

Writing for Children

Write His Answer conference, August 2023

Pam Halter

****PRECONFERENCE HOMEWORK ~ bring a favorite book in the age group you're writing for. Ask your children/grands/any kiddo what kind of book they like.**

You'll also need a notebook or laptop for writing during class.

Thursday AM

Picture Books

First Chapter Books

Early Chapter Books

Picture Books

How we get to know the younger audience

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Are they on social media? Where?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Who buys their books?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

*Plot

The text focuses on the characters, plot and action of the book. Very little description. Plots are action-based, with a new scene every page or two. Themes are straightforward, concrete and taken at face value. Kids are very literal, so we have to be careful what we include in a story.

*Character development

Characters can be children, animals, fantasy characters or adults. They can learn as the story goes on, but we still don't want to preach to kids. While adults can help kids in picture books, we try to have the child characters draw their own conclusions or solve the mystery.

*Illustrations

Illustrations are super important in picture books. They tell almost as much of the story as the text.

Chapter Books

First

Early

How we get to know the chapter book audience

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Are they on social media? Where?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Who buys their books?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

***Plot**

Though story possibilities range from mysteries to humor to fantasy, plots that revolve around family, friends and school are most common. This is true for both early chapter books and regular chapter books. Just keep the age group in mind.

Stories are told primarily through action and dialogue, though some minor description is acceptable.

***Character development**

Characters can be animals, fantasy creatures or children, though child characters are the most common.

***Illustrations**

Most chapter books have illustrations. For younger children, I've seen color illustrations, but not like picture books.

For some chapter books, illustrations are typically black line art, and not on every page.

Older chapter books

Ages 8-12

Like all the other age groups, we need to know these kids to effectively write for them. Social media is super important for most of this age group. They all pretty much have cell phones, especially the 10–12-year-olds.

*Plot: more in depth, involve more subplots and more characters. This is middle school age, so friends are super important.

*Character development: unless you're writing speculative fiction, characters are people. Family is still important. School is important. Sports/hobbies are important.

*Illustrations: none

Extra Notes
