

LEARNING PLATFORMS - updated 4/27/25

To write a good book (a great book!) consider committing yourself to learning the craft of writing, and if interested in selling your books, consider learning about the business of publishing in the children's book world. I personally write and illustrate and in an overlapping fashion I continue to take classes and build my skills. In other words, I don't wait to create work until I have learned everything I think I need to learn. If I did that, I would never create anything. But do it *your* way – find the best way to learn that works for you.

Storyteller Academy is an online learning platform founded by award-winning author and illustrator Arree Chung. It offers comprehensive courses and resources for aspiring children's book writers and illustrators. The academy provides a structured curriculum that guides students through the creative process, from developing ideas to crafting compelling stories and illustrations. Courses are taught by industry professionals and cover various aspects of children's book creation, including writing, illustrating, and publishing.

In addition to its educational offerings, Storyteller Academy fosters a supportive community where members can connect, share their work, and receive feedback. This collaborative environment aims to help creatives refine their skills and achieve their goals in children's literature.

However, it's important to note that Storyteller Academy announced its closure in early 2025. Founder Arree Chung decided to close the online school to focus on personal well-being and other interests. Despite this, the academy has continued to offer workshops and live classes through February 2025, with access to courses available to annual members until that time. You may want to contact them on their website and ask for more information if interested.

LINK: For more information about Storyteller Academy and its offerings, you can visit their official website: <https://www.storytelleracademy.com>.

**

SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators)

SCBWI stands for Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. It's the largest professional organization specifically for writers, illustrators, and translators who create content for children and young adults. Founded: 1971 by authors Stephen Mooser and Lin Oliver. What SCBWI does:

- Provides networking opportunities (both online and in-person).
- Offers grants, awards, and mentorships to emerging and established creators.

- Hosts regional and international conferences — great for workshops, critiques, and meeting editors, agents, and fellow creators.
- Publishes industry resources like The Bulletin, The Book, and various guides on publishing and marketing.
- Supports diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in children's literature.

Membership includes:

- Access to exclusive events, webinars, and meetups.
- Opportunities to get work critiqued or considered by publishers through special SCBWI programs.
- Discounts on conferences and workshops.

Who it's for:

- Authors (traditionally published, self-published, or aspiring).
- Illustrators.
- Translators of children's books.
- Anyone working in children's publishing fields.

LINK: <https://www.scbwi.org/>

SCBWI Member Benefits Videos: Maximize Your Membership: Blurb from SCBWI's website:

Supercharge your SCBWI membership with the Member Benefits Video Series! Dive into a treasure trove of insider tips and expert advice designed to help you make the most of your membership. Whether you're a writer or illustrator, these exclusive videos will show you how to unlock powerful SCBWI resources, level up your craft, and take your creative career to exciting new heights! –

LINK: [Member Benefits Videos: Maximize Your Membership – SCBWI](#)

Resources related to SCBWI -

"The Book" from SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) is a *huge* guide specifically for people creating children's books — including writers, illustrators, and translators. "The Book" is usually every year and is free for SCBWI Premium members as a PDF download.

LINK: [The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children – SCBWI](#)

Blurb on SCBWI's website about this book:

"The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children" offers invaluable advice and resources for authors, illustrators, and translators of children's books. Inside you will find new and essential articles such as maximizing social media, creating book trailers, best practices in independent publishing, and grassroots promotion. Our up-to-the-minute Market Survey includes a comprehensive house-by-house listing of imprints, editors, art directors, and key personnel. Other directories include The International Market Survey, The Reviewers Directory, The Agents Directory, and unique features called Edited By and Agented By, in which editors and agents have been personally surveyed to provide a history of their recent acquisitions. Key resources include an annotated bibliography of reference books for aspiring children's book creators, as well as a current listing of bloggers, reviewers, grants, and awards opportunities.

SCBWI Regional Online Virtual Events: low-cost, online webinars about various Craft (How-To's about your story) and various Business (marketing, etc.) topics regarding the world of Children's Books. SCBWI premium members will get a discount when they but you can still attend if you are not a member. Many events are recorded with recordings made available for a short period of time after the webinar (check each topic's description to check about that). Refer to this web page often if interested as new events get posted frequently.

LINK: [Regional virtual events – SCBWI](#) *

NOTE: These events need to be manually posted to this general SCBWI web page and sometimes the event organizers don't always do that. So you may also want to check regularly by going to each region's (in which you are interested) to check their specific regional web pages for their events. Note that each region's website will look different as they are maintained locally by that region. **LINK:** [SCBWI global regions – SCBWI](#)

SCBWI Regional In-Person Events: Same as above except in-person. This is where you will find posts about local region's in-person annual day-long conferences.

LINK: [Regional virtual events – SCBWI](#)

NOTE: These events need to be manually posted to this general SCBWI web page and sometimes the event organizers don't always do that. So you may also want to check regularly by going to each region's (in which you are interested) to check their specific regional web pages for their events. Note that each region's website will look different as they are maintained locally by that region. **LINK:** [SCBWI global regions – SCBWI](#)

Blurb from SCBWI's website: "The Bulletin" was produced by SCBWI for over fifty years, containing comprehensive information, articles, and interviews about the field of children's literature. You can view the full archives of the Bulletin, available only to SCBWI Premium Members.

LINK: [The Bulletin – SCBWI](#)

**

Domestika is a leading online learning platform tailored for creative professionals and enthusiasts. It offers a vast array of courses across disciplines such as illustration, design, photography, animation, crafts, and more. Each course is meticulously produced in-house to ensure high-quality content, featuring expert instructors who guide learners through practical projects. With a community of over 8 million creatives worldwide, Domestika provides an engaging environment where students can share their work, receive feedback, and connect with like-minded individuals. * Domestika offers a monthly subscription membership or you can purchase individual classes. All are online.

LINK: [Online courses for creative professionals | Domestika](#)

NOTE: This platform started abroad so some classes were originally in another language, but many have been translated to multiple languages including English (or offer captions). The site has evolved quite a bit recently so this may no longer be an issue. If you think a class looks interesting click on the short Intro video to get a feel for the instructor and to check out the syllabus.

BOOK AWARDS - updated 4/27/25

Researching Children's Book Awards (what it takes to have your book considered for the award, but more importantly, which book has won in the past...then you may want to read reading as many of those as you have time and can find in your library):

1. **Newbery Medal**

Awarded annually to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

LINK: [Newbery Medal – ALA](#)

2. **Caldecott Medal**

Recognizes the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

LINK: [Caldecott Medal – ALA](#)

3. **Coretta Scott King Book Awards**

Honors African American authors and illustrators for outstanding contributions to children's and young adult literature.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/coretta-scott-king>

4. **Pura Belpré Award**

Celebrates Latino/Latina writers and illustrators whose work best portrays the Latino cultural experience in children's books.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal>

5. **Theodor Seuss Geisel Award**

Given to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/geisel>

6. **Michael L. Printz Award**

Recognizes excellence in literature written for young adults.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/yalsa/printz>

7. **Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal**

Awarded to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished informational book for children.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/sibert>

8. Odyssey Award

Honors the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/yalsa/odyssey-award>

9. Batchelder Award

Given to an American publisher for the most outstanding children's book originally published in a language other than English and subsequently translated into English.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelder>

10. Stonewall Book Awards

Recognizes exceptional merit relating to the LGBTQIA+ experience in children's and young adult literature.

LINK: <https://www.ala.org/rt/rrt/award/stonewall>

11. Children's Literature Legacy Award

Honors an author or illustrator whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to children's literature.

LINK: [Book & Media Awards | Association for Library Service to Children](#)

12. International Literacy Association (ILA) Children's and Young Adults' Book Awards

Recognizes newly published authors who show unusual promise in the children's and young adult book field.

LINK: [Children's and Young Adults' Book Awards | International Literacy Association](#)

13. Kids' Book Choice Awards

The only national book awards chosen solely by kids and teens.

LINK: [Kids' Book Choice Awards – CBC](#)

Google the internet for many more.

Here's a list of indie children's book awards that independent (self-published or small press) authors often enter:

1. IBPA Benjamin Franklin Awards

Recognizes excellence in independent publishing, including categories for children's books.

LINK: <https://ibpabenjaminfranklinawards.com>

2. Moonbeam Children's Book Awards

Celebrates exceptional children's books across over 45 categories, from picture books to young adult fiction.

LINK: <https://moonbeamawards.com>

3. **The Wishing Shelf Book Awards**

A UK-based award with categories for children's books, judged by real child readers.

LINK: <https://www.thewsa.co.uk>

4. **Next Generation Indie Book Awards**

One of the largest international awards for indie authors, featuring children's book categories.

LINK: <https://www.indiebookawards.com>

5. **Best Indie Book Award (BIBA)**

An international literary contest recognizing outstanding achievements by independent authors, including children's fiction and nonfiction.

LINK: <https://bestindiebookaward.com>

6. **Readers' Favorite Book Awards**

Offers a wide range of categories for children's books, providing recognition and exposure for authors.

LINK: <https://readersfavorite.com>

7. **Royal Dragonfly Book Awards**

Hosted by Story Monsters LLC, this award focuses on excellence in children's and young adult literature.

LINK: <https://storymonsters.com/store/royal-dragonfly-book-award-entry>

8. **Mom's Choice Awards**

Recognizes excellence in family-friendly media, products, and services, including many indie children's books.

LINK: <https://momschoiceawards.com>

9. **Purple Dragonfly Book Awards**

Also by Story Monsters, this award specifically honors children's books across various categories.

LINK: <https://storymonsters.com/store/purple-dragonfly-book-award-entry>

10. **Literary Titan Book Awards**

Open to indie children's books, offering gold, silver, and bronze awards to recognize excellence in writing.

LINK: <https://literarytitan.com/bookawards/>

Google the internet for many more.

CRITIQUES - updated 4/27/25

In a recent copy of *Poets & Writers* about critique groups, "... Constructive feedback helps writers recognize their strengths and weaknesses, [and] consider new revision strategies..."

About critique groups (typically self-arranged and no cost; you critique each other's work on an ongoing basis with the goal of creating a "polished" well-developed version of your story. Every group operates differently so check in with the group leader about the structure and any questions you may have): You may want to check to see if any of the information on SCBWI CenCal region's web pages is of interest to you:

LINK: [Critique Group Connection | California: Central/Coastal – SCBWI](#)

(scroll to bottom of that web page to find the downloadable PDF version)

Paid Professional Critiques: Often when you register for a writer's conference you may be offered an optional add-on for an additional charge for a bit of time with an industry professional.

They are all structured differently so read the descriptions carefully. Variations may include: Online-only or in-person only * AND/OR there may be with one professional and just you OR there may be with one professional with a small group.

The purpose of this time will vary significantly so again, read the descriptions carefully. Some offer time for you to **Pitch** them your story; others will allow you time to read your **first page**. Sometimes you can find a paid written critique where you will mail in your manuscript before the conference and the industry expert will review and comment on it in writing before it is returned to you at the conference.

TIP: It seems as if EVERYBODY wants time with a professional so these options often sell out quickly. Do your homework (who do you want time with?) and try to register immediately as soon as registration opens. Have a backup choice ready in case your first choice is sold out by the time you register.

TRAINING - updated 4/27/25