

Reaching Boys with Your Writing
By Tim Shoemaker

We're living in a FAMINE when it comes to great writing for boys...

Boys are very different from girls in more than physical ways...

Our writing for boys must differ from writing for girls...

Often a writer writes for boys *EXACTLY the SAME WAY THEY'D WRITE for GIRLS...they LUMP THEM TOGETHER. But THAT WON'T WORK... boys don't think the same way.*

If you want to write for boys—*WRITE for BOYS. TARGET THEM.*

If you want to write for boys & girls—*WRITE for BOYS.*

Good writing for boys will *CROSSOVER to girls easily*
-Generally girls will read it.

BUT BOYS won't want to be *CAUGHT DEAD*
reading something they think is *written for girls.*

Target the boys & you've got a chance at getting both markets.

WORDS are a BROAD WAVELENGTH/channel OF COMMUNICATION for
GIRLS

AGGRESSION is a BROAD WAVELENGTH/channel OF COMMUNICATION for
BOYS

BOYS are HAMMERS... and HAMMERS are ROUGH...

Girls can be MORE SOPHISTICATED when it comes to COMMUNICATION.

BOYS are NOT SO SOPHISTICATED with COMMUNICATION

BOYS are MORE PHYSICAL...

BOYS are DOERS...

BOYS DON'T WANT TO SHOW FEAR

Boys want to be perceived as being MORE GROWN UP than they feel inside.
The POWER OF THE GROUP is a HUGE FACTOR on boys

The Gotta Haves 10 essential elements when writing for boys

1. Great cover
-The *FIRST THING* a boy is going to look at is *the COVER*.
2. White space
-The *SECOND THING* a boy may look at is *how much text* is on a page.
3. Powerful Opening
-*Not the first page*-... but the first line... and PARAGRAPH
4. Action
-Boys need *something GOING ON* or *ABOUT to HAPPEN* if you're going to hold their attention.
5. Show the Story— and from the Character's POV
-You *don't want to TELL* a story, you want to *SHOW* it.
6. Likeable Main Character
-If they don't *QUICKLY IDENTIFY* with *the main character*, if *they don't like him*, what happens?
7. A Clear Goal
-What does the character want—*bad*?
8. Strong conflict
-WHAT or WHO is going to *GET IN HIS WAY... MAKING IT TOUGHER THAN EVER* to *ATTAIN HIS GOAL*?
9. Cliffhangers
-If you're writing a book, *you want your chapters to end with something* that will make them *want to TURN the PAGE*, not *CLOSE the BOOK*.
10. Short chapters
-If you're writing a book, *short chapters may not be essential*, but they're a *really good idea*.

The Kisses of Death 10 areas to avoid when writing for boys

1. Kisses
-*Lose the romance* if writing for MIDDLE GRADE BOYS.
2. Preachy
-Using a *portion of a sermon* your character hears . . . or a *"timely" word from a youth pastor* that amazingly *addresses their problem* can seem *manipulating*.

3. Flawless Characters

-You want your readers to relate to the main character in your story, not be INTIMIDATED by HIM.

4. Model Material

-This is a *HUGE FAULT with FICTION for ADULTS*, and sadly, *many writers do it when WRITING for KIDS*.

5. Protagonist Too Young

-They tend to *LOOK UP to OLDER BOYS*. They *try to ACT OLDER than THEY ARE*. They *DREAM about what they'll do when they're older*. So, if you're writing for 10-12 year old boys, *give them a protagonist that is 13*, one they can look up to and accept easier.

6. Problems Solved by Others

-In most cases, *the book WON'T be TRULY SATISFYING if the problem is NOT solved by the protagonist*.

7. Unreal

-If the *situation is JUST TOO BIZARRE*, too unbelievable, you *cause the reader to COME BACK to REALITY*.

-If they think, *"This could never happen,"* you've just hurt the chance of them finishing the book or *you may have limited its impact if they do*.

-Yes, it's "just a story", *but to the reader it must stay real*.

8. Too much Description and Detail

-The *descriptions you slave over*, thinking they will bring the book to life are more *likely going to be the death of your story if you overdo it*.

9. Unfamiliar Words and Phrases

-When you use *WORDS BOYS DON'T UNDERSTAND*, or *terminology that is TOO DATED*, you can lose your reader.

10. Avoid slang, trendy words, cliché's

It can be very *REGIONAL*—apply to one area of the country, *leaving other areas of the country CONFUSED*. It also tends to *CHANGE TOO QUICKLY*.

3 TRAPS WOMEN must AVOID when WRITING for BOYS

1. MAKING BOY CHARACTERS TOO GIRLY.

-They *COMMUNICATE TOO WELL*.

-They *RELATE TOO WELL*.

You're *MAKING BOYS the way you WISH THEY WOULD BE... not the way they really are*.

2. MAKING THE BOYS TOO STEREOTYPICAL.

Always LIKING GROSS THINGS. Sure, some boys like gross things... but that is more juvenile.

3. Deep down THINKING BOYS HAVE IT EASIER than GIRLS.

-The truth is EACH GENDER has their own set of hardships.

-What you BELIEVE DEEP DOWN will COME OUT in your writing...

MY PERSPECTIVE when WRITING for BOYS

If you think of kids as JUST KIDS... YOU'RE IN FOR TROUBLE.

IF YOU THINK of THEM as Kids... your writing will take on the TONE of a PARENT.

HERE'S HOW I THINK of KIDS...

-I think that they're just about AS SMART AS ME... and SMARTER in some ways. (math... technology)

-BUT they're MORE IMPULSIVE.

-AND their JUDGMENT isn't always so good... and they make BAD DECISIONS as a result.

-THEY ARE SMART... but not nearly as EXPERIENCED as I am.

-With their LIMITED EXPERIENCE and LACK of JUDGMENT they LACK WISDOM.

Boys need good writing.

-They need to be SHOWN THINGS ABOUT LIFE through the experiences of your characters...

-They need to be shown how to COPE with complicated life.

-They need to be shown what it means to MATURE.

-They need to be shown how to PERSEVERE through hardship,

-They need to learn how to GROW in their faith.

-They need to be WARNED about TRAPS IN LIFE... and INSPIRED TO AVOID THEM.

-They need to be shown what it means to BECOME a MAN...by GOD'S DEFINITION.

Writing for boys, is a very WORTHY and NOBLE GOAL.

LETS write in a way so that THEY'LL WANT to READ IT . . .

so they'll get the MESSAGE God has PLACED in OUR HEARTS!