

**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!*