture books only more so, leveled readers are written with great economy. It will take several drafts of a manuscripts to achieve that economy. Writers should pay close attention to the leveling criteria in Appendix A in preparing the text, and also carefully plan the ways the illustrations can support the meaning of the text.

Decodable Books

What Are They?

Decodable books are short books or collections of texts that stress the letters, letter-to-sound patterns, and other features of words that children are learning in their reading instruction. Decodable books have high concentrations of such words, so children may practice reading words with those patterns in meaningful contexts.

Who Are They For?

- Children who are beginning readers.
- Any older children who need extra attention to patterns and features of words.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To practice reading words with the patterns and features they are learning in class.

How Do You Prepare Them?

The first step is to identify the sequence of skills in reading patterns of words that are being taught to beginning readers in school. Such patterns vary by language. In most alphabetic languages, children are first taught to match individual letters to individual sounds. In English, students are taught to match the letter c to the sound /k/, a to the sound /æ/, and t to the sound /t/ in cat. They may then be taught to match clusters of letters to parts of syllables called phonograms. In English, a phonogram is the -at in cat, and that phonogram also appears in bat, hat, sat, fat, and mat. In languages that build many words from relatively few syllables such as Spanish and Kiswahili, children may be taught to read words with a few syllables repeated many times. In Spanish, for example, children typically practice reading "Mi mama me mima." Teachers of reading in some languages may stress words with the same grammatical morphemes. In Kiswahili, tu- means "we" and na- indicates the present tense of the verbs, as in Tunacheza. Tunakula. Tunalala ("We play. We eat. We sleep").

Once you have chosen patterns to use, now create a meaningful text with a high concentration of words that include those features. The text on each page should be well supported by the illustration.

Source: Sia and Friends, Book 1. CODE, 2019.

Texts for decodable books may be **alliterative**—a series of sentences with words that begin with the same letter and sound (In English, an example is "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers"). Or decodable texts can be short stories, or even short informational articles. One book may contain a combination of different kinds of texts. At the lowest levels, each book should feature just a few spelling patterns. Later books can include several spelling patterns.

What Are the Special Challenges of Writing Decodable Books?

The biggest challenge of writing decodable books is making the language meaningful, natural, clever, or all three—even while the main purpose is to have children practice reading certain letters and sounds and/or spelling patterns in words.

Informational Books

What Are They?

Informational or nonfiction books present information in attractive and engaging ways for children's reading. Their topics are limitless, though unlike textbooks, each book is usually limited to one topic. Informational books are creative and colorful. Their purpose is not only to present information, but to guide readers' inquiry—to teach children how to learn from reading.

Who Are They For?

- Emergent readers through fluent independent readers.

Why Do Children Need Them?

Children are typically taught to read using works of fiction, but in later schooling and in later life, readers mostly read to get information. There are important differences between texts with engaging characters and plots that are meant to be enjoyed, and texts that use classification patterns, argumentation, and explanations to present information. Those differences can present challenges to children. The problems usually occur after a few years of schooling, when the tasks of reading can shift abruptly from fiction (which children have been taught to read) to informational text (which they haven't). To avoid this problem, in addition to reading fiction and poetry, children should learn to read for information as they are first learning to read. The task for writers of informational text is to make those books as engaging to read as fiction.

Informational texts are needed--

- To acquaint readers with the vocabulary and structures of informational texts.
- To elaborate on information learned from classroom instruction and textbooks.
- To expand students' knowledge of and cultivate their curiosity about other topics besides those in

the school curriculum.
- To teach children to enjoy gaining information from books.

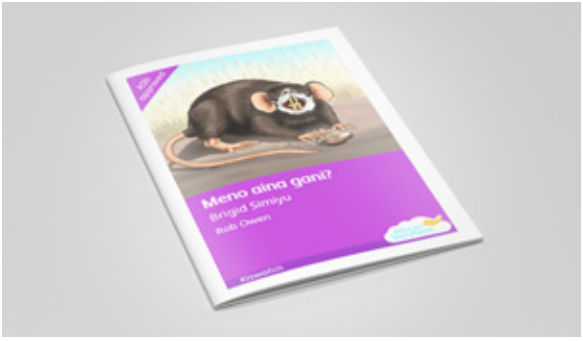
How Do You Prepare Them?

- There are several requirements to keep in mind as you write supplemental readers.
- Write to interest the readers: Be lively!
- Guide the readers' inquiry: arouse their curiosity and then satisfy it; pose questions, and then answer them.
- Be selective with your coverage—don't overwhelm the young reader.
- Use topics from the curriculum, but approach them more expansively and in more engaging ways than textbooks do.
- Write books that cultivate the readers' interests in topics beyond the curriculum, too.
- Be accurate—check your facts scrupulously!
- You may include short texts for "pop-ups" or boxed inserts on some pages.
- Organize the presentation logically, with a main topic and subtopics.

Once you have chosen your topic, researched it, and collected essential information that will be of interest to children in your target age group, choose to write to a pattern. Here are some examples, though there are many more possibilities:

- **A fictional framework.** Some series books use fictional characters and an invented device to engage readers as they share factual content. The characters might be a classroom of children of about the same age as the readers, whose teacher takes them on trips aboard a magical vehicle that can go anywhere: deep into the earth, to the floor of the ocean, into outer space, and even (when shrunk to a microscopic size) inside the human body.[20] Such books could be used to explore topics from science or geography. Another magical device might be a means to transport fictional characters to different places and times, as a means to explore topics from history and culture.[21]

Focus on small features.
- Books like Meno Aina Gani? ("What kinds of teeth?") focus on one interesting feature of animals, such as how different kinds of teeth are best suited to their lives.



Source: Meno Aina Gani? Zanele Buthelezi, Thembani Dladla and Clare Verbeek, Author. Brigid Simiyu Illustration - Rob Owen Language - Kiswahili Level - First words © School of Education and Development (Ukzn) and African Storybook Initiative 2007 Creative Commons: Attribution 3.0 Source www.africanstorybook.org. Original source www.akdn.org

---

20 This refers to Joanna Cole's popular series, *The Magic School Bus,* illustrated by Bruce Deegan.

21 Here we are referring to *The Magic Treehouse* books, by Mary Pope Osborne.

Designs are important in such books. A book entitled, *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* shows on the right-hand page a picture of just the tail of an animal, insect, or bird, without showing the whole body. The print asks, "What do you do with a tail like this?" The reader is led to wonder not only what the purpose of the tail is, but to what creature it is attached. The readers turns the page and the whole creature is revealed, and the author explains how the tail functions in the creature's life.

- **Questions and answers.** Question-and-answer books treat topics from the sciences, or history, or geography, or health, by posing the kinds of questions about the topic that a child might ask, and then providing elaborate answers. A particularly engaging question is chosen as the title of the book: for instance, "Do whales have belly buttons?"[23] Designs are important in such books, too. The question is written on the right-hand page, and the answer is given in large print on the overleaf. There follows a detailed.

- **True or False?** True-or-false books chooses a topic from life science, health, geography, weather, etc. They makes statements about a topic and then asks the readers if those statements are true or false. On one right-hand page comes a statement about a topic that may be true or false. Below the statement is the question, "True or False?" On the overleaf, the answer is given in big letters, followed by more information about the answer in smaller print.

- **Where do things come from?** Choose a topic: a shirt, bread, electricity, water, etc. At the beginning a child asks, "Where does___ come from?" A teacher or parent or wise neighbor guides the child back step by step to the origin of the thing, including the work that goes into preparing it at each stage.

- **Food, clothes, or housing around the world.** Choose a topic that cuts across disciplines. The different kinds of clothes people around the world wear, for example, can teach about geography, cultures, and the environment, at the same time promoting understanding of far-flung people.

- **A day in the life.** Make a list of community helpers and other people children may see day-to-day in their communities: a market seller, a policewoman, a fisherman, a medical doctor, a teacher, a motorcycle taxi driver. Choose one and interview this person to find out exactly what she or he does all day. What is especially challenging about this line of work? What is especially rewarding? The text may be written up in a question-and-answer format.

- **Biographies.** Think of interesting people in your country or your community who can serve as role models for children. Think of questions you can ask them to draw out their stories. Be sure to press for details, that will add color to the texts. Especially useful are stories of women and other people who overcame hardships to reach success.

- **Straightforward informational books.** The patterns for informational books laid out above are all interactive: they raise questions before presenting answers. But "straightforward" informational books that simply present information can also be written for children. They have several features that make them child-friendly. They focus on a narrow topic, or they address a topic from an unusual angle. For example, they might focus on houses around the world, or bread, or jobs on a farm. They are logically organized. They typically set out a main topic, then present sub-categories of the

---

22 Steve Jenkins, *What do You Do With a Tail Like This?* Clarion, 2009.

main topic, then share examples of each subcategory. They may have features more common to informational books for mature readers, such as a table of contents, and index, or a (picture) glossary.

How many pages are required? Informational books vary from 16 to 32 pages or longer. The manuscripts may range from a few pages up to 64.

What Are the Special Challenges of Writing Informational Books?

Consider your audience. Children read textbooks because they are required to. The audience for informational readers is different. Readers may be attracted by an exciting cover. On the first inside page, the text must arouse their curiosity about then topic, and then entice readers to want to find out more, page after page to the end. Thus, writers, illustrators, and designers should have a plan to attract readers to a book, and guide their inquiry through the whole work.

There are many strategies authors can use for guiding children's inquiry, and they are described later in this guide. A general recommendation is to arrange the presentation much the way a curious person would investigate a new topic, by arranging the information logically and sensibly into main topics and subtopics. In this way the writing not only guides readers' inquiry, but also teaches readers the thought processes that educated people use.

The final task is to make sure all the information is accurate. Both writers and illustrators should check their presentations of facts against reliable sources.

Transitional Books

What Are They?

Transitional books are scaled-down versions of chapter books (see below). They run from 40 to 60 book pages in length, with short chapters of three-to six pages, and two or three line-drawn illustrations per chapter. Because transitional books are meant to be read by children who have learned to read but still find it taxing to read an extended work, the books are meant to be read in several sittings. Each short chapter reaches a provisional ending, which may present a question or pose a mystery that motivates the young reader to continue reading later. Transitional books may be fiction or informational.

Who Are They For?

- Readers beyond the beginning reading stage.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To provide an enjoyable reading experience so children will practice reading.
- To support readers as they begin reading longer works.

---

23 Here we are referring to a book by Melvin Berger.

How Do You Prepare Them?

The task of writing a transitional reader is similar to writing a chapter book, except the plot is simpler and the length is shorter. If the transitional book is a work of fiction,

- In the first chapter, introduce a setting and a character whom the reader will care about.
- Give that character a problem to solve or a situation to resolve that will continue through the whole work.
- Create a series of episodes that unfold in single chapters or clusters of chapters.
- Build up to a climax near the end of the book.
- Resolve the problem in a short final chapter.

If the transitional book is to be informational, a question-and-answer format or "If you lived in the time of..." format can be used, among many other possibilities.

Consider writing a series of fictional transitional readers about the same character or characters, or a series on informational transitional readers using the same format. Once children enjoy the first book, they will be motivated to read others in the series.

How many pages are required? Transitional books are usually 40 to 64 pages long, and the manuscripts may be 25 to 40 type-written pages.

Chapter Books

What Are They?

Chapter books are longer works with longer chapters and more complex plots than transitional books. They usually do not have illustrations beside the cover. They range from 64 to 72 book pages in length.

Who Are They For?

- Fluent readers.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To provide an enjoyable reading experience
- To support readers in reading longer works.
- To expand their knowledge, or increase their understanding of and empathy for other people in situations like or unlike their own.

How Do You Prepare Them?

When we write books for children from age 10 and upwards, it is important to explore the inner lives of the characters. It is a psychological universal (according to the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget), that at around that age children's brains rapidly grow in sophistication that enables them to practice self-reflection. Pre-adolescent children delight in this new-found "celebration of awareness." Also, children at this age are approaching the time when they must identify their roles in society. And as developmental psychologists point out, forming an identity (especially a social and vocational one) requires that children

actively think about who they are and who they want to be, rather than passively adopting roles that adults have carved out for them.

Successful books for pre-adolescent children are written with children's expanding self-awareness and their questioning of their identity in mind.

As for their structures, many chapter books have plots that can be summarized like this:

- They begin by introducing characters in a setting. The setting is a certain place in a certain time, and it also may have social and cultural dimensions.
- One character is the protagonist, the person whose needs drive the story forward. There may be other characters as well, such as a companion or helper, and an antagonist, a person or other force that works against the protagonist as she or he pursues the goal.
- There is an initiating event which leaves the protagonist with a need and a goal which will be sought during the story.
- Seeking the goal leads to a series of episodes.
- There is rising action where the tension is greater and greater. In the early chapters, the protagonist may appear overwhelmed by the problem, a victim of circumstance. Midway through the book, she or he formulates plans and takes on the role of agent rather than victim.
- There is a climax, in which the tension is highest and the outcome most in doubt.
- Finally, there is a resolution, in which the protagonist's need is met or not met, and a new situation results.

General Suggestions for Writing Children's Fiction

1. SHOW, DON'T TELL	Relate the story scene by scene and action by action. Using dialogue can make a scene more vivid.
2. GET GOING	Make it clear what the story is about right away.
3. MAKE THE PLOT FLOW FROM YOUR CHARACTER'S NEEDS	Make the plot flow from your character's needs. Your main character should be the same age as the reader, in most cases.
4. LET THE CHILD PROTAGONIST SOLVE THE PROBLEM	Let the child protagonist solve the problem. Seeing examples of children their own age solving problems empowers young readers.
5. FIND A PATTERN, AND STICK TO IT	Find a pattern, and stick to it. But add a twist! If the book is too predictable, it will be boring.
6. WRITE IN A GENRE	If you are writing realistic fiction, don't resort to magical solutions.

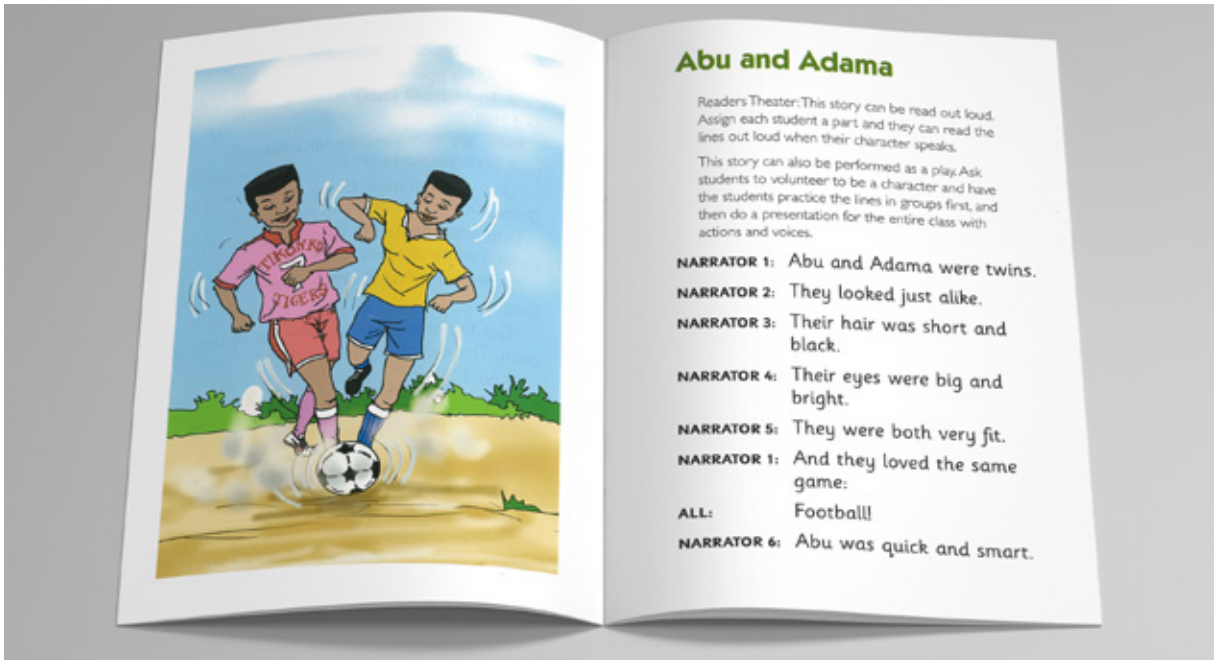
7. TRUST YOUR READER	Don't explain everything. Leave room for readers to make inferences.
8. TELL THE TRUTH	Even in fiction, offer solutions to problems that can work in real life.
9. BE INCLUSIVE	Put girls in lead roles as often as boys. People who have disabilities are nearly one sixth of the world's population, so include characters with disabilities, too. Professional people who appear in stories—medical staff, police officers, and head teachers—should be women as often as men, and also people with disabilities.
10. SAY SOMETHING, BUT DON'T PREACH	Make the story "a slice of life" from which children can learn. Concentrate on writing a good story rather than teaching a moral message. The reader can infer a lesson from your story, if it is a good story.

How many pages are required? Chapter books may be 64-72 pages long, and the manuscripts may be 40 to 60 type-written pages.

Reader's Theater Books

What Are They?

Helping children read fluently is an important part of literacy instruction. Research shows that practice reading the same text repeatedly helps children become fluent readers. Performing a readers' theater presentation requires that children read their parts many times to read accurately, at a natural rate, with appropriate expression. Readers' theater books are texts, usually stories, written like scripts to a play. A readers' theater book usually contains several short stories. It need not have illustrations.



Source: Sia and Friends, Book 3. CODE, 2019.

Who Are They For?

- Readers beyond the beginning reading stage.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To practice reading for fluency.
- To practice reading expressively.
- To have an enjoyable social experience while reading.

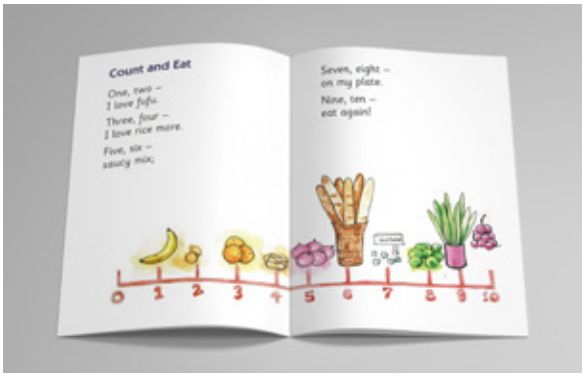
How Do You Prepare Them?

- Develop a short story with several parts for speakers.
- Divide up passages in which there is no dialogue into short sections (a line or two) to be read by different narrators.
- Decide how many speakers' parts to include.
- Put each speaker's role in bold type by the left-hand margin.
- Characters should be identified by name.
- Narrators are labeled Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, etc.
- Delete "he said" or "she said," wherever the speaker's identity is clear from the context.

How many pages are required? Readers' Theater books may be 8 to 32 pages long, and the manuscripts may be four to twenty type-written pages.

Poetry Books For Choral Reading

What Are They?



Source: Sia and Friends. Book 2. CODE, 2019.

Poetry books for choral reading may take the form of picture books, big books, or reproducible books. Books of poetry are useful for children learning to read for many reasons. Poets will say their poems are valuable because they invite readers to look closely at the world and perceive things clearly and in new ways. They also foster a delight in language. These claims are certainly true. But poems are highly valuable for another reason—poems provide wonderful opportunities for choral reading, which is a rich and enjoyable method for children to develop fluency as readers, so long as adults are careful to use strategies to make sure all the children actually read, and not just mumble along as others read.

When children are asked what poems they like most, the answers are poems that rhyme and have rhythm, poems that have humor, and poems that tell stories.

Who Are They For?

- Readers in the independent and fluent stages.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To practice reading for fluency.
- To practice reading expressively.

How Do You Prepare Them?

- **Chantable Poems from Folk Songs.** A good source of poems for chanting is folk songs. You can make a poetry book by writing down a folk song verbatim.

- Alternatively, you can write an original poem based on the pattern of a folk song. Choose a highly patterned folk song and fit your own ideas into it. Folk songs often have choruses—lines that are repeated. Choruses are good to have in poems for young readers, too, since repeated words make the texts easier to read.

- **Dialogue Poems.** Choose or write poems that can easily be read in parts, such as dialogue poems or poems with repeated phrases. In dialogue poems there are two narrators, and they take turns speaking lines. Dialogue Poems are conversations between two distinct characters. Characters might be a goat herd and a goat, a market seller and a sting customer, a child and a bird, etc. The poems have this form (Note that every other line is indented, to show who is speaking):

First character's line
Second character's line
First character's line
Second character's line
First character's line
Second character's line
First character's line
Second character's line
Concluding line (spoken by both characters)

- **"I used to … but now …" poems** (the narrator names one thing at a time she used to do, think, or be earlier in life and contrasts it with something she does, thinks, or is now); Right now I… but some day… poems (On one line the narrator says one thing about her current situation, and on the next line she says what she aspires to in the future).

How many pages are required? Poetry books may be 16-32 pages long, and the manuscripts may be two to six type-written pages.

Read-aloud Anthologies

Sierra Leone: A father prepares to read from an anthology to his children. Photo by Stephen Douglas. Courtesy of CODE of Canada (www.CODE.ngo)

What Are They?

- Read-aloud anthologies are collections of stories, informational texts, and poems that are meant to be read aloud to children by their teachers or parents. They may be collected together as anthologies. If read-aloud anthologies are prepared for classroom use, they may be economically published without illustrations. Literacy experts recommend that children listen to texts read aloud to them every day.

Who Are They For?

- Children from who are pre-readers through independent and fluent readers.

Why Do Children Need Them?

- To develop a love of reading.
- To expand children's curiosity, imagination, and knowledge of the world.
- To help children learn a rich vocabulary.
- To help children become familiar with the patterns and structures of written language.
- To develop listening comprehension and thinking skills, even when children cannot yet read the texts themselves.
- To engage more advanced readers in written texts that are beyond their reading levels.

How Do You Prepare Them?

- Books for reading aloud by parents to children may have illustrations. Books for reading aloud in classrooms need not be illustrated, since only the teacher will see the pages in most cases.

- The difficulty level of the text should be a year or two above the reading levels of the students.

- Anthologies can be assembled from manuscripts created in writers' workshops. They may also be assembled from open-source material, such as the African Storybook Project or the Global Digital Library, or world literature in the public domain.

- One or more long anthologies can be prepared for each level of readers. Prereaders will enjoy fairly short and simple stories and engaging informational texts. Early readers, independent readers, and fluent readers can follow proportionately longer stories and factual articles.

- Choose texts that do not rely on illustrations to get their messages across.

- Arrange collections of texts from different genres thematically. There may be several themed sections in each anthology.

- You may choose topics from the school curricula for social studies, science, health, etc. The texts in the anthology can be child-friendly and interesting expansions on the topics presented in textbooks. Or they may deal with other interesting topics entirely.

How many pages are required? Read-aloud anthologies may be 60-120 pages long, and the manuscripts may be 80 to 100 type-written pages, since the print is not especially large and few illustrations may be included.

PART III

NOTES FOR AUTHORS

Once you have written (and rewritten, and rewritten) a manuscript, it is time to think about making a book out of it. There are many factors to consider:

- What kind of book is it? A concept book, a picture book, a leveled book, an informational book, a transitional book, a chapter book, or a book of poems? Each kind of book requires a certain number of pages, as you saw earlier in this guide.

- What age readers is it for? Is the topic of an informational text or the problem of a story one that would interest children of that age? If you are not sure, read your manuscript to a few children of that age group and watch their body language. Do they appear excited or bored or bewildered?

- Is the language appropriate for that age group?

- Decide what the pictures can show that the words don't have to say. If children in a story are happy, or their mother is shocked, the picture can often show those things, so you won't have to waste your precious quota of words to describe them.

- Think of your book as a movie, drawing readers in, and pulling them along scene by scene. With that in mind, what question or mystery should go on the right-hand page to rouse curiosity before the child turns to the page on the other side?

- Prepare a storyboard for all but transitional books and chapter books. A storyboard is a table that shows which words will go on each page. It may have suggestions for the pictures on each page. Books are printed in multiples of four or eight pages, so design your storyboard accordingly. Bear in mind that if your publishing project has a book designer, she or he may have final say on the design, but your suggestions will still be helpful. Here is a sample story board for 16-page picture book. Note that the author has left room for the title page and credits page, and has written suggestions for the illustrator.

A Sample Storyboard

(Back cover) [Other books in the series]. [Project Logo]	**(Front Cover)** [Illustrator: Use art from page 8]. Tina the Tailor By Hakuna Haraka Illustrated by XXXXXXXXXX

(Inside front cover) [Notes to teachers and parents].	**1 (Title Page)** [Illustrator: Use art from page 4. Show girl stretch the tape out on a piece of cloth on a table, looking very concentrated on her work] TINA THE TAILOR By Hakuna Haraka Illustrated by XXXXXXXXXXX
2 [COPYRIGHT INFORMATION]	**3** [Illustrator: Show girl, about age 8, holding scissors in her left hand and a cloth measuring tape in her mouth. She is sitting at a table outside on the sidewalk] Tina Taylor wants to be a tailor.
4 [Illustrator: Show girl stretch the tape out on a piece of cloth on a table, looking very concentrated on her work] She measures. She cuts. She sews.	**5** [Illustrator: Show girl proudly holding up a shirt. The cloth is the same as before. Don't show the collar or the sleeves (Hint: The shirt doesn't have either, but we don't know that yet!). In the distance behind her, show a man approaching, from left to right] She makes a shirt!
6 [Illustrator: Show the man talking to the girl. She is rubbing her chin and considering what he is saying] Are you a tailor?" asks the village chief. "Can you make me a shirt?"	**7** [Illustrator: Show girl beaming proudly at the chief. Show the chief as gullible looking] "Yes," says Tina Taylor.
8 [Illustrator: Show the chief looking suspenseful as the girl wraps a measuring tape around his middle. Tina Taylor measures. "Come back tomorrow. It will be ready."	**9** [Illustrator: Show the chief approaching on the street from left to right.] She cuts. She sews. The next day the chief comes.
10 [Illustrator: Show the chief talking to the girl. She looks at him with great confidence] "Is my shirt ready?" he asks. "Yes, it is ready," says Tina. "Try it on."	**11** [Illustrator: Girl is on the left, looking at a tall portable wall that the chief is changing behind, for the sake of privacy. She has a worried look on her face.] "How do you like it?" asks Tina.
12 [Illustrator: Show the chief with a shirt (same cloth as before) covering his head. He looks like a tree stump covered in cloth! Don't show sleeves—the shirt doesn't have any, but don't give that away yet.]	**13** [Illustrator: Show the chief sitting in a chair, and the girl is on his left, carefully cutting a hole for his head to poke through. (Again, don't show sleeves—the shirt doesn't have any, but don't give that away yet.)]

"It is fine. It is good. But why is it dark now?" asks the chief. "Oh," says Tina Taylor. "I forgot something."	Tina cuts a hole in the shirt for his head.
14 [Illustrator: Show the girl with scissors and a cloth measuring tape. "I am a fine tailor!" says Tina Taylor.	**15** On the right-hand side, show the chief walking away down the sidewalk from left to right. Some passers-by are looking at him curiously. Try not to show his sleeves! He doesn't have any!] "Why can't I move my arms?" says the chief.
16 [Illustrator: Show the chief closer up from behind. His arms are pinned tightly to his side, by the shirt that has no sleeves.]	**(Inside Back Cover)** [Information about the author and the illustrator].

- Revise your text as needed after preparing the storyboard.

Addressing Cross-Cutting Issues

- A primary value of books for young readers is to help them learn to read and become life-long readers, and also to enhance their knowledge of the world. Books for children can advance cross-cutting values and themes, too. Such themes may be:

- **Girls' empowerment:** showing girls, as well as boys, in active leadership roles; showing women in professional jobs and men in helping professions.

- **Social inclusion:** showing children and adults with disabilities participating as equals in everyday activities.

- **Rural and urban:** setting stories in rural areas as well as urban ones; showing positive features of both settings.

- **Peaceful resolution of conflicts:** showing problems being resolved in clever and satisfying ways, without resorting to hostility.

- **Inter-ethnic understanding:** promoting understanding between children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

- **The challenges of migration:** showing empathy for a child whose family has been forced to move into a new area. How will the local children come to know that child, and help her feel welcome? What can they learn from her?

- **Care of the environment:** teaching about environmental issues (clean water and air; recycling; caring for the land; showing children taking active roles in caring for the environment).

- **Health and hygiene:** teaching habits of healthy living; teaching personal hygiene.

Quality Criteria for Manuscripts

When the time comes to choose manuscripts for publication, the people doing the selection of ten use criteria such as these:

1. COHERENCE—The work should develop one topic clearly, without irrelevant information. Often when writing a first draft, a writer's thoughts will drift from one topic to another, or when adding pages, the writer will veer off in a new direction. You need to review your early drafts and find the main idea, and then rewrite every word to advance that idea. (You may find that the other ideas in your early drafts can later be turned into different books!).

2. PATTERN—The work should have a clear pattern. In the case of lower-level books, the pattern may be a series of actions or related objects; for later fiction, a clearly developed plot that encourages predictions and interpretative discussion. The pattern should give the reader an idea of where the text is going and allow her to make predictions. But it should often have a twist—a surprise ending (making predictions is engaging, but if a reader can guess the ending from the beginning, the text will be boring!). For informational books, the text should draw readers in and guide their inquiry, such as by questions and answers (not just presenting facts).

3. APPROPRIATE LEVEL—The topic, language, and length of the text should match the reader's interest level and reading ability. The main character is usually the same age as the reader. The level of writing should conform, or be able to be edited to conform, to the specifications for reading levels that are presented in Appendix A of this guidebook.

4. INCLUSIVITY—The work should indirectly or directly promote the advancement of girls and other marginalized people. Give equal treatment to girls and boys, women and men, abled people and people with disabilities, people from different ethnic groups, and people from rural and urban areas.

5. HIGH MORAL STANDARDS—the work should embody decency, kindness, and a positive outlook on life. Children's books can help children shape a view of the world and the people in it. What authors depict as "normal" and "acceptable" should show society in a positive way.

6. ACCURACY—Especially when writing informational books, research every fact you put into the book and make sure it is correct.

PART IV

ON ILLUSTRATING BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

The following section should be shared with illustrators.

Illustrators of picture books control many elements, including:

STYLE OF THE ART

Collage, ink and watercolor; cartoon; classic; post modern; photographs, etc.

LAYOUT

This includes book size and shape, book covers and jackets, page turns, borders, text layout and type face, and the number and placement of frames on a page.

CHARACTERIZATION

This refers to the consistent visual identity of the characters;

PERSPECTIVE AND PLACEMENT

This is of characters in pictures.

COLOR

Especially as it relates to mood.

PICTURE/TEXT RELATIONSHIP

that is, which aspects of the communication are carried by the text and which are conveyed by the pictures and how the pictures and text interact.

THE STYLE OF THE ART. With modern printing techniques, the range of media for the art that can easily be printed has expanded enormously. Colored chalk or crayon is frequently used, and so are oil and acrylic painting, along with watercolor and ink—all of these can be scanned and reproduced. Collages are frequently used, and even compositions made of scrap materials or sculptures are seen. Cartoon styles are popular with children, but more classical styles now make their way into books for children. Post modern art is also increasingly seen.

Of course, the artist must work closely with the book designer. The range of possible styles of arts is large, but there are always economic considerations— most obviously, the number of colors used in printing adds to the expense of publishing the book. When illustrating books that will be used to help children learn to read, the artist must be careful to support the readers and not get in their way.

For younger or less experienced readers, the art may be needed to carefully depict just what is described in the text. For older readers, the art may play a complementary role (see discussion below).

THE LAYOUT OF PICTURE BOOKS. Children's books are printed in multiples of eight pages, and picture books are typically either sixteen or thirty-two pages long. One page is taken up by the title page, a second by the copyright information, and often another by the dedication—leaving the illustrator of most picture books a little less than thirty pages or even fourteen double pages to work with. Within these few pages, the illustrator creates a visual world. By laying out the illustrations in a particular way, the illustrator controls the readers' journey through that world, much as a tour guide leads a group through a city or a landscape. Like a tour guide, the illustrator can move readers quickly from place to place and happening to happening or cause readers to pause in one spot and let impressions settle in.

Technical Issues in Book Illustration. The art needs to share space on the page with the print. In many book projects, the same book may be printed in more than one language. Since languages differ in the number of words and characters that are needed to express the same message, it is usually advisable to leave up to half of each page in white space on which text may be printed, so that different languages can be used when the book is printed. Some artists leave spaces right in the picture where print can be overlaid.

If an illustration is to be spread over two pages (see below), the artist must be careful to leave the "gutter"—the place (usually five or six centimeters wide) in the middle where the pages are joined -- free of important art.

Also, in the most common printing processes, room must be left around the outside of the illustrations so they can be taped to the drum on which they will be photographed. For other considerations, the artist should work closely with the book designer.

Book Size and Shape. The size and shape of a book has impact both in conveying content information and in eliciting the reader/viewer's emotional and aesthetic response. Tall books align the viewer's perspective to the vertical dimension. A wide book with pages shown as double spread units often gives a sense of the horizon and its vastness.

Book Covers. Readers are first introduced to a book by its cover. The cover serves as an invitation into the book, and offers a sample of what's inside – something of a "window" to what lies within the covers. A good cover says just enough but not too much about what is coming, so it arouses curiosity, and a desire to read the book.

Single Pages and Double-Page Spreads. As a rule, putting a picture on each page propels readers through the story at an even pace, whereas putting more than one picture on a page is a way to depict a series of actions or the rapid occurrence of actions. Spreading a single picture across two facing pages (a double-page spread) can signal a pause, a moment to ponder the events.

Borders. As a practical matter, it is recommended to leave 3 or 4 cm of space at the edges of the pictures, so children can hold the pages open without covering the pictures. Borders around pictures affect the esthetics of the book, too. They offer a means for the illustrator to control how intimately readers feel involved with the pictures. The absence of a border puts the action right in the reader's face. White space puts the action at some distance.

An illustrated border sentimentalizes the action, or makes it clear that the time period or place depicted is remote.

Page Turns. Page turns allow an illustrator to create and relieve suspense. Some call this phenomenon "the drama of the turning page." Many illustrators make use of page turns to add dramatic interest. When Nancy Winslow Parker illustrated John Langstaff's text Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go, she broke up the verse of the folk song as follows:

Oh, a-hunting we will go.
A-hunting we will go.
We'll catch a fox
[page turn]
And put him in a box,
And then we'll let him go.

Given the rhyming word "fox" as a clue to what comes next, children enjoy predicting what will occur on the next page.

The Last Page. The last page of a picture book is often used as a visual afterword. Many illustrators reserve this last page for an epilogue, a comment on what has gone before, or a mirror, perhaps with changes, of the situation at the beginning of the book.

CHARACTERIZATION. Characterization refers to the way in which an illustrator makes readers identify a particular character and continue to recognize that character throughout the changes of scene or status in the whole book. Features of a character may become so recognizable that even a part of a character may serve to identify the whole. When you draw children, be sure to depict children of the same age as the characters described in the work.

Sierra Leone. Liberian artist Leslie Lumeh shows illustrators at PEN-Sierra Leone how to draw a yam with a personality. Photo by Charles Temple.

PERSPECTIVE AND POSITIONING. The artist can vary the vantage points from which readers view the situation. Sometimes the artist lets readers see things that characters in the book do not—creating visual irony. A scene with a character's shoulder is the foreground suggests that the character is viewing the scene. A big person depicted from below looks like a giant.

A small person depicted from above looks tiny and vulnerable. The placement of characters in a picture can also have significance. A character placed high in the picture may be in a more dominant position than a person placed low. In cultures where writing proceeds from left to right, a person placed far to the left of a picture may be more in control of the situation; a person placed far to the right may be overwhelmed by circumstances.

Here is a subtle point: the majority of the characters in a book should be facing to the right. Because readers page through books from left to right, the implied motion of the art should point in that direction, too.[24]

---

[24] The reverse is true, of course, in books written in Arabic and some other languages.

Lines. The nature of the lines in a book has significance. Curvy lines are comforting. Jagged lines with lots of angles arouse tension in the reader. Cross-hatched lines suggest complexity in the situations depicted.

COLORS. Colors reflect emotions and communicate moods. Dark colors suggest foreboding, or importance. Bright colors are playful. Pastel colors may be "safe." Colors in picture books generally should be bright and very distinct from each other. Bear in mind that subtle differences in color may be washed out in the printing process.

Emphasis. Since illustrations are often counted on to help children understand the words on the page, the pictures should clearly show that meaning without other visual distractions. Some other visual information is sometimes called for when a setting needs to be shown, and in those cases, the important information should be clearly distinguished from the background. Often, no background is needed at all: just show the principal information against white space. (Of course, all of what has just been written is sometimes contradicted—but when it is, the contradiction is deliberate.

PICTURE/TEXT RELATIONSHIPS. In leveled books, pictures should carefully support the meaning of the text. If the text says, "The girl saw three birds," the picture can show a girl watching three birds. In picture books for more mature readers, the pictures can complement rather than duplicate the text. For example, the art may include facial expressions that show emotional reactions that are suggested but not explicitly named in the text.

Quality Criteria for Illustrations

In order to be suitable for publishing in children's book, the artwork should satisfy these criteria:

1. QUALITY—The art should be of professional quality. This standard refers to what you learned in your art classes. With every book, the art is what first greets the readers' eye. We are counting on you to make a good first impression!

2. REPESENTATION—The art should represent people and objects clearly and consistently. Illustrating children's books differs from other art assignments. You will be introducing characters and settings to the reader, and representing those characters and settings repeatedly and consistently—not just in one drawing, but often in more than a dozen different drawings throughout the book. Be careful to depict children of the ages that the text describes. Note especially that children's body parts change in proportion to each other as they get older. An infant's head is one fourth the length of her body; an adult's head is one sixth of his body length. A child's proportions are somewhere in between. Our arms and legs grow longer in proportion to the rest of our bodies, too. If you draw a child as a small person with the same proportions as an adult, you will have drawn a miniature adult!

3. EXPRESSIVENESS—The art should be lively and expressive. In illustrated works of fiction, people should have faces that express feelings and personalities. Scenes should show action. If you must draw several pictures that take place in the same setting, change the perspective from picture to picture, to create visual variety. In informational books, too, the pictures should be dynamic and full of energy.

4. **FLOW**—The art should pull the reader through the book. Artists who are new to children's book illustration tend to create books that look like art shows, where the audience is expected to admire one picture at a time. But illustrating a children's book is more like filming a movie. The pictures should engage the readers' attention and pull them through the work.

5. **RELEVANCE**—The art should be uncluttered and relevant to the text. In lower-level books, illustrations should clearly and unambiguously show what the text says, because young readers will be counting on the pictures to help them understand the text. In books for not-so-young readers, the illustrations can play ironically with the meaning or illustrate one aspect of what is written.

6. **FORMAT**—The art should be formatted to allow room for the print, be matched to the trim size of the pages, and avoid putting important visual information in the gutters. The book designer will explain the layout of the book—portrait or landscape—and the laid-out of the manuscript will show you how many lines of text in what font size must share the page with the art. Plan your illustrations accordingly.

7. **CLEAR COLORS**—The colors should be simple, and contrast nicely with each other, remembering that the process of printing tends to make colors darker and to run them together. The simpler and clearer, the better.

8. **VARIETY**—Each page or two-page spread should be interestingly different from others (unless there is a deliberate reason to make them similar). Picture a child paging through your book. Illustrations on each page or two-page spread should be excitingly different from each other.

9. **ORIGINALITY**—Strictly avoid using any artistic image that may be copyrighted. It is allowable to borrow a style from another artist, but it is illegal to copy someone else's images, especially their characters, without expressed permission.

10. **INCLUSIVITY**—The art should accurately depict people from different regions of the country. It should show women and men, girls and boys, in non-stereotypical roles. The illustrations should often include people with disabilities, even when they are not mentioned in the text. Illustrators have a major role to play in making the books inclusive. We need to picture girls as well as boys, rural people as well as urban people, disabled people as well as fully-able people. Often the text does not make reference to this variety of people, and we will be counting on illustrators to include them.

PART V

MANAGING A PUBLISHING PROJECT

The following section is written for managers of publishing projects.

Notes for Project Managers

Managing a writing project is an exciting challenge, and doing it successfully can bring benefits to the children in your community and eventually to the community as a whole. Here are some suggestions for approaching the challenge.

Prepare yourself. Locate and read as many books as you can of the kinds that are described in this guidebook. Many books are available for free in several languages from online sources, such as the Global Digital Library (https://digitallibrary.io), the African Storybook Project (https://africanstorybook.org), or the Bloom Library (https://bloomlibrary.org). Approach the task seriously. Your project is producing literature, and it will make a lasting impression on your young readers. The books should be as good as you can make them.

Working With Authors

Recruiting authors. It is recommended that you "cast your net widely" when you seek writers for your project. There may be some established writers in your community who volunteer to help, and you should welcome them. But many other people are capable of writing for children, with some orientation and guidance. They may be storytellers, teachers, parents, or even secondary and university students interested in literature. Everyone will need a thorough orientation to the work of producing books for children, and people you might not expect may produce surprisingly good works after some training. Try to recruit ten or more writers at the beginning. Some will leave after the first workshop, so you might leave the invitation out for more to join. It is likely that once the first workshop makes it clear what you are doing, other writers will want to take part. However, if you conduct a series of several workshops, it won't be practical to have people join the workshops late in the series.

Setting Expectations. Make clear to the authors what you expect from them and what they can expect from you. They should submit only original work that they did themselves. Explain how they will be compensated: unless they are writing as volunteers, they should be paid an agreed-upon amount of money for each work that is accepted for publication. You may fix different pay rates for different lengths of manuscripts. Make clear who will own the rights to the published works, and whether you or they will be allowed to publish them elsewhere. Explain that you reserve the right to edit their works.

Explain the procedures for submitting manuscripts—in what form they should be submitted (handwritten or typed into a digital file), to whom they should be submitted, and by when. Explain how the manuscripts will be selected: by whom, and following what criteria.

Once you have decided on these matters, write them up in contracts for authors, illustrators, and a representative from your agency to sign.

Conducting workshops. It is recommended that you conduct workshops for writers, to introduce the project of producing books and share examples of the kinds of books you seek, to give writers and illustrators prompts to inspire them to produce new works, and to give them guidance to refine their works.

It is preferable to have experiences children's authors lead the workshops if they are available. If not, try to have many examples of good books on hand to show the participants and recruit the most dynamic and effective workshop leader you can. She or her can read through this guide and refer the participants to it.

Try to schedule several workshop sessions, if possible. These might take place on weekends, for several days (up to four) at a time. Each workshop might focus on producing a certain kind of book (concept books, informational books, leveled books, etc.).

If your budget allows, provide the writers with notebooks, pens, and storage folders. It is helpful, but not essential, to have a laptop computer, a document camera, and a digital projector and screen available in the workshops.

A recommended format of a writers' workshop is as follows:

1. Welcome and introductions, explaining the project, sharing roles and responsibilities, and setting goals for the workshop. Make it clear that everyone will write during the workshop and share their drafts with others for comments and suggestions.

2. An ice-breaking activity to get the participants comfortable working with each other. This is especially important when there are participants of mixed ages and levels of experience as writers.

3. Provide a brief overview of the genres of books they will be producing.

4. Start with one genre. Show an example of a book from that genre, and explain its form and the techniques that go into writing it.

5. Give a prompt to get writers started. A prompt may be a pattern of a story of an informational text, with the challenge for writers to write a new text to that pattern. Then provide time (half an hour or so) for people to write.

6. Have the writers form groups of 3 or 4 and have them take turns reading their work-in-progress to others. First, establish ground rules for sharing:

    a. The writer should read her work slowly and clearly to the others, without any introduction or explanation—let the work speak for itself.
    b. The others listen attentively—prompt them to give encouragement: nods, smiles, and appreciative applause afterwards.
    c. Then, each listener should point to one thing he especially liked about the work.
    d. Next, each listener can ask a question or make a suggestion.
    e. Finally, the author thanks the listeners, and briefly explains anything she wants to about the work.

7. You may invite each group to nominate one writer to share with the whole group. Follow the same procedures as in Step 6.

8. Encourage the writers to write a new draft of the work, taking into account the best questions and suggestions, and anything that occurred to him as he read the work aloud to others.

9. Explain to the authors that they may need to write several works before they create a really satisfactory work. Tell them to keep everything. There may be a character or other some detail in an unsuccessful draft that can be used in another work, or even offer an idea for another text altogether.

10. Give the participants clear assignments to work on before the next workshop: tell them how many drafts in what genre. Encourage the writers to share their works with partners to help refine them.

Creating fair and transparent procedures for choosing manuscripts for publication. You may recruit a vetting committee to do blind reviews of manuscripts. Make sure the members are well trained and fully oriented to the goals of your project, and give them clear and relevant criteria for judging works, such as those found in this guide oin pages XXX-XXX. Have them rate the manuscripts as (1) ready for immediate work toward publication; (2) the author should work on the manuscript further, then resubmit it; (3) the work is not suitable for the project, and the author should submit another work.

Note that having a fair vetting procedure will be important for everyone's morale. Authors need to know that their works have an equal opportunity to be selected for publication.

Working With Illustrators

Recruiting artists. When recruiting illustrators, you will need to be more selective than with authors. Suitable illustrators should already know how to skillfully represent people, objects, actions, and scenes in pictures. If there is not a nearby art school to recruit from, you may have to look at the art around your community, at representations of vegetables on the wall of a grocery store, or billboards beside the road with public health messages, and locate and recruit their creators.

Sierra Leone. An illustrators' workshop led by artist Chase Walker at PEN-Sierra Leone. Photo by Charles Temple.

Conducting workshops for illustrators. Try to schedule several workshops for illustrators, too. Illustrators will need more materials than writers. If your budget allows for it, try to provide the proper papers and drawing supplies. An experienced illustrator can tell you what these are.[25] Note that these supplies may not be readily available locally, and you may need time to search them out or order them from somewhere else.

The recommended format of a workshop for illustrators is as follows:

1. Welcome and introductions, explaining the project, and setting goals for the workshop.

2. An ice-breaking activity to get the participants comfortable working with each other. This is especially important when there are participants of mixed ages and levels of experience as illustrators.

3. Provide a brief overview of the genres of books they will be producing.

4. Take the artists carefully through the section in this guidebook on illustration. If possible, show them examples of the points made in that section.

5. Go over with them the quality criteria for illustrations from the guidebook.

6. Give each artist a manuscript of a story or other work. Assign them to illustrate a sequence of three scenes.

7. Have them submit their artwork to you for review.

8. You may choose to eliminate one or more artists after reviewing their work, or invite them to work alongside a more proficient artist.

Supervising the Illustration and Design of Books

Once a manuscript is in final shape for publishing, someone must make a rough design of the book. This is normally done by creating a story board (See pages 44-46 above). A story board shows exactly which words should go onto each page of a book of an exact number of pages (always in multiples of 4 pages for printed books). It shows what picture the illustrator should supply for each page. Sometimes the author will supply a story board, but in most cases, it is the job of an editor hired by the project to provide the final rough design. The instructions to the illustrator may need to be detailed, especially if the illustrator is new to the work of illustrating children's books. The artist should provide rough sketches of the pictures to the editor for approval before submitting final artwork.

Technical Aspects of Producing Books

Getting Manuscripts Ready for Publication. Writers may write their stories by hand when computers or laptops are not readily available. At some point, manuscripts will need to be typed out, either by the author or an editor. In many places, it is affordable to rent laptop computers during the writing and editing process. A standard laptop (Mac or PC) that can run email, MS Word, and standard office software is enough to generate a typed manuscript.

---

[25] Artists often ask for watercolor paper, tracing paper, watercolor pan sets, brushes of different sizes, colored pencils, graphite pencils, sharpeners, erasers, charcoal, and portfolios for storing artworks.

The most common software used for typing text is Microsoft Word. When a manuscript is in MS word, it can be easily edited. A final manuscript in MS Word can then be sent to a book designer. The 'Final" manuscript usually includes the main text, as well as the cover text (title, subtitle writer, illustrator, and publisher), the copyright information (copyright date, ISBN, permissions, and all contributors), and text for the back cover (logos, ISBN/bar code, possibly the reading level, and a brief book description) along with any optional content: acknowledgements, dedications, table of contents, and author and illustrator bios.

Once manuscripts have been typed into a Word file, they need to be edited and proofread.
Editing consists of composition and leveling issues, making refinements to the organization of a work, the clarity of the writing, and the readability (or reading challenge) of the language. For guidance on readability, editors can consult the leveling criteria in Appendix A. With informational books, editors can also double check facts for correctness. A good editor searches for possibilities in a text and finds ways, if they exist, to refine it to publishable quality. Some editors make changes themselves and send them to the author for approval. Some editors make specific suggestions to the authors for changes and ask the authors to make them. Either way, it is a courtesy to explain the procedure you have chosen to the authors in advance.

Proofreading focuses on issues of correctness, spelling, punctuation, grammar, and paragraphing. For languages in which little publishing is done, you may need to seek help from the most authoritative sources guidance on grammar and spelling.

Preparing Illustrations for Publication

Especially if the artists are not experienced children's book illustrators, they will need clear directions as to what they should draw. Authors may offer suggestions for the artwork, but even if they do, it is the responsibility of the book's editor to communicate clearly to the artist what illustrations are needed, to review the artist's submissions, and to make suggestions to make the art suitable for the book.

Artists often create the artwork for books in three stages. Roughs (pencil sketches that show characters and other subjects, perspectives, and sizes), revised drawings (with any corrections, changes, additions), and the final artwork.

1. If the artwork is being created using paint, pencil crayon, or other physical mediums, the artist may create artwork that is larger than the final print size. The physical artwork will need to be scanned into a digital file for placement in the layout of the book. There are several options for turning physical artwork into a digital scan:

    a. The preferred option is a full service printshop that has flatbed, calibrated scanners who can create high resolution (300 dpi) files. Many printers specify that the files be calibrated CMYK tiff files, but not all do, so you should check with your printer before scanning the illustrations. The files will be large and can be saved on a flash drive, or uploaded to an Cloud location such as Google drive or and ftp (File Transfer Protocol) server). They are usually too large to send by email. A flash drive with the artwork files can then be sent or given to the designer. Most urban centers, even in low-income countries, have local printshops with these facilities.

    b. If a full-service location is not available, a high-quality, modern photocopier with scanning features will work. The limitation is the size of the glass on the scanner, so the original artwork

cannot be larger than the glass size, or the artwork has to be scanned in two pieces and reassembled digitally. There are often features on an office scanner that allow you to set the resolution, the file size, and the color output. 300 dpi, cmyk, tiff (or jpeg) are the minimum requirements. It is important that the glass is clean without any dust, scratches, or marks. Anything on the glass will appear on the final artwork. These files, too, will be large and will need to be saved on a flash drive, or uploaded to an iCloud location (Google drive, or ftp server) since they are usually too large to send by email.

c. During the development stage of the artwork - roughs and refined roughs - a phone with a camera to take pictures for review and feedback is enough. Sending photos by email or WhatsApp to an editor or art director or publisher suffices to communicate changes and approvals.

d. For the final artwork, if a scanner is not available, the artwork can be photographed using a high-quality digital camera or as a last resort a cell phone. However, the quality of the digital file will be determined by the ability of the photographer to shoot the artwork at the correct angle, in the correct lighting, and with a tripod to avoid any blurriness or focus issues. Digital cameras have the capacity to take high resolution (300 dpi) files. Cell phones have limited capacity and are not recommended to produce the final high resolution digital files. The digital files can be saved onto a flash drive and given or sent to the designer. Bear in mind that this option is more likely to result in low quality and problematic digital artwork.

2. If the artwork is being originally created using digital software - (for example: Illustrator, CorelDraw, Photoshop) - then the artist creates digital files as the output. These files can then be saved as high resolution, CMYK, tiff or eps files, saved onto a flash drive, and given to the designer. Digital artwork is usually created using high-quality computers with extensive memory, drawing tablets, high-quality monitors, and access to digital software and apps.

Having the Book Designed.

1. The book designer will need to have a high-quality, reliable computer with a high memory capacity, design software, email, access to the internet, and ideally, the ability to access ftp sites. Microsoft Word is needed to access the text along with industry standard design packages such as the Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat, etc.) or QuarkExpress or Photoshop. These software packages are expensive, but a professional book designer or publishing company should invest in these to ensure quality, and to ensure that printers are able to work with the files. Book layout should NOT be produced in MS Word, CorelDraw, or Desktop Publisher. A qualified publication designer will have the equipment (computer) and software to produce a layout.

2. One alternative to working with a local professional book designer is to locate and work with a designer online. Upwork.com lists freelance designers with whom you can negotiate a price and arrange to have design work done (after you first check their references under "reviews"). Most are English speakers. Go to **www.Upwork.com** and search their catalogue for book designers.

3. Another alternative for designing a book is to use Bloom Software. Bloom Software provides a platform onto which you can load text and illustrations and design your own book. Bloom Software has training video in English, French, and Spanish. **See https://bloomlibrary.org/page/create/page/about.**

Reliable access to the Internet is essential during the publishing process for email communication and sharing files. You will also need access to hardware such as quality computers (laptops or desktops), flash drivers, scanners, and phones for communication.

Having Books Reviewed for Approval

Many governments and funders require that books produced for children be approved by local authorities before they can be distributed.

- You should check and be clear on what such requirements are in your country or community.

- Educate the people doing the reviewing to the goals of the project, the kinds of books you will producing, and why they are needed. It is recommended that representatives from the reviewing body be invited to your training workshops.

- Make clear arrangements for the review procedure. It is best if works can be reviewed and approved, at least tentatively, in the earliest stages of producing them, before investing the labor and expense of designing and printing. Invite people doing the reviewing to sit on the selection committee.

Printing the books. Small numbers of books may be printed locally, and some governments or donors may insist on this. For large print runs, some projects use offshore commercial printing houses who do high volume jobs of good quality at reasonable prices. Negotiations with printers will involve:

- The **trim size** of the book
- The **number of pages**
- The **weight of the paper** for the covers and interior pages
- The **number of colors** needed (up to four, since four colors can be combined to make dozens of colors and hues)
- The **binding** (stapled, stitched, glued, or a combination)

Further discussion of these matters can be found online in Best Practices for Developing Supplementary Reading Materials. https://allchildrenreading.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Best-Practices-for-Developing-Supplementary-Reading-Materials.pdf.

Budgeting a Publishing Project.

Costs of the creative team.

1. Training costs. If workshops are conducted for writers and illustrators, there may be charges for

    - transportation
    - renting the training venue
    - catering
    - lodging (if traveling long distances)
    - supplies (notebooks, pens, folders, chart paper, masking tape, markers, water)

2. Published authors will be paid per book.

3. Illustrators will be paid per picture.

4. Book designers will be paid different fees depending on the number of book pages and illustrations.

5. Workshop leaders may need compensation per day.

6. Editors and proofreaders may be paid per book, with different fees depending on the length of each book.

Printing and transport of the books. These fees are to be negotiated with printers.

Timeline for a Publishing Project

Arranging the project management team (project manager, writers' workshop leader, illustrators' workshop leader, editor, proofreader, clerical help).	May take 2 weeks
Recruiting and inviting authors' and illustrators	2 weeks, which may overlap with step #1
Arranging workshop venue and catering, if necessary	A few days, overlapping with #1 and #1
Conducting first workshops for writers and illustrators	1 week if together, 2 weeks if separate
Interval after the workshop for writers to work on drafts before submitting them	2 weeks
Reviewing and vetting manuscripts.	2 weeks
(Preferred) second authors' workshop.	1 week
Interval after second workshop for writers to work on drafts before submitting them.	2 weeks
Reviewing and vetting manuscripts.	2 weeks
Editing and proofreading manuscripts	3-6 weeks, depending on the number and length of the manuscripts
Illustrating the books and revising the illustrations	1-4 months, depending on the availability and schedules of the illustrators, and the number of illustrations needed
Designing the books	1 to 4 months, depending on the availability and schedules of the designer, and the number and complexity of the books
Printing and delivering the books	1 to 4 months, depending on whether the printer is local or offshore

Sierra Leone. Happy recipients of locally-published books. Photo by Stephen Douglas. Courtesy of CODE of Canada, www.CODE.ngo.

Given the variability in the factors listed above, a publishing project may take as few as four months to as long as a year from conception to finished books. Longer may be better, especially if it allows time for more workshops, more writing, more editing, and more careful illustrating.

Once your project has put in all the work described in this guide—having authors, illustrators, and project staff study the different varieties of children's books and how they are created, training authors and illustrators to create them, learning to make designs for books and mastering the technical details of having them printed and distributed—it will take far less effort to produce more children's books in the future. When the writers, artists, and project staff have seen the delightful reception your books are likely to get when they find their way into children's hands, they will almost certainly want to create more books, and their future works are likely to be even better.

Finding Sources of Support. Once your project has produced books that you can show around, and you know from experience what the costs are to produce them, it will be easier to gain support for future projects. Your country's ministry of education may be willing to support publishing more books. You can point out to them that providing reading materials will go a long way toward addressing the goal of reducing learning poverty. Donors to your country, including foreign embassies, may be willing to help, especially if you have been careful to pay attention to the cross-cutting issues discussed on pages 46 and 47 above. They may wish to put their logos on the back of the books, which is normal procedure. Support from businesses can be solicited if you make the argument that providing children with books will make them more literate and productive citizens and workers in the future. Choose ethical businesses, of course. They, too, are likely to want acknowledgment of their support written on the back covers of the books.

APPENDIX A

CRITERIA FOR BOOK LEVELS

Adapted from Chall, J.S., Bissex, G.L., Conrad, S.S., & Harris-Sharples, S. (1996). Qualitative assessment of text difficulty: A practical guide for teachers and writers. Cambridge: Brookline Books.

For Pre-Readers

Level and Font Size	Vocabulary	Number of Pages	Words per page	Words per sentence	Sentences per Page	Patterns	Picture Support	Syntax	Concept Load
Level 1.1 30-32 pts. Well-spaced words	Short familiar words.	8	3-4	**3-4**	1	No plot; mostly labels or simple actions that are linked and lead to a conclusion. Often repeated phrases with new word slotted in.	Pictures on each page (Or double-page spread) show *exactly* what the text says.	Simple declarative sentences, present tense. Single phrases.	Familiar objects and actions.

For Early Readers

Level and Font Size	Vocabulary	Number of Pages	Words per page	Words per sentence	Sentences per Page	Patterns	Picture Support	Syntax	Concept Load
Level 1.2 30-32 pts. Well-spaced words	Short familiar words. One or two less familiar words per page, highly supported by pictures and context.	16	10-12	**5-6**	2-3	**Fiction:** A series of simple actions; a simple plot that may imply more elaborate meanings. **Information:** Labels with some elaboration.	Pictures on each page closely represent what is described in the words.	Simple and compound declarative and interrogative sentences, with some prepositional phrases ("in the room…"); some commands. Present and past tenses.	Mostly familiar objects and actions, with some novel ideas, closely supported by pictures.
Level 1.3 30-32 pts. Well-spaced words	Short familiar words. Write three or four less familiar words per page, supported by picture or context.	32	13-20	**7-11**	3-5	**Fiction:** A series of simple actions with a surprise ending, or "punch line." Information: Richer descriptions and explanations.	Pictures on each page more generally represent what is described in the words.	Alternating simple and compound sentences, with some prepositional phrases; some cohesive ties ("because," instead of…")	Familiar objects and actions, with more novel ideas, closely supported by pictures.

For Independent Readers

Level and Font Size	Vocabulary	Number of Pages	Words per page	Words per sentence	Sentences per Page	Patterns	Picture Support	Syntax	Concept Load
Level 2.1 26-28 pts. Spaced words	Familiar words with more syllables. Some newer words supported by pictures or context	32	20-28	10-12	2-3	**Fiction:** more complex pattern (may be a series of events leading to a surprise ending). Simple plot structure (character has a problem and sets a goal, makes attempts to achieve the goal, and finally achieves it). **Informational:** the text may contain short descriptions of different animals; or it may explain the steps in a procedure. The text may be a simple question followed by a simple answer. It may be a riddle with an answer.	One picture per page, shows settings, but does not explicitly show what is described in the words; may elaborate on or ironically contradict what the text says.	Sentences are still relatively short, but may contain compound sentences and preposition-al phrases. There is some dialogue.	The topics and words are mostly close to the children's experiences. **Fiction:** the plot may look deeper into characters' motives, and require fairly obvious inferences. **Informational:** the text moves beyond naming to some explaining.
Level 2.2 26-28 pts. Spaced words	Some newer words supported by pictures or context.	32	28-35	10-15	3-4	**Fiction:** Simple plots with more dialogue, more character development. **Informational:** More description and explanation. The tone is personable, often with child characters as investigators.	One picture per page, shows settings or single characters; may show parts of items or characters to invite inferences; may elaborate on or ironically contradict what the text says.	Longer sentences that may contain compound sentences and prepositional phrases. There is more dialogue. Cohesive ties are used more frequently, especially in informational text: "First…, second…, third…"	The topics and words are moving further from the children's experiences. Fiction: the plot may look deeper into characters' motives and invite readers to infer lessons. Informational: the text does more explaining, mostly using common vocabulary.
Level 2.3 26-28 pts. Spaced words	More newer words supported by pictures or context	32-48	35-40	10-15	4-5	**Fiction:** Linear plots with dialogue and more character development. Informational: More description and explanation. The tone is still personable, often with child characters as investigators	One picture per page, shows settings or single characters; may show parts of items or characters to invite inferences; may elaborate on or ironically contradict what the text says.	Longer sentences that may contain compound sentences, prepositional phrases, and some subordinate clauses. More verb tenses, including future and imperfect. Plenty of dialogue. Cohesive ties	The topics and words are moving still further from the children's experiences, or examining them more deeply. Fiction: the plot may contrast characters, but look more empathetically into

Level and Font Size	Vocabulary	Number of Pages	Words per page	Words per sentence	Sentences per Page	Patterns	Picture Support	Syntax	Concept Load
								are used more frequently, especially in informational text: "First…, second…, third…"	characters' motives (mean character may turn out to be insecure, etc.). Informational: the text does still more explaining.
						For Fluent Readers			
Level 3.1 24-26 pts. Normal spacing	Still many familiar words but more variety of words.	48	40-60	7-15	Full pages of sentences.	**Fiction:** Better developed plot, more richly describe characters. **Informational:** guided inquiry: questions and answer, chronology of discovery; more detailed process explained. The books often feature child characters as investigators.	Picture every other page. Informational texts may have charts and diagrams.	Simple, compound, and complex sentences; prepositional phrases, and more subordinate clauses. More verb tenses (conditional, present progressive, and present perfect) Plenty of dialogue. Cohesive ties are used more frequently, especially in informational text: "First…, second…, third…"	**Fiction,** the meanings and morals are left more open, inviting interpretations by the readers. **Informational:** The text may begin with topics that are familiar to the reader, but add considerable new information.
Level 3.2 24-26 pts. Normal spacing	Some figurative language; some idiomatic expressions.	48-64	60-80	7-15	Full pages of sentences.	**Transitional books:** Short chapters (3-7 pages). **Informational:** table of contents, some charts or other figures. The tone is more personable than a textbook—often addressing the reader directly: "If You Lived in the Stone Age…".	Picture every 3 pages. May include maps and other visuals. Informational texts may have charts and diagrams.	More complex sentences with relative clauses. Full range of verb tenses. Some dialogue.	**Fiction,** readers are expected to assemble clues as they work toward understanding the plot. **Informational:** The text may begin with topics that are familiar to the reader, but add still more new information, some of it technical.

Level and Font Size	Vocabulary	Number of Pages	Words per page	Words per sentence	Sentences per Page	Patterns	Picture Support	Syntax	Concept Load
Level 3.3 24-26 pts. Normal spacing	Some figurative language; some idiomatic expressions. More unusual words supported by context.	64-72	60-80	7-15	Full pages of sentences.	**Transitional books:** Short chapters (3-7 pages). **Informational:** table of contents, some charts or other figures. The tone is more personable than a textbook—often addressing the reader directly: "If You Lived in the Stone Age…".	Picture every 3 pages. May include maps and other visuals. Informational texts may have charts and diagrams.	More complex sentences with relative clauses. Full range of verb tenses. Some dialogue.	**Fiction,** readers are expected to assemble clues as they work toward understanding the plot. **Informational:** The text may begin with topics that are familiar to the reader, but add still more new information, some of it technical.

APPENDIX B

FURTHER RESOURCES

Reference Guides

The World Bank (2021). Read@Home Materials Guidance.
https://worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/read@home

USAID (2019). Best Practices for Developing Supplementary Reading Materials. https://allchildrenreading.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Best-Practices-for-Developing-Supplementary-Reading-Materials.pdf.

Global Book Alliance (2020). The Book Dash Manual. https://www.globalbookalliance.org/resources-1/the-book-dash-manuaL

Online children's books

The Global Digital Library. https://digitallibrary.io
The African Storybook Project. https://africanstorybook.org
The Bloom Library. https://www.bloomlibrary.org. (Also offers free publishing software).

Online folk tales from around the world (Resources for Read-Aloud Anthologies)

World of Folktales. www.worldoftales.com
Folktales Online. https://libraryguides.missouri.edu/c.php?g=1052498

On Learning to Read and Reading Instruction

Acosta-Tello, E. (2019). Reading aloud: Engaging young children during a read aloud experience. Research in Higher Education Journal, 37.

Anderson, R.C., and Pearson, P.D. (1998). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension. In Carrell, P.L., Devine, J., Eskey, D.E. Interactive approaches to second language reading. Cambridge University Press.

Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., and Kucan, L. (2013). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction, 2nd edition. Guilford Press.

Cunningham, A.E., and Stanovich, K.E. What reading does for the mind. Journal of Direct Instruction. 1, 2, pp. 137-149.

Duke, K. N., and Cartwright, K. B.J. (2021) The science of reading progresses: Communicating advances beyond the simple view of reading. Reading Research Quarterly, May, 2021.

Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write: A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. Journal of Educational Psychology, 80(4), pp. 437–447.

Massaro, D.W. (2017). Reading aloud to children: Benefits and implications for acquiring literacy before school begins. American Journal of Psychology. 130, 1, pp. 63-72.

Rasinski, T. (2004). What research says about reading: Creating fluent readers. Educational Leadership. 61, 6, pp. 46-51.

Stanovich, K.E. (2017). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. Journal of Education. Volume: 189, 1-2, pp. 23-55.

Temple, C. A., Ogle, D., Crawford, A.N., and Temple, C. F. (2018). All children read: Teaching for Literacy in Today's Diverse Classrooms. 5th Edition. Pearson.

Whitehurst, G.K, Arnold D.S., Epstein, J.N, Angel, A.L., Fish, M., and Fischel, J. (1994). A picture book reading intervention in daycare and home for children from low-income families. Developmental Psychology 30, pp. 679-689.

On Writing for Children

Levine, G.C. (2013). Writing magic: Creating stories that fly. HarperCollins.

Paul, A.W. (2018). Writing picture books: A hands-on guide from story creation to publication paperback.

Aids for Publishing

The Bloom Library. https://www.bloomlibrary.org.

Upwork.com. https:/www.upwork.com. A marketplace of freelance talent (book designers, etc.).

International Networks for Writers, Illustrators, and Children's Book Publishers

The International Board of Books for Young People. https://www.ibby.org.

The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. https://www.scbwi.org.

APPENDIX C

INSIDE COVER NOTES FOR PARENTS

These suggestions may be printed inside the covers of a book.

Suggestions for Parents

The suggestions below are offered to help you have a productive and enjoyable session reading with your child. It is always a good idea to read a book or part of a book yourself before you read it with your child. You will need to prepare to read it in an interesting voice. You will also need to find out what is most interesting and instructive about the text, and prepare some questions and points to discuss with the child.

FOR PRE-READERS AND EARLY READERS

BEFORE READING

1. Show the child the cover of the book. Ask the child to name what she or he sees on the cover. Point to the title and read it aloud. Then ask the child to say what he or she thinks the book will be about.

2. Do a "picture walk" through the book, showing the picture on each page, commenting on the picture, and asking the child to comment, too. After showing the first several pictures, you may look ahead without showing more pictures to the child. Then say, "Oh, my! This is interesting!" Then tell the child that you must read the book together so she or he can find out what was interesting.

WHILE READING

1. Open to each new page, point to the picture, and ask the child to say what is in the picture. Praise the child if the answer is correct, but if the response isn't correct, tell her the correct word or words for what is in the picture.

2. Then the text on that page, sentence by sentence, pointing to the words. Read each sentence a second time, still pointing to the words, and ask the child to read along with you.

3. Read a sentence or paragraph aloud and say what it means to you and what it makes you think of. Restate it in your own words. Ask the child what the sentence or paragraph makes him or her think of. Predict what will happen next in the text, and ask the child to predict, too. Repeat the activity four or five times as you read through the text.

AFTER READING

1. Ask the child to tell you step by step what happened in the text.

2. Have the child act out a scene from the text with you.

3. Invite the child to draw a picture of her favorite part of the text. Have her write a caption under the picture and read it back to you.

FOR INDEPENDENT AND FLUENT READERS

BEFORE READING

1. Give a brief talk about the topic of the text. Try to relate the topic to the child's experiences or to your own.

2. Ask two or three questions that will be answered in the text. Ask the child to listen or read for answers to the questions.

3. Choose four important new words from the text. Write them on a piece of paper. Read each word aloud and have the child read it or repeat it. Then explain plainly what each word means. Ask the child to be watching for the word as you read together.

WHILE READING

1. Read each sentence of the text aloud, pointing to the words with your finger, then have the child read the sentence aloud after you.

2. Divide the text into four or five parts. Before each part, ask the child to predict what will happen. After reading that part asked the child what did happen. Then ask the child to predict what will happen next.

3. Read a sentence or paragraph aloud and explain what it means to you. Restate it in your own words. Predict what will happen next in the text. Repeat the activity four or five times as you read through the text.

AFTER READING

1. Ask the child to tell you step by step what happened in the text.

2. Remind the child of the questions you asked in the beginning. Ask the child for her or his answers.

3. Invite the child to draw a picture of her favorite part of the picture. Have her write a caption under the picture and read it back to you.

IMAGE REFERENCES

Page i

Page i

Page i

Page ii

Page ii

Page iii

Page iii