

Children's Writer®

Newsletter of Writing
and Publishing Trends



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Contemporary YA Fiction Stands the Test of Time

By Chynna Laird

Young readers are intelligent and know what they like. In some ways, young adults can be a tougher audience than adults because their wants and needs change much more often. Learning to write for this audience, as well as market to them, is a constant process.

Authors of YA should be happy to know that their genre is still going strong. But with stories about vampires, werewolves, zombies, and other fantasy themes filling the shelves, those authors who want to write contemporary stories may be asking themselves whether readers are still interested in their more down-to-earth, real-to-life stories. The answer is a huge yes.

Although young readers enjoy the escapism of a good fantasy story, they are still drawn to characters to whom they can relate, who are going through similar experiences and situations. Contemporary YA authors will always have a solid audience as long as they stay on top of what draws in teen readers.

Realism

Contemporary YA fiction still attracts readers, even those also drawn to fantasy reads, because it offers a taste of realism that teens seem to crave. Fantasy “is not real life and there’s the element of the unknown,” says Stephanie Taylor, Editor and CEO of Astraea Press. “Contemporaries keep their steam because they are real life, and sometimes we all need a little hope that fiction can become truth.”

Hannah Goodman, Editor and Founder of the ezine *Sucker Literary Magazine*, which specializes in YA fiction, agrees. Readers “can fully identify with the characters. The reason I gravitate more towards contemporary is because I read to see myself, or those in my life. Teens do the same, tenfold.”

Cheryl Tardif, Publisher of Imajin Books, thinks that teens seek out the realism

in contemporary books in part to find answers for things they go through.

“Teens are trying to make sense of emotions, changes, stressful situations, etc., and finding a book that deals with real issues can be inspiring and motivating.”

Publisher of Melange Books Nancy Schumacher says, “The trials (To page 2)

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Contemporary and joys of life are portrayed in contemporary stories that are similar to some of the things happening in their own lives.”

Literary agent Jennifer De Chiara feels that the universal themes of teen identity can be represented in any YA subgenre, but that readers seem to be suffering from vampire/paranormal/werewolf fatigue. “The more realistic stories will probably prevail for a while. But the relevant themes remain the same.” De Chiara represents YA, as well as picture books, middle-grade fiction, and adult genres.

Realism in contemporary stories seems to be one of the top attractions for young readers, but other elements are important for success in this genre.

The Right Elements

The two most important elements that help attract today’s teens to contemporary fiction, says Goodman, are, first, tension and electricity between characters who deal with regular teenage problems, and second, authentic dialogue that does not rely on pop culture lingo.

In Taylor’s view, “Uniqueness is what always gets you noticed.” Di Chiara agrees: “I look for freshness—an original idea that stands out from the pack when most genres tend to be repetitive and blur together. You need a great title, a great concept, and great writing. Only one or two of these will not work.”

“If you can’t capture and hold my attention in the first five pages, I will likely reject the project,” Schumacher says. “From the start, the author needs to have action, snappy dialogue, some kind of problem-action that is interesting in a dramatic or humorous way. Immediately, I need to be able to relate to those characters.”

Sticking out from the crowd will not make a book more competitive on its own. Authors need to understand what makes a book marketable and be willing to work hard at keeping their work visible.

“Writers must create memorable characters and stories,” says Tardif. They need to “edit until their work shines, have a professional editor edit the work, have a professional book cover designer create a stunning, eye-catching cover, write a gripping back cover text that draws a reader in, and then market the heck out of the book.”

Goodman mentions another important tip for this genre: “In particular for contemporary [YA fiction], avoid teaching a lesson or preaching in your work. Try not to sound like an after-school special.”

Understanding Market Demands

Solid contemporary YA endures mostly because authors are able to fit their work into the ebb and flow of the market, but also remain universally appealing. Understanding market demands is important to a book’s success. One idea is for authors to research the

MORE CONTEMPORARY YA FICTION MARKETS

- ~ Abrams Books: www.abramsbooks.com
- ~ Action Publishing: www.actionpublishing.com
- ~ Adams Media: www.adamsmedia.com
- ~ Aladdin: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/aladdin
- ~ Algonquin Books: www.algonquinbooks-blog.com. A new juvenile/YA line.
- ~ Ambassador International: www.emerald-house.com
- ~ AMG Publishers: www.amgpublishers.com
- ~ Amulet Books: www.amuletbooks.com
- ~ Atheneum Books: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/atheneum
- ~ Balzer + Bray: www.harpercollinschildrens.com
- ~ A & C Black: www.acblack.com
- ~ Bloomsbury: www.bloomsburykids.com
- ~ Blue Sky Press: www.scholastic.com
- ~ Boyds Mills Press: www.boydsmillspress.com
- ~ Candlewick Press: www.candlewick.com
- ~ Carolrhoda Lab: www.lernerbooks.com
- ~ Chronicle Books: www.chroniclebooks.com
- ~ Cinco Puntos Press: www.cincopuntos.com
- ~ The Collaborative: alloyentertainment.com
- ~ Cool Well Press: www.coolwellpress.com. Changing its focus to YA.
- ~ Dial Books: us.penguin.com
- ~ Diversion Press: www.diversionpress.com
- ~ Dutton Books: us.penguin.com
- ~ Eerdmans Books: www.eerdmans.com/youngreaders
- ~ Egmont USA: www.egmontusa.com
- ~ Farrar, Straus & Giroux: us.macmillan.com/FSGYoungReaders.aspx
- ~ Feiwel & Friends: www.feiwelandfriends.com
- ~ Margaret Ferguson Books: us.macmillan.com/fsgyoungreaders.aspx
- ~ David Fickling Books: www.davidfickling-books.co.uk
- ~ Fire: sourcebooks.com
- ~ Flux: www.fluxnow.com
- ~ Frances Foster Books: us.macmillan.com/FSGYoungReaders.aspx
- ~ Greenwillow Books: greenwillowblog.com
- ~ Harcourt: hmhbooks.com/kids
- ~ Harlequin Teen: www.harlequin.com
- ~ Harper Teen: www.harperteen.com
- ~ Holiday House: www.holidayhouse.com
- ~ Henry Holt Books: us.macmillan.com/holtyoungreaders.aspx
- ~ Houghton Mifflin: www.hmhbooks.com
- ~ Just Us Books: justusbooks.com
- ~ Kensington Teen: www.kensingtonbooks.com
- ~ Alfred A. Knopf Books: www.randomhouse.com/kids
- ~ Wendy Lamb Books: www.randomhouse.com/kids
- ~ Leap Books: www.leapbooks.com
- ~ Arthur A. Levine Books: www.arthuralevine-books.com
- ~ Little, Brown and Co.: www.lb-kids.com
- ~ Margaret K. McElderry Books: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/margaret-k-mcelderry-books
- ~ namelos: www.namelos.com
- ~ Orchard House Press: www.orchardhouse-press.com
- ~ Peachtree Publishers: www.peachtree-online.com
- ~ Philomel Books: us.penguin.com
- ~ PUSH: www.thisispush.com
- ~ Razorbill: us.penguin.com
- ~ Roaring Brook Press: us.macmillan.com/roaringbrook.aspx
- ~ Scholastic: www.scholastic.com
- ~ Simon Pulse: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/simon-pulse
- ~ Skyhorse Publishing: www.skyhorsepublishing.com
- ~ Splinter: www.sterlingpublishing.com
- ~ Topaz Books: www.topazpublishingllc.com
- ~ Viking Books: us.penguin.com
- ~ Walker Books: www.bloomsburykids.com
- ~ WaterBrook Multnomah: www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook
- ~ Albert Whitman Teen: www.albertwhitman.com
- ~ Paula Wiseman Books: imprints.simonandschuster.biz/paula-wiseman-books

WISDOM FROM THE EXPERTS

top-selling books on Amazon, then check out the publishers or agencies representing such books. This can give authors a sense of direction, and ideas about where they might submit their work.

Tardif, for example, has noticed an interesting change in the YA market. “Readers of YA are mature readers who don’t want to be talked down to or be given vapid characters. They want strong characters—fighters. They want adventure. Romance too, but give them more action and suspense and you’ll connect with them even more.”

There also seems to be a rise in specific subgenres, Goodman points out: “Older YA is emerging. And then there’s the genre of *new adult* or post-adolescence. It seems like a quiet and growing trend. I am a great fan of older YA—stories that focus on senior year and that summer after graduation or even that first semester or year of college.”

Di Chiara, whose agency represents several award-winning YA authors, says that series seem to be big right now, along with “projects with cross-media potential. That is, books that have film or TV potential, gaming potential, etc.”



Spit and Polish

After taking time to understand current marketplace trends, authors are more ready to send out to the right prospective editors or agents. The number one requirement, unanimous among all editors, is to send a clean, professionally edited manuscript. As most authors know, no matter how great a story might be, typos, sloppy grammar, and shaky plots will lead to rejection.

Market research is equally important. When a work is submitted to someone who does not publish in that genre, and that fact is clearly stated in the submission guidelines, the only result will be annoyance on the part of the editor or agent, and an automatic rejection. But once an author finds a good fit, Taylor suggests going a step further. “Email other authors from this [publisher or agent] to see if they are happy with where they are. If you can’t find a client list or places to get one, run far and fast.”

An author who has established, or at least started, a solid platform, also has an advantage. “Learn everything about writing, the business of being a writer, how to market yourself and your book, and then be prepared to work on these areas immediately,” says Tardif. Create a website or a blog, use social media, network. Work to brand yourself as an author with your own platform.

Schumacher reminds authors that sometimes the best way to understand the market is to read similar works from top-selling authors in the same genre. “Be a reader. Some of the best authors are avid readers.”

There will always be room for contemporary YA

I’m known to ask my interviewees what pearls of wisdom they have to share with readers. Often, the answers turn out to be powerful bits of advice. Here are a few gems from the experts presented in this article.

~ **Astraea Press:** www.astraeapress.com. Editor Stephanie Taylor says, “It’s so important to make sure you’re aware of changes in the market. Once your manuscript is done, listen to people who know the market, and never take any advice given as personal or hurtful. Soak up and learn from everything, and then go out and take your market by storm!” This e-publisher is open to middle-grade and young adult submissions. Astraea Press focuses on *clean* fiction, meaning no explicit language, sex, or violence. Guidelines are available on the website.

~ **Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency:** www.jdlit.com. Agent Jennifer De Chiara says, “Write the book that’s in your heart, the book you’re most passionate about—vampires or no vampires. A great story is a great story, regardless of its form.” The agency is open to submissions for most forms of children’s, middle-grade, and YA. Be sure to check each agent’s needs and to choose only one to send work to.

~ **Imajin Books:** www.imajinbooks.com. Publisher Cheryl Tardif shares her pearls of wisdom with *don’ts*: “Don’t overload a story with too many characters. Don’t overload a story with too many cross-genre subplots. Don’t overload with extraneous back stories. Dig deep on emotion so your reader connects not only to the characters but also to their problems. When your character stumbles into a challenge, ask: ‘What’s the worst that can happen to them?’ Then create it.” Closed to submissions until March 2013. Check website for updates and details. Imajin will be looking for mystery/suspense, horror, and fantasy, but no vampires or werewolves. Email submissions only.

~ **Melange Books:** www.melange-books.com. In addition to telling writers they need to find that writing time, Publisher Nancy Schumacher says, “One more invaluable piece of advice is to join a critique group or a writing chapter where you can actually learn through online or real-life classes on writing.” Ebook publisher Melange Books has a new YA imprint called Fire and Ice. Submissions are open; check the website for specific calls and the emails of editors accepting the submissions. For example, Fire and Ice is currently looking for horse stories, 10,000-20,000 words, and novellas, 40,000-60,000 words.

~ **Sucker Literary Magazine:** <http://suckerliterarymagazine.wordpress.com>. Editor Hannah Goodman says, “Be professional and study your craft. Make sure you proofread your submissions and that you are submitting your best work. Be patient. No matter how many people in your life tell you that your writing is amazing, it doesn’t mean that it’s ready for publication. Take your time.” Reading period from February 1 to May 1 only, with occasional brief open calls at other times. The protagonists for this literary magazine for young adults must be between 14 and 20 years old. Submission details are available on the website.

fiction. Even when put up against the toughest vampires, werewolves, or dragons, there is a permanent place for true-to-life stories that explore universal teen experiences. As long as there are authors out there willing to write from their hearts, research the market, and offer up the very best they have, there will be editors waiting to get the work out there and readers eager to soak it up.

Ecology for Kids

50 Years After Silent Spring



By Darcy Pattison

Fifty years ago, Houghton Mifflin published Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which kindled the modern environmental movement. The changing views of ecology and nature, and the changes brought to our culture and laws spilled over into education and books for kids. Where is publishing after five decades of books on the environment?

Focus on the Child Reader

Books in this category are flourishing. Cynthia Platt, Editor at Houghton Mifflin, prefers the term *environmental studies and ecology*, while Jennifer Emmett, Editorial Director of National Geographic Books for Kids, uses the terms *green*, *conservation*, and *science and nature*.

Resisting labels, Andy Boyles, Science Editor for *Highlights for Children* and Boyds Mills Press, says, "If we started to label the stories as *ecology* or *how to live green*, then our own thinking, our own approach, would change so that what we published would feel less like stories and more like lessons. We want kids to connect with the people and nature, not just get the *right* answer."

Beyond the terminology, editors focus on the child reader and how a book can affect that child. Emmett says National Geographic's goal is to inspire, engage, and wow a kid with stunning photography and amazing facts. Boyles looks for books that help a child develop a deep, lasting connection with nature. For older kids, he looks for books that delve deeper into one of the most important themes at *Highlights* and Boyds Mills: how we know what we know.

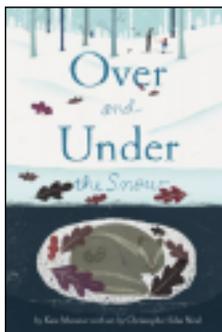
TITLES

~ Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Scientists in the Field series
~ Boyds Mills Press: Younger readers: *Frogs! Strange and Wonderful*, by Laurence Pringle (and others in the Strange and Wonderful series); *Growing Patterns*, by Sarah C. Campbell; *Path of the Pronghorn*, by Cat Urbigkit; *What Bluebirds Do*, by Pamela F. Kirby; *Wolfsnail*, by Sarah C. Campbell. Older readers: *Adventures Beneath the Sea*, by Kenneth Mallory; *The Case of the Monkeys that Fell from the Trees*, by Susan Quinlan; *Saving Manatees*, by Stephen Swinburne.
~ Chronicle Books: *Just One Bite*, by Lola Schaefer; *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau*, by Jennifer Berne; *Over and Under the Snow*, by Kate Messner; Seymour Simon's Extreme Earth series.
~ National Geographic Books for Kids: *Alien Deep: Revealing the Mysterious Living World at the Bottom of the Ocean*, by Bradley Hague; *Earth in the Hot Seat: Bulletins from a Warming World*, by Marfe Ferguson Delano; *True Green Kids: 100 Things You Can Do to Save the Planet*, by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin; National Geographic Kids Chapters series; *The Skull in the Rock: How a Scientist, a Boy, and Google Earth Opened a New Window on Human Origins*, by Marc Aronson.
~ Sylvan Dell: *Animal Helpers: Wildlife Rehabilitators*, by Jennifer Keats Curtis; *Desert Baths*, by Darcy Pattison.

Science Standards

Over the next few years, the Next Generation Science Standards and the Common Core State Standards will be implemented, and could affect the type of books published in the future.

Boyles notes that *Highlights* and Boyds Mills already emphasize open-ended concepts about the process of science. "The new standards will certainly help us think about the age of our readers for a given subject. But we are still thinking of the reader first. We're going to be looking for great concepts, great stories that fire the imagination and engage kids at a fundamental level."



While Platt keeps the new standards in mind, she says, "They don't dictate what type of topics or approaches to them that we sign up. The trade team is concerned with finding and creating books about compelling topics with the highest quality storytelling. We want to be aware of what's happening in the

classroom, but we're not creating books to fit with specific standards."

On the other hand, Donna German, Editorial Director of Sylvan Dell Publishing, says, "Since our mission is 'science and math through literature,' aligning to science standards is of utmost importance to us." Submissions should include an indication of how the title would fit into the early elementary school curriculum. Because Sylvan Dell is a small publisher, it also wants titles appropriate for niche markets such as zoos, aquariums, or museum gift shops.

Fact or Fiction?

Sylvan Dell titles also represent a hybrid between titles focused on pure facts, and those that use fiction techniques to develop a nonfiction story. German says, "Our fun-to-read stories are often fictional stories but we add four to six pages of nonfiction learning activities, For Creative Minds (FCM), in the back of each book. These sections are designed to be activities that engage children for better learning and retention." The section also helps parents, and language arts teachers who want to integrate science, math, and literature. Note that the FCM is usually created by the Sylvan Dell staff, not the authors.

Other editors also value fiction techniques in their nonfiction titles. Platt says, "A topic like wildlife conservation can be told in a fairly dry, straightforward way. Or, it can follow a scientist out in the field whose life's work is to study and help save a tree kangaroo or manatee." In other words, a character-centered narrative draws in readers.

EDITOR WISH LISTS

At Chronicle Books, which publishes for both trade and educational markets, Assistant Editor Ariel Richardson says that most of Chronicle's science and nature books use at least some fiction techniques. "For example, the voice in *Over and Under the Snow*, by Kate Messner, is rhythmic, lyrical and alliterative, while the voice in Seymour Simon's Extreme Earth series really draws the reader in by addressing the reader directly in second person. *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau*, by Jennifer Berne, and *Heroes of the Environment*, by Harriett Rohmer, each beautifully develop character and narrative."

Connections, Not Topics

When you think about writing a book on topics related to the environment, you may think first of topics—the content. Great content is essential, of course, but *how* the facts and material are handled is paramount.

"Laurence Pringle works some magic in helping kids to see that even creatures that may seem creepy or scary are valid members of nature's community," says Boyles. "Sarah Campbell has a remarkable gift for taking unusual and thought-provoking subjects that have been under our noses all along and bringing them into the foreground. Pamela Kirby and Cat Urbigkit have written books that are as close as a printed work can come to having a caring adult right beside young readers, showing them the wonders of nature."

While books for older readers may deal with difficult environmental issues, Boyles says, "We prefer to give our readers stories that offer a ray of hope. That's often in the form of telling them about people who are working to solve environmental problems."

Platt says that Houghton Mifflin's popular Scientists in the Field series inspires kids to "enter the world of science, and to think about and study the world around them. This series very nicely describes the scientific process and gives young readers a real look inside the world of some of the top scientists of today." Titles in the works cover a wide range of subjects, "everything from tapirs to National Parks, dolphin intelligence, and beetles." Platt is editing books in the series that cover new sciences and cutting edge developments: transgenic goats that produce spider silk proteins in their milk, advances in volcanology, and even the development of birth control vaccines to help manage healthy levels of wild horse populations.

Photos or Illustrations

Books on nature lend themselves to beautiful photographs, but writers do not necessarily have to provide the photos. "Usually, we supply the photos to accompany our science and nature titles," Emmett says. "Sometimes the authors help with photo research, especially if the photography closely corresponds to their book research. It is helpful to get a sense of what photo options might be available, so we appreciate having some images with a submission."

Richardson says the decision to illustrate or use photos at Chronicle Books is made on a title-by-title basis. "If the author does deliver photographs, that will likely be reflected

~ **Chronicle Books:** 680 Second St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

www.chroniclebooks.com. Ariel Richardson, Assistant Editor, says, "Our 2013-14 lists are full, but we are always looking for projects that speak to us: true stories compelling enough to inspire kids, stories we haven't heard before, great writing that feels fresh, and new research that has never been published before. Perhaps a novel in which girls in particular are engaged with nature, science, or technology."

~ **Highlights for Children, Boyds Mills Press:** 815 Church St., Honesdale, PA 18431. www.highlights.com, www.boydsmillspress.com. Science Editor Andy Boyles says, "One time we published a short, simple item about cottontail rabbits in *Highlights*. After it came out, we got a letter from a young girl who wrote something along the lines of, 'I read about rabbits in *Highlights* and the next day I saw a rabbit in my own yard!' I realized that it had been a profound experience for her. Because exotic animals get a lot of air time on TV, it's easy to think they are the only 'significant' nature, right? But the simple act of publishing a piece about cottontails elevated rabbits in her mind. She could see real nature for herself and not just have it spoon-fed to her. Experiences like that for every kid, that's on my personal wish list."

~ **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt:** 222 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116. <http://hmhbooks.com/kids>. Editor Cynthia Platt says, "We are always looking for titles for our Scientists in the Field series, as well as other nonfiction and ecology books. I don't have a personal wish list, though I'm always inspired by an author's passion for her subject matter. It's so clear when you get a proposal from someone who's truly invested in and inspired by a topic—and that enthusiasm can be infectious. I'd much rather receive proposals from authors who chose topics that speak to them, rather than address topics that are prescribed to them."

~ **National Geographic Children's Books:** 1145 17th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20036. www.ngchildrensbooks.org. Jennifer Emmett, Editorial Director, National Geographic for Kids: "We continue to see kids' interest in nature subjects, with animals being the key. For our new series, National Geographic Kids Chapters, we are looking for true animal stories about animal heroes, animal rescues, animal superstars, animals behaving badly, and more. These stories need to be narrative and exciting and completely true. Ideas can go to Becky Baines at rbaines@ngs.org."

~ **Sylvan Dell:** 612 Johnnie Dodds Blvd., Suite A2, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464. www.sylvandellpublishing.com/Submissions.htm. Editorial Director Donna German says, "We keep our submission page up to date, so please refer to it."

in the amount they are paid as an advance, and they are responsible for the permissions associated with those photographs. For example, Mark Cassino, author of *The Story of Snow*, is a photographer and took all the photos in the book (except one that he credits elsewhere). Seymour Simon usually delivers his own photographs as well. But sometimes our designers will hire someone, or we'll even use stock photography on occasion. Of course, if the author has access to incredible photos, that can sometimes be a selling point."

Sylvan Dell uses illustrations almost exclusively for its titles, and as is industry standard, its editors prefer to choose illustrators themselves.

Fifty years after *Silent Spring*, the publishing world is abuzz with books for children, and while the facts must be correct—that is not negotiable—it is not just the facts that matter. These books are meant to inspire, delight, connect, engage, amaze, instigate deep thoughts, instill passion, and bring kids out into the amazing environments around them.

The Bibliography: The Heart of Your Submission



By Patricia Curtis Pfitsch

When you are writing nonfiction, the bibliography may be the most important part of your submission. “The first thing I do when I receive a submission,” says Debra Hess, Senior Editor at *Highlights for Children*, “is flip to the back. If there is no bibliography, I send the manuscript back without reading it.”

Randi Lynn Mrvos, Nonfiction Editor of *Stories For Children*, agrees. “The bibliography can reveal how much thought, time, and research has been devoted to the article. If a bibliography is incomplete or if unreliable sources are used, I question the validity of the article.”

“When a nonfiction article comes with a cover letter, good photo support, and a bibliography, it shows the writer is putting her best foot forward,” says Marilyn Edwards, Editor in Chief of *Hopscotch* (for girls), *Boys’ Quest*, and *Fun for Kidz*. “Regardless of the publication, you want your submission to stand out over the others. The more professional it looks and the more complete, the better.”

Even when you’re writing on assignment for an editor you know, the bibliography is crucial. “I require [a bibliography] with the final submission,” says Sharon Doorasamy, Managing Editor of Morgan Reynolds. “If I get a bibliography with a scant one or two sources, that tells me they really haven’t consulted other sources out there. That would be a red flag for me.” She admits that she has never received such a bibliography because she works with a familiar stable of authors. “I know something about the people I’m dealing with. I know their backgrounds and their work capabilities and their professionalism.”

Sue Wilkins, Children’s Book Editor for Mitchell Lane Publishers and Enslow Publishers, focuses first on the bibliography when an assigned manuscript comes in. “I look at the first couple of paragraphs, and then I go straight to the bibliography and see what sources this person used.” She can tell how useful the book would be and how much revision would be necessary just from looking at the sources the author has cited.

Bibliographies are important even for some fiction. “If [a story] is based on a true situation or person,” Edwards says, “a bibliography would be helpful to be included at the beginning with the initial submission. If the writers used

sources, which you would assume they did, including those in a bibliography just shows the writer is well-organized.”

The Bibliography At Work

Editors also use bibliographies to help with fact-checking. “*Highlights* is read by millions of children,” says Hess. “We take the business of facts very seriously. We carefully validate all facts in every one of our articles.” In fact, Hess and other *Highlights* editors require back-up information in addition to the bibliography to ensure that facts and quotes are accurate. “If the writer is also an expert in the field, that should be included in the cover letter but should not preclude a bibliography,” says Hess.

For every quote that appears in a Morgan Reynolds book, says Doorasamy, “The writer must send me a hard copy of where that quote came from, even if it’s online.” She checks each quote to be sure it has not been altered unintentionally. “There’s no quote in our books that’s not referenced.”

Wilkins appreciates the same kind of back-up material from her writers. Earle Rice Jr., whose latest books for Mitchell Lane are *Billie Holiday* and *Charlie Parker* in the *American Jazz* series, makes it easy to fact-check his work by sending a packet of bibliographic information. “He’s so thorough,” says Wilkins. “He photocopies the title page of the main sources. Then he photocopies the pages with all the quotes in them and highlights the quote. Finally, he jots in the margin where in his text the quote occurs. That’s really, really helpful.”

Morgan Reynolds and Mitchell Lane include a bibliography in published books. “We want our young reader to be able to go back and look at the bibliography and pursue the sources that you pursued,” Doorasamy says. “The child may want to read the book on his or her own. We’re dealing with middle school and high school readers. They are primarily doing research for classroom subjects. They might need the information to take their own research to the next level or to indicate to their teacher that they’ve read a book that’s been properly referenced.”

What’s In and What’s Out

You might be surprised at how many sources editors like to see. Doorasamy edits the work of Kevin Cunningham,



Editor in Chief Susan M. Tierney. Publisher Prescott V. Kelly.
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Email queries, manuscripts, or MarketPlace information, to cwtierney@childrenswriter.com.

author of *Wildfires* in the Morgan Reynolds Extreme Threats series, and *Soil* in the Diminishing Resources Series. “When I get his work,” she says, “I know I’m going to have a 10- or 12-page bibliography accompanying the text.”

“For a 32-page book,” says Wilkins, “I’d like to see at least five print sources and three or four online sources. For a longer book—for example, a 100-page book—I want to see at least 8 to 12 print sources and 5 to 7 online sources.”

Stories for Children requires 3 sources for its articles. “But I would prefer to see 5 to 8 sources,” says Mrvos, who is also a writer. “When I write articles for children’s magazines, I read about 20 sources that relate to my topic. Then I narrow them down to only the pertinent ones.”

Mrvos advises using primary sources: journal and newspaper articles, diaries, letters, reports, financial records, and memos. Hess adds government transcripts, interviews with experts, and peer-reviewed papers to the list.

Secondary sources, like research books written for adults, can be good sources, but be sure to pay attention to the dates of publication. “You want to keep your book as current as possible,” says Wilkins. “It doesn’t matter what your subject is. If you’re writing about Greek mythology, you can quote Edith Hamilton or Robert Graves, but you also want to research news articles to see if there’s anything new that scientists have found related to your subject.” That is important even if you do not find anything new or earth-shattering. “Your bibliography must show that you’ve done your research up to the print date.”

It is also important to be familiar with your publisher’s policies with regard to bibliographies. Doorasamy will accept other children’s books as reference sources, but Wilkins does not want writers to use children’s books as source materials.

Encyclopedias are another gray area. For Doorasamy, some encyclopedias work as research tools. “It depends on who put the encyclopedia together. Is the publisher of the material itself credible?” Wilkins does not want writers to use encyclopedias or a compilation of biographies as a main source. “You need to go back to a more primary source.” Otherwise, she says, “The research gets too watered down. Nobody wants to read a rehash of what is already out there. You want to have a new point of view and a new combination of information.”

All editors agree on one thing: Do not list Wikipedia as a source on your bibliography. Wikipedia can be edited by anyone. “That’s a problem,” says Doorasamy. “I don’t know who’s writing the articles. And even if I did know the person’s name, that doesn’t necessarily mean that the person is credible. I don’t have time to track down the credibility of a Wikipedia writer, whereas I can quickly go onto the Library of Congress site and check a person who has authored a book. I can quickly look up a journal.” In fact, Wikipedia gives precedence to secondary over primary sources, as a recent experience by a scholar revealed (www.npr.org/2012/10/03/162203092/wikipedia-politicizes-landmark-historical-event).

One of the useful aspects of Wikipedia, however, is that

the articles list their sources. “If Wikipedia lists a *New York Times* news article,” says Wilkins, “you can look up that news article and keep digging from there.”

Working in Cyberspace

Editors usually want to see more print than Internet sources in a bibliography. “Those print sources have been fact-checked,” says Wilkins. There is no guarantee that online sources have been checked for accuracy. “Assuming everything on the Internet is accurate is simply not realistic,” says Hess.

When researching online, stick with reputable sites like those ending in .gov, .mil, .edu, or .org. Even then, be careful. “Official websites could have typos,” says Wilkins. “You need to make sure you’ve verified your facts with other reputable sources.”

Wilkins suggests that writers save every page of an online source that has useful reference information as a PDF on the computer, or print them out. Those pages can disappear or be moved to a site that can be only accessed via subscription. “If you’ve got it printed out,” says Wilkins, “it can be checked much more quickly.”

Remember, too, that *print* sources can often be found online: Full-text digital editions of print magazines may be available.

There are times when you must rely primarily on Internet sources. For instance, Morgan Reynolds does quite a few biographies. “Last year,” says Doorasamy, “we produced our Xtreme Athletes series—biographies of present-day sports figures. A lot of [those figures] don’t have even [a single other biography yet]. So you have to depend on CNN interviews, newspaper articles, or magazine articles. It really depends on the subject matter.”

Before you send your submission packet off to an editor, consider the format of your bibliography. Most editors want to see citations listed in the format prescribed by the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Some use the format recommended by the Modern Language Association. Wilkins advises, “Please, please, if a publication you’re writing for indicates a particular format, use that format. It’s very time-consuming for the copy editor to reformat the bibliography.”

“Nothing drives me crazier than a carelessly written bibliography with incorrect formatting, misspelled words, book titles not capitalized or italicized, and missing punctuation,” says Mrvos. “Authors should take as much care in writing the bibliography as they do in writing the article.”

It makes sense. You are passionate about your subject. You have researched for weeks, months, even years. You have revised the manuscript over and over. Let your bibliography reveal all that hard work. Show the editor you are accountable for the information. It is your opportunity to distinguish yourself.

“When writers present their work in a most professional manner,” says Edwards, “the person reading these submissions will remember that writer when they send in something another time. First impressions are important!”

Punchy, Bold, Colorful: Fricatives

By Veda Boyd Jones

My friend Brendan, a brand-new teacher, sat at my dinner table complaining that a novel for junior high readers was totally unrealistic.

“There’s no way a juvenile delinquent would talk like that. His language would be full of words like *!&## and \$^*&\$* and %(^*#. (Substitutes are mine.) Your ears would turn blue if you heard the kids talk in our school hallways, and they’re not in trouble with the law.”

“That may be,” I said in the tone I reserve for talking to young friends I have known since their birth and who should not be cussing in front of me, “but the first reader of a novel is an editor and once it’s in print, the next readers are reviewers and librarians, and they are not going to buy a kids’ book full of profanity. And I won’t even address the role of irate school boards.”

Dagnabit

“But it’s not right,” he said.

“It’s not accurate, but that’s where *substitute fricatives* come in.”

“Fricatives?”

“Phooey. Don’t tell me you’ve never heard of fricatives? Shoot, they’re such wonderful words.”

What the Fricative?

In the gentle way I have of talking to know-it-all whippersnappers the ages of my sons, I explained about aggressive consonant sounds (*p, f, b, d, k, sh*, etc.). When you say them, parts of the vocal apparatus (lips, tongue, teeth, and palate) block air and make you push it through a narrow gap to make the sound. Forcing the air out causes friction, thus the name fricative. Once you get one of those suckers out, you feel immensely better. Our best curse words contain fricatives.

Of course, there are technical terms for each of the five combinations of vocal apparatus that constrict the airflow, but I did not flaunt that knowledge to the kid.

~ The lip and teeth combination makes the *f* in *fire* and the *v* in *very*.

~ The tongue and teeth combination makes the sound *th* in *math* and *this*.

~ The tongue and alveolar ridge (the ridge behind the upper front teeth) combination makes the *s* in *say* and the *z* in *zebra*.

~ The tongue and palate (roof of the mouth) combination makes the *sh* and *z* sounds in *shoe*, *machine*, *azure*, and *rouge*.

~ The glottis (the area of the windpipe behind the tongue) makes the sound of the *h* in *happy* and *hello*.

Bunch-back'd toad

Note, these examples are not bad words (well, *math* may be to some people). But the tone we use saying them may help us express our attitudes and emotions.

Frankly, My Dear

My librarian friend Carolyn, an expert on Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone With the Wind*, says that the movie folks added the punch to Rhett’s farewell speech to Scarlett when they added the word *frankly* to Mitchell’s dialogue. In “Frankly, my dear, I don’t give a damn,” it is that wonderful fricative *f* in *frankly* that stings.

Carolyn swears that scientific studies have been done that prove using fricatives causes the part of the brain called the *amygdala* to jump into action, flooding the senses with hormonal superpowers. The conclusion of more than one study: People who swear reduce their stress and heighten their pain tolerance.

Why not run your own little scientific test? Hit your left thumb with a hammer, and say, “That *fricking* hurts!” Then hit your right thumb with the same hammer (for a controlled study) and say, “Oh, dear, it hurts!” Really, which felt better?

Of course, Carolyn pointed out, nobody beats William Shakespeare when it comes to using colorful language, and he created effective phrases without stooping to words that would be banned in print for middle-grade students. Take Queen Margaret calling Richard III to his face a “poisonous bunch-back’d toad” (*Richard III*, Act 1, Scene 3, line 247). And there is one of Falstaff’s fellow drinkers calling other drunks “these mad mustachio purple-hued maltworms” (*Henry IV*, Part 1, Act 2, Scene 1, lines 74-75). In another example from *Henry IV*, Prince Hal calls a tradesman a “leathern-jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated, agate-ring, puke-stocking, caddis-garter, smooth-tongue, Spanish pouch” (Act 2, Scene 4, lines 68-70).

Fudge

Today’s children’s writers could replace cuss words with fricatives in a humorous way with more up-to-date language. I asked my Wednesday lunch group writers for examples of fricatives, and we sat around the table swearing like sailors in friendly language: from *son of a biscuit eater* to *dagnabit* to simple words like *fudge*, *shucks*, and *featherhead*. One writer reminded us that a current phrase used by kids when aggravated in the presence of adults is *shut the front door*.

There are tons of possibilities for giving characters words they could use for fun and as an outlet for their frustrations that will pass that first editor’s desk. Be as creative as the Bard, that sour-pussed, fret-minded Brit.

Obstacles: Too Little, Too Large, or Just Right

By Leslie Wyatt

Say you are tootling down the road in a little Volkswagen convertible. The top is down, your music blares, and the scenery is amazing. Then you come upon a stick. Yes. A stick is in your lane. You drive over it. After several more instances of driving over sticks, you park in your garage and go eat lunch.

Such tiny, uninteresting obstacles, these sticks. Do they have any story value? None.

Or, as you zip up a mountain road, you meet a semi-truck going 80 MPH downhill. His brakes are out, he runs over you, and you die.

Choose too large an obstacle, and the story ends before it really starts.

But what if you are rocking along and *ka-blam*, you collide with a deer? It rolls up over your hood, leaving a deer-sized dent, and lands in the seat next to you. Add in the fact that the car is not really yours. It belongs to your father, and, oh yeah, you don't actually have your license yet.

Finally, you have a *story*.

All Kinds of Obstacles

In literature, an obstacle is an antagonistic element in one form or another. Vivian Vande Velde, whose more than 30 books have won national awards and been translated into 7 different languages, puts it this way: "An obstacle is something that stands in the way of the character getting what he or she wants."

Vande Velde elaborates about what an obstacle is: "It can be an external thing such as another person—maybe two characters want the exact same thing (the One Ring of Power, or the lead in the school play); or one character is simply in the other's way (for example, Snow White doesn't *want* to be the fairest of all, she simply *is*, and that makes her an obstacle to her stepmother); or it can be something in the environment."

An obstacle can also be internal, where the character gets in his or her own way through an inner conflict or weakness—self-doubt, ego-driven blindness, dyslexia. Traditionally, obstacles fall into basic categories: man versus man, man versus society, man versus nature, man versus himself, man versus the supernatural, and sometimes man versus technology.

Unlike what we hope for in real life, writers actively try to create problems for characters—difficulties that they almost cannot overcome. That is where the interest of a story lies. These situations need to be organically generated. That is, they need to spring from the story's own elements in a natural continuum.

Complications should not be added simply to increase page count. As Dandi Daley Mackall, award-winning author of more than 400 books for children of all ages, says, "I think the best obstacles come out of the character himself. What would he never want to happen? What would shake her up more than anything else because it's out of her circle of confidence?"

"As an author, you have to look at every scene and ask, 'How does this add to the story?'" says Vande Velde. "Scenes should add up to something. What does the character learn, or what do we learn about the character, from facing this obstacle?"



Striking a Balance

Creating believable, escalating, connected, almost-but-not-quite overwhelming obstacles for your characters is imperative. But do not overdo it.

Mackall advises that when a story is too plot-heavy, readers do not care what happens to a weak character. "Obstacles aren't just there to let the character jump over," she says. "Obstacles are there to develop character." In her YA novel, *The Silence of Murder* (Random House), Mackall's character Hope "isn't the same shy girl she was in the beginning of the mystery because she's had to shove her way through obstacles."

Beware of constructing too many obstacles, however. You don't want your readers to start thinking "enough, already!"

For the most part, readership determines the size and intensity of obstacles, yet there is variation within each age group of readers. In Vande Velde's middle-grade novel *Smart Dog* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), "There is an unscrupulous scientist who wants to dissect the brain of Sherlock to determine what makes this dog so smart. There's a lot of running around and lying and slapstick humor." Vande Velde doubts any reader seriously worries that Sherlock is going to "end up going under the knife." However, her book for the same age group *Ghost of a Hanged Man* (Marshall Cavendish) is darker. Vande Velde says, "Most readers will guess that Ben, the main character, will survive. They won't be so sure about his sister or his father."

Finally, avoid creating obstacles that do not build tension and lead into the next hurdle, or your story can begin to feel like a string of incidents—like so many sticks under your tires. Mackall's concluding advice? "Create characters you love. And then make their lives miserable."

Marketplace

DECEMBER 2012



Kathy Dawson Books

Penguin Young Readers Group, 375 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014.
<http://us.penguinroup.com>

Penguin Young Readers Group will debut a new middle-grade and YA imprint, Kathy Dawson Books. The first list will appear about a year from now, in winter 2014. The books Editor Kathy Dawson hopes to publish will be “emotionally driven,” and not restricted to any genre boundaries, but in fact stretch them.

Dawson was Vice President and Editorial Director for Fiction at Penguin’s Dial Books for Young Readers; before that she had been at Harcourt, and had an earlier stint at Penguin. At her new imprint, Dawson is looking to acquire fiction from both established and new writers.

The imprints of Penguin are generally open to queries. Dial Books accepts unsolicited queries, with a synopsis and 10 pages, for middle-grade and YA fiction. Regular mail only. Responds only if interested.

Quake

<http://quakeme.com>, www.echelonpress.com

Quake is the young adult imprint of Echelon Press Publishing, which publishes ebooks and trade paperbacks. It will be reopening to submissions in February 2013. Quake’s tagline is “Shakin’ Up Young Readers.” The goal of the company is to promote literacy, shaking kids up and involving them emotionally in books so that they learn to love to read.

Among Quake’s short story children’s ebooks are *King of the Marshmallows*, by Lydia Ondrusek, and *Into the West*, by J. A. Campbell, about a New Jersey teen in the Western desert.

Echelon Press’s other imprints are Explorations, which publishes fantasy, science fiction, and horror; and Shorts, which publishes short stories.

Sterling Publishing

Sterling Publishing, 387 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016.
www.sterlingpublishing.com



Sterling Children’s Books publishes books for all ages, from babies to teens. Its categories include board books, picture books, and nonfiction about art, sports, games and activities, crafts, early learning storybooks and activity books, biography, history, humor, and science and nature.

In 2010, Sterling launched the Splinter imprint to publish edgy fiction for teens, including fantasy, romance, and thrillers. It also now publishes middle-grade fiction. *Itch, the Explosive Adventures of an Element Hunter*, by Simon Mayo, is a new middle-grade to early YA mystery that features science as a major plot element.

Sterling is owned by Barnes & Noble. The current Editorial Director is Patricia Gift.

Mail complete manuscript with author’s biography and publishing history, targeting the Sterling Children’s Books Editor or the Splinter Editor. No email submissions, but include your email address with your manuscript. Royalty; advance.

Turtle

U.S. Kids, P.O. Box 567, Indianapolis, IN 46206.
www.uskidsmags.com

Turtle is the preschool bimonthly of U. S. Kids that targets ages three to five. It and its companion publications *Humpty Dumpty* and *Jack and Jill* promote healthy living and safety through entertaining stories and activities.

Of interest to Editor Terry Harshman are articles to 250 words on health, fitness, nutrition, simple science, and basic concepts; fiction to 350 words, including rebuses (to 100 words), adventure, humor, contemporary, fantasy, and multicultural; poems, 4-12 lines; and puzzles, games, activities, crafts, finger plays, and recipes. *Turtle*’s circulation is 382,000.

Mail complete manuscripts. Buys all rights. Payment, articles and stories, \$70+; poetry, \$35+. Recipes, crafts, finger plays, and action rhymes, \$40+. Pays on publication.



FamilyFun

805 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.
www.parents.com/familyfun-magazine

Early this year, Meredith Corporation bought the 20-year-old *FamilyFun* from Disney Publishing. The magazine, which appears 10 times a year and has a circulation of more than 2 million, joined Meredith’s *American Baby*, *Family Circle*, and *Parents*.

The October 2012 issue saw a redesign of *FamilyFun*, which now has three major sections: Create, Play, and Explore.

The magazine continues to offer original ideas for family projects, crafts, cooking, parties, holidays, sports, and family-friendly travel. The emphasis is on activities and practical ways to build strong, healthy families.

Query for features; include content, structure, and tone of article. Send complete manuscript for depts/columns.

Current online queries for *FamilyFun* writers’ guidelines for directed to the guidelines for *Parents* (www.parents.com/parents-magazine/writers-guidelines), which say the publication is looking for new talent for its writer pool. Query with a one-page letter detailing your topic, angle/strategy, and publishing history. No unsolicited fiction or poetry. Responds in 4 to 6 weeks. Pays on acceptance.

Stockland Happy to Be Leading Lerner Publications

By Judy Bradbury

In the spring of this year, Lerner Publishing Group announced the appointment of Patricia Stockland as Editorial Director of Lerner Publications. She is charged with enhancing the nonfiction imprint by, according to the company's press release, "strengthening and building upon an already successful publishing program that includes highly reviewed and recognized nonfiction series for children in kindergarten through eighth grade."

A Wealth of Experience and Passions

Stockland comes to Lerner with a wealth of experience. Formerly Editorial Director of Red Line Editorial, she has been an editor and author for 13 years and has a master's in literature. In addition to poems, scholarly articles, and marketing pieces, she has written more than 60 books for children and teens, garnering national and regional awards, including the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Association of Educational Publishers, and the NSTA's Outstanding Science Trade Book award.

Prior to entering the publishing arena, Stockland worked briefly as a substitute teacher. "As much as I loved being in the classroom and helping students have those *aha* moments," she reflects, "I also appreciated the depth afforded by editing something to make it a strong and useful form of information. It's really a privilege to combine a number of my passions and strengths into a career."

Exploring New Areas and Needs

Stockland works out of Lerner Publications's office in Minneapolis, developing, acquiring, and editing new nonfiction series for both the print and digital marketplace.

"Lerner has a long-standing tradition of quality publishing in the nonfiction marketplace. Our list development process, alongside driven cover designs and marketing efforts, really makes it a great place to be in terms of joining an intelligent dialogue of what to publish when, and also what not to publish and why. I'm really excited to learn from the team here and to push this imprint into new areas of coverage," says Stockland.

Discussing her staff, she says, "A book is a team effort—I'm one of many folks at Lerner who bring things together. Mary Rodgers is our Editor in Chief, and she oversees the work of my imprint as well as my colleagues' imprints. In addition to a team of editorial directors, text and production editors, designers, photo researchers, administrative staff, and marketing teams, we also have digital leadership, premedia personnel, warehouse experts—the list goes on. We even have our own bindery!"

"As you might gather, Lerner is really a start-to-finish type of publishing house. It's one of the few mid-size

publishers left in the industry, and I think that results in an excellent combination of size-meets-quality. The Lerner imprint truly capitalizes on that mix and, thanks to sibling imprints in the trade and fiction realms, is able to concentrate on well-done nonfiction because it doesn't have to try to be everything else."

Stockland is pleased by the growth of Lerner's ebooks and interactive books. "To get our products into the hands of readers who come to information more effectively in those formats is rewarding because we know we've provided

Work for Hire

For authors who are interested in being considered for work-for-hire assignments, Lerner has a formal vetting process. For more information, contact solinquiry@lernerbooks.com and request the author packet, specifying the elementary or upper grades version, or both. The packet provides instructions for submitting specific writing samples. "We vet the samples," says Stockland, "and if an author seems like a good fit and we have a project in mind, we may contact him or her."

a tool that brings youngsters into the fold of learning."

Currently, Lerner is focusing on informational texts that support the curriculum and the new standards. "I see children's nonfiction series leading the charge in classrooms, school libraries—and public libraries as well. As readers are asked to make connections among texts rather than learning subjects in isolation, those points of comparative literature will become even stronger."

Staying in Touch

Although Lerner no longer accepts unsolicited materials, Stockland remarks, "We do sometimes put out a call for specific proposals through newsletters, and our blog (www.lernerbooks.blogspot.com) and Twitter feed (@LernerBooks). Following them is a great way to be informed about what we are specifically seeking at any given moment." Stockland advises authors to "be open to the revision process. We don't expect a manuscript to be perfect upon arrival, but we do appreciate an open and ongoing dialogue as to what makes really high-quality materials. If you're married to your work out of the gate, especially for a title within a nonfiction series, it can make the revision road challenging."

Stockland believes, "Having a natural love of nonfiction really helps when it comes to writing nonfiction. Kids naturally love facts and answers, and asking questions, and I think Lerner Publications provides excellent tools by which to satiate informational curiosities. I'm really thankful for the opportunity to steer the imprint toward even more of those areas!"

Marketplace

Poisoned Pencil

www.poisonedpenpress.com

Mystery publisher Poisoned Pen Press is launching its first dedicated YA imprint, Poisoned Pencil, with the premier list this fall. The new imprint is currently open to submissions for YA mysteries, 45,000 to 90,000 words, and 12- to 18-year-old protagonists. It is open to new writers.

Poisoned Pencil wants traditional and cross-genre teen mysteries, especially those with unique narratives and depictions of the ambiguity and complexity of the world. No nonfiction, no short stories or collections, no gore, horror, serial killers, or heavily supernatural or fantasy content, including no vampires.

Editor Ellen Larson can be followed at @poisonedpencil. Guidelines are available on the website. Manuscripts must be submitted via the online submissions manager only; no hard copy or emails. Include a cover letter (to 500 words) to introduce your book; a letter with your biography, publication history, and any other relevant information; a synopsis; and the complete manuscript. Only one manuscript may be submitted at a time. No simultaneous submissions.

Poisoned Pen Press currently has 400 books in print.

Keys for Kids

CBH Ministries, P.O. Box 1001, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

www.keysforkids.org

This quarterly for ages 6 to 14 offers Gospel-based stories and daily devotionals to help young people grow in their faith and belief in Jesus Christ. The *keys* are thoughts and Bible verses that kids may carry with them and think about through the day. The related Scripture passages and stories help, as do the practical applications with each key. The circulation is 70,000.

Guidelines are available online. Submissions should include a suggested title, a Scripture passage reference of 3 to 10 verses, and a spiritual story, though not a Bible story. *Keys for Kids* Editor Hazel Marett wants characters in the stories to be normal kids (not angels), and a lesson illustrating a spiritual or biblical truth should be included—but do not be heavy-handed or preach. Include action and humor. Do not use even mild swear words. The related practical application should be specific to children's lives. Finally, include the key, a short and focused thought.

Stories, 375 to 400 words; practical application, 85 words. Scripture passage, a story, and a practical application. Mail or email submissions to hazel@cbhministries.org. SASE. Responds in 2 months. Buys first, second, and reprint rights. Articles, \$25. Pays on acceptance.

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Odyssey

Cobblestone Publishing, 30 Grove St., Suite C, Peterborough, NH 03458. www.odysseymagazine.com

Elizabeth E. Lindstrom is the Editor of this science magazine for ages 9 to 14 that appears 9 times a year.

Odyssey includes short stories, articles, poetry, and activities, on themes related to science, technology, and math. Upcoming themes are Unsolved Mysteries of Science (due February 1, 2013) and Imagine a 10-D World (due March 1, 2013). See the website for specifics.

Articles are 750 to 950 words; fiction is 1,000 words, in the genres of science fiction, retold legends, and science-themed stories. Departments (Place, Media, and People to Discover), 400 to 650 words. Activities and experiments, to 750 words.

Buys all rights. Pays 20¢ to 25¢ a word, on publication.



Flashlight Press

527 Empire Boulevard, Brooklyn, NY 11225.

www.flashlightpress.com

A small picture book publisher, Flashlight Press publishes picture books for ages 4 to 8. It looks for touching, humorous stories depicting contemporary families and social situations, and universal themes.

Fiction should be about 1,000 words and revolve around universal themes related to family and social situations. No concept books, early readers, chapter books, novels, or holiday stories. Recent titles include *Victricia Malicia*, by Carrie L. Clickard and illustrated by Mark Meyers, and *Sillie Frillie Grandma Tillie*, by Laurie Jacobs, and illustrated by Anne Jewett.

Email a query describing the story, word count, and your target audience in the body of the email, to submissions@flashlightpress.com (no attachments). The Editor is Shari Dash Greenspan. No hard copy submissions. Responds if interested.