

Thank you for attending this event. Feel free to reference this document for your own personal use. Please don't distribute it without asking me first. My best to you in your journey as a Children's Book author! – Paulina Hill

So You Want to Write a Children's Book...

AGENDA

Goal: To help you identify your “motion” for writing a children’s book—and to help get you started in that direction.

- ✓ Talk about the different types of children’s books + how a library grows its collections + expected 2025 trends.
- ✓ Share tips for how you might build your *skills* for writing a children’s book, as well as learn about the *business* of children’s books.
- ✓ Meet an award-winning local author who has written and published multiple books- Alexis O’Neill.

A mini-workshop * 4/26/25 * Camarillo Library



About Us...

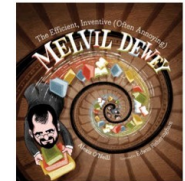
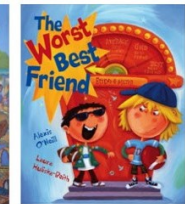
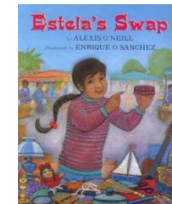
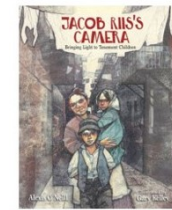
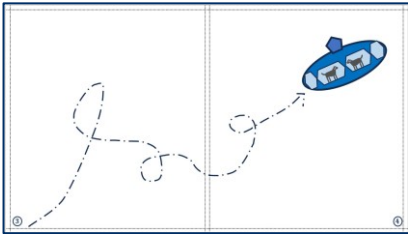


Paulina Hill

25 years in corporate & professional project management. During the pandemic, designed a short series of bilingual activity books (self-published on Amazon).

Has 6 polished picture book manuscripts (now illustrating them). Is also working on a historical YA novel set in Renaissance Italy, as well as an early-reader Graphic Novel.

Member of SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) for more than 15 years, has attended numerous conferences and workshops. * Former Asst. Regional Advisor for SCBWI's local chapter.



Alexis O'Neill

Has written numerous children's books and magazine articles,--including the award-winning bully picture book, *The Recess Queen*.

Former elementary teacher, now teaching at the UCLA Extension Writers' Program. A school-visit expert, visits schools across the country and advises others how to design high-quality school visit programs. Established the annual Children's Book Week Celebration in Simi Valley serving 12,000 students a year. Board member of the Ventura County Reading Association.

Former Regional Advisor for SCBWI's CenCal chapter for 16+ years.



Lisa Padgett

As Youth Services Manager at the Camarillo Library. Lisa is a dedicated library professional driven by a desire to strengthen community connections and expand access to learning opportunities.

Lisa is especially committed to establishing the library as a vital hub for early childhood literacy, empowering families and young learners throughout the community.

Lisa has a BA in Psychology as well as a MLIS in Library Science. Additionally, she has many years of experience in Quality Improvement in the social services field.

CHILDREN'S BOOK GENRES:

Ages 0 to 12 - Picture Book to Middle Grade

FICTION

FANTASY

SCIENCE
FICTION

ADVENTURE

MYSTERY

REALISTIC
FICTION

HISTORICAL
FICTION

HUMOR

ANIMAL
STORIES

HORROR /
SPOOKY
STORIES

FAIRY TALES
& FOLKLORE

SUPERHERO
/ ACTION

MAGICAL
SCHOOL
/ POWERS

NON-FICTION

Biography & Memoir

Science & Nature

History & Culture

Geography & Travel

How-To & DIY

STEM & STEAM

Social Studies & Civics

Emotional Intelligence & Self-Help

Language & Literacy

Reference

Arts & Entertainment

Sports & Games

Religion & Spirituality

Children's Books Sub-Genres (Picture Book thru Middle Grade) - FICTION

1. Fantasy

- **High Fantasy / Epic Fantasy** – Invented worlds, complex lore
- **Low Fantasy** – Magic within the real world
- **Fairy Tales & Retellings** – Classic or reimagined folklore
- **Mythology-based** – Greek, Norse, Egyptian, etc.
- **Animal Fantasy** – Talking animals or magical creatures
- **Portal Fantasy** – Real world to magical realm (e.g., *Narnia*)
- **Urban Fantasy** – Magic hidden in modern society
- **Magical Realism** – Subtle magic in everyday life

2. Science Fiction

- Time Travel
- Dystopian / Post-Apocalyptic
- Space Exploration
- Futuristic Societies / Technology
- Aliens & First Contact
- Robots & AI

3. Adventure

- Quest / Journey Stories
- Survival Stories
- Treasure Hunts
- Exploration & Discovery
- Pirates & High Seas
- Escapes / Rescues

4. Mystery

- Kid Detectives / Sleuths
- Whodunits
- Spy & Espionage
- Supernatural Mysteries
- Puzzle Solvers

5. Realistic Fiction

- Friendship & Family
- School Life
- Coming-of-Age
- Bullying / Peer Pressure
- Divorce / Grief / Loss
- Cultural Identity / Immigrant Experience
- Slice-of-Life

6. Historical Fiction

- War-Time (e.g., WWII)
- Great Depression / Industrial Age
- Civil Rights Movement
- Immigrant Stories
- Ancient Worlds (Rome, Egypt, etc.)
- Colonial / Pioneer Life

7. Humor

- Slapstick
- Wordplay / Puns
- Absurdist / Surreal Humor
- Diary-style Comedy (e.g., *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*)
- Satire & Parody

8. Animal Stories

- Realistic Animal Protagonists
- Anthropomorphic Adventures
- Pet-Centered Tales
- Wildlife Survival

9. Horror / Spooky

- Ghost Stories
- Haunted Houses
- Monsters / Vampires / Werewolves

- Mild Scares for Young Readers
- Cursed Objects / Dolls

10. Fairy Tales & Folklore

- Classic Retellings
- Multicultural Folktales
- Fables with Morals

11. Superhero / Action

- Kid Superheroes
- Secret Identities
- Team-Based Missions
- Comic-style Adventures

12. Magical School / Powers

- Wizard Schools
- Hidden Talents
- Special Academies

13. Paranormal

- Psychic Kids
- Mediums / Ghost Communicators
- Telekinesis, Telepathy, etc.

14. Sports Fiction

- Team Sports & Tournaments
- Underdog Stories
- Athletic Rivalries
- Disability & Inclusion in Sports

15. Tall Tales & Legends

- Exaggerated Heroes (e.g., Paul Bunyan)
- Modern Mythmaking
- Campfire Stories

Children's Books Sub-Genres (Picture Book thru Middle Grade) – NON-FICTION

1. Biography & Memoir

- **Historical Figures** (inventors, presidents, royalty)
- **Contemporary Figures** (athletes, artists, scientists)
- **Activists & Changemakers**
- **Memoirs for Kids** (age-appropriate personal stories)
- **Autobiographies** (simplified or adapted for children)

2. History

- **World History**
- **American History**
- **Ancient Civilizations** (Egypt, Rome, China)
- **Indigenous History**
- **War & Conflict** (WWI, WWII, civil rights)
- **Famous Events** (Titanic, moon landing, etc.)

3. Science & Nature

- **Biology** (animals, plants, human body)
- **Earth Science** (volcanoes, weather, geology)
- **Astronomy** (space, planets, stars)
- **Physics & Chemistry** (magnets, matter, reactions)
- **Ecology & Environment** (conservation, climate change)
- **Insects & Animals**
- **Human Body & Health**

4. Technology & Engineering

- **Machines & Vehicles**
- **Robotics & Coding**
- **Engineering Principles**
- **Inventions & Inventors**
- **STEM Activity Books**

- **Basic Math Concepts** (addition, subtraction)
- **Patterns & Shapes**
- **Mathematical Thinking**
- **Math in Real Life** (money, time, cooking)

6. Geography & Cultures

- **Countries & Continents**
- **World Cultures & Traditions**
- **Maps & Atlases**
- **Languages of the World**
- **Holidays Around the Globe**

7. Social Studies & Civics

- **Government & Democracy**
- **Economics** (basic concepts)
- **Rights & Responsibilities**
- **Citizenship**
- **Community Helpers**

8. Arts & Music

- **Visual Arts** (drawing, painting, famous artists)
- **Music & Musicians**
- **Dance & Performance Arts**
- **How-to Art Books**
- **Art History for Kids**

9. Self-Help / Life Skills

- **Mindfulness & Emotional Intelligence**
- **Social Skills**
- **Growth Mindset**
- **Grief, Divorce, or Mental Health**
- **Daily Routines / Habits**

- **How People Work**
- **Career Biographies**
- **STEAM Careers**

11. How-To / Activity / Hobby Books

- **Crafts & DIY**
- **Cooking & Baking**
- **Drawing & Art Activities**
- **Games, Puzzles, Mazes**
- **Outdoor & Nature Activities**

12. Poetry & Anthologies (non-fiction-based)

- **Nature Poems**
- **Historical or Biographical Poems**
- **Poetry Collections by Topic**

13. Faith & Religion

- **Bible Stories**
- **World Religions**
- **Moral Lessons**
- **Spiritual Practices for Kids**

14. True Adventure & Exploration

- **Animal Encounters**
- **Survival Stories**
- **Space Missions**
- **Ocean Explorations**
- **Travel Logs**

15. Current Events & News

- **Kid-Friendly News**
- **Environmental Updates**
- **World Events Explained**



So how does a library consider
all of that to create its
collections?



Collections



Library collections have very specific types of goals...

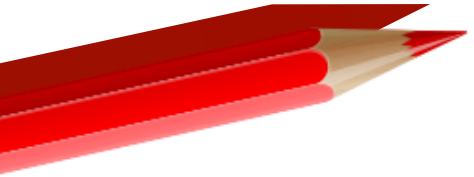
- ✓ **Board Books** (0–3 years): Durable, chewable, simple text, bright illustrations.
- ✓ **Picture Books (PB)** (3–7 years): Often read aloud, 500–800 words, heavy on illustrations. (Used to be longer but agents now want fewer words.)
- ✓ **Early Readers** (5–8 years): Simple sentences, chapters, designed for kids just learning to read.
- ✓ **Chapter Books** (6–9 years): More words, fewer pictures, easy-to-follow plots.
- ✓ **Middle Grade (MG)** (8–12 years): More complex themes and characters, no romance usually.
- ✓ **Young Adult (YA)** (12+): Deals with mature themes, often from a teen's perspective.



Trends



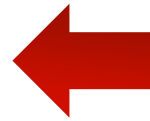
What's on the horizon for
2025 (a librarian's view)...



Build Your Skills



Credit: Debbie Ridpath Ohi – Children's Book Author & Illustrator



The most important thing you can do.

Having said that, it's time to think about...

Learning the craft of writing a good children's book and learning the business of publishing your book (if you plan to sell your book).

Introducing the idea of "Craft"

Everything that makes the story itself great...

And so much more... (great dialogue, high stakes, etc.)

1. **Emotional Impact** - *makes you feel something*. Whether it's joy, heartbreak, wonder, or anger, it lingers in your gut.
2. **Memorable Characters** - Characters that feel real—flawed, complex, and evolving—stick with you.
3. **Strong, Original Voice** - The author's voice—whether lyrical, raw, witty, or spare—should feel distinctive and authentic. You read a paragraph and *know* who wrote it.
4. **A Compelling Plot** - Some great books are page-turners, others wander beautifully without much happening. Either way, they pull you in and won't let go.
5. **Timeless Themes** - Love, death, identity, justice, power—books that grapple with the big questions tend to have lasting power.
6. **Thought-Provoking** - A great book **changes** you, even just a little. It makes you rethink something, see the world differently, or ask new questions.
7. **Beautiful or Precise Language** - Sometimes it's about lyrical prose that sings, sometimes it's about words chosen so precisely they cut like a scalpel.
8. **Cultural Relevance** - Books that tap into, reflect, or challenge the times we live in often gain that extra layer of greatness.

Definitions

Everything that
makes the story
itself great...

A **strong author's voice** is what makes a writer's work feel *unique*, *alive*, and *recognizably theirs*. It's the combination of style, tone, personality, and perspective that shines through the writing, no matter what they're writing about. An author's choice of words, rhythm and sentence structure create a flow that's easy to recognize and feel.

A **plot** is the sequence of events that make up a story — basically, what happens and in what order.

In writing, a **theme** is the **main idea, message, or underlying meaning** that a story explores. It's what the story is really about at a deeper level — beyond just the plot or what's happening on the surface. A theme is usually:

- Universal** (something many people can relate to, like love, friendship, betrayal, freedom).
- Expressed through characters, actions, and outcomes** (not usually stated outright).

Introducing "The Business"

Everything that
helps you publish
and sell your
book...

- **The WHO:** Know the **industry's key players** (i.e., publishers, agents, retailers, educators, librarians)
- **The WHAT:** Know how the **business models** works (i.e., traditional publishing vs self-publishing vs hybrid publishing)
- **More WHAT:** Know the **revenue streams** (i.e., advances, sales commissions, foreign rights, licensing and merchandising, educational use, audio- and e-books)
- **The HOW:** Know how to get and work with an agent, how to get a good book contract, how to work with the publisher's editor, etc.
- **The HOW:** Know how to **market/promote** your book (i.e., social media, school visits, book awards)
- **Do your research before you write** (if you want to sell). Know the current and coming **trends** (what's selling now) – read, read, read the top selling books and read market studies

For Example...

Industry experts that presented
recently at a local SCBWI region
conference...



Andrea Welch
Executive Editor
Beach Lane Books/
Simon & Schuster



Jennie Kendrick
Sr. Agent
Red Fox
Literary Agency



Courtney Donovan
Agent
Writers House



Michele Robbins
Publisher
Familius Publishing

Book Awards...



Children's Book Publishers and imprints



The Process of Selling Your Book (Traditional Publishing)

Every step in this process needs preparation by the author and has concrete elements related to it like the author's query letter, formatted manuscript, PB dummy (for illustrators), agent contract, book contract, etc.

An abbreviated, general example Note: there are many permutations so do your research!

Author pitches story to agent



Agent agrees to represent the author



Agent pitches and sells the book to a publisher



Author works with publisher's editor to finalize the manuscript



Publisher produces (formats, prints, designs) the book



Publisher distributes the book through its sales channels



Publisher and author promote the book to increase sales



Author collects \$\$\$ (royalties/advances)

Type of Publishing

An abbreviated, example to give you a general idea of the differences. Do your own research for information about the types of publishing.

Things change fast in this industry. So stay current.

	Traditional Publishing	Independent (Self) Publishing	Hybrid Publishing
Control	Limited (publisher makes major decisions)	Full control (author decides everything)	Moderate (author has some control, but publisher offers support)
Upfront Costs	No costs to the author (publisher covers expenses)	High (author pays for editing, design, etc.)	Moderate (author typically contributes to production costs)
Royalties	Typically 10-20% of sales	70-100% of sales	Typically 30-50% of sales
Creative Freedom	Limited (publisher makes key creative decisions)	Full creative control (author decides everything)	Moderate (author has input but publisher has some control)
Editing & Design	Professional editing, cover design, etc.	Author hires own editors/designers	Professional support provided by publisher
Distribution	Wide distribution (bookstores, libraries, etc.)	Limited (mostly online or via author's own efforts)	More distribution than self-publishing, but less than traditional
Marketing	Publisher handles marketing & promotion	Author handles all marketing	Publisher supports with marketing efforts
Advances	Author receives an advance against royalties	No advance (earn royalties only after publication)	Rarely receives an advance, but keeps larger royalties
Prestige/Recognition	High (especially for major publishers)	Lower (self-published books are often viewed as less prestigious)	Moderate (has more credibility than self-publishing but less than traditional)
Time to Publish	Longer (can take months to years to get published)	Faster (author can publish immediately)	Moderate (may take a few months, depending on the contract)

Pros and Cons

An abbreviated, example to give you a general idea of the differences. Do your own research for information about the types of publishing.

Things change fast in this industry. So stay current.

1) Traditional Publishing:

- **Pros:** No upfront costs to the author (except for your personal supplies and equipment), professional support from the agency and publisher, potential for wider distribution, industry recognition.
- **Cons:** Lower royalties, limited control, slower process, harder to get the attention of an agent and publisher than your own attention

2) Independent (Self) Publishing:

- **Pros:** Full creative control, higher royalties (you get all the money you make from sales minus your expenses), faster publishing depending on fast you want to and can go.
- **Cons:** High upfront and ongoing costs to the author (you're on your own), limited distribution and marketing, all the responsibility is on you for everything since you don't have an agent or publisher and are completely representing yourself.

3) Hybrid Publishing:

- **Pros:** Some level of professional support, higher royalties than traditional publishing (less than self-publishing), some creative control, faster than traditional publishing.
- **Cons:** Some upfront costs (there is a \$ charge), moderate control, distribution less wide than traditional publishing.
- You can get conned by someone posing as a hybrid "agency". Research this service carefully.



YOU CAN DO IT! Tips that helped me grow as an author

1) Remember: You are not Alone. Look for like-minded people.

Join an association, attend a local meetup or mingle, go to in-person conferences, and sign up for live webinars.

2) Important: Get feedback on your writing so think about who can be your “beta readers”. Think about joining a critique group and getting feedback on your work-in-progress, and giving feedback to others.

3) Consider paying an industry expert for a bit of their time to review your work. This called a “professional critique”.



4) Solo: Find great how-to books or Youtube channels. Frequent your library or used-book sales (i.e., Friends of the Library) and read, read, read.

5) Consider volunteering within the industry. Not only will you help but you will learn a lot and you may find others who love children's books.



SCBWI global regions

SCBWI regions are run by dedicated volunteer leaders who coordinate communications, activities, and events so our members can enjoy the benefits of belonging to a creative community. Be sure to follow your home region to keep up with the latest local news and activities. Go to your Member Home page, click the My Profile button, then the Edit My Profile button. Scroll down the page and click "Set your SCBWI home region," then click the arrow and choose your home region to add it to your profile.

Explore SCBWI Regions

Alaska	Illinois	New York: Long Island
Arizona	Indiana	New York: Metropolitan
Australia East	Indonesia	New York: West/Central Upstate
Australia West	Inland Northwest (Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho)	New York: Westchester
Benelux (Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands)	International Central	New Zealand
British Isles (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland)	Iowa	Nigeria
California: Central/Coastal	Ireland	Ohio: Central and South
California: Los Angeles County	Israel	Ohio: North
California: North/Central	Japan	Oklahoma/Arkansas
California: San Diego	KS/MO (Kansas, Missouri)	Oregon
California: San Francisco North and East Bay	Louisiana/Mississippi	Pennsylvania: East
California: San Francisco/South	Maryland/Delaware/West Virginia	Pennsylvania: West
California: SoCal	Mexico	Rocky Mountain (Colorado/Wyoming)
Canada: East	Michigan	Singapore
	Mid Atlantic (D.C./Virginia)	South Africa

Note: I'm not "pitching" SCBWI to you...I'm just really familiar with it so am sharing what I know about it and how this resource has helped me. There are many other ways of participating in the world of Children's Books. Go find your options and have fun!



ABOUT

- Membership
- Our Mission
- Who We Are
- Global Regions
- Impact and Legacy Fund
- Partners
- Annual Report
- Gift Cards

SUBMISSIONS & SHOWCASES

- Awards and Grants
- Illustrator Gallery
- Member Bookstore
- SCBWI at Bookshop.org
- Translation in SCBWI

EVENTS

- Annual Events
- Regional In-Person Events
- Regional Virtual Events

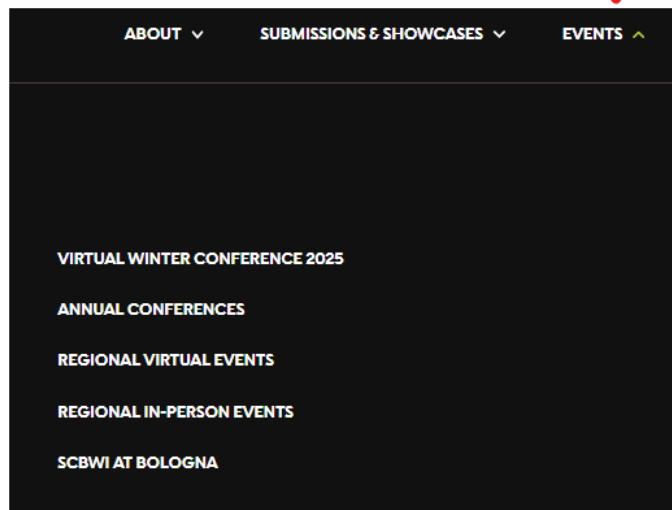
PUBLICATIONS

- The Essential Guide to Publishing for Children
- Newsletters
- Podcasts
- The Official SCBWI Blog
- Self-Publishing Resources

CONNECT & SUPPORT

- Careers
- Contact Us
- FAQ & Policies
- Donate
- Discussion Board
- Privacy Policy
- Cookie Notice
- Terms of Service

SCBWI - SOCIETY OF CHILDREN'S WRITERS & ILLUSTRATORS - WWW.SCBWI.ORG



You can find local in-person events here (don't have to be a member to register).

For the online events, those are shorter webinars and tend to cost less.



SCBWI New York Metro: Crafting Engaging School Visits for Different Age Groups

April 22, 2025: School visits offer authors a fantastic opportunity to connect directly with young readers, promote their books, and encourage literacy and creativity in the next generation, all while supplementing their income. Yet school visits remain quite mysterious for many newly published authors. Developing effective school visit materials takes time and requires some trial and error as you learn about your audience. Join author and illustrator Aram Kim for a workshop where she will share her insights on creating and tailoring school visit programs for different age groups, as well as how to prepare for and follow up after these visits.



SCBWI Houston: Worldbuilding Crash Course

April 24, 2025 (registration closes April 22): Ready to breathe life into your stories? Join Tracey Baptiste's "Worldbuilding Crash Course" and learn the art of crafting immersive worlds! In this webinar, we'll dissect the elements of worldbuilding in beloved children's books. This webinar is designed to enhance your storytelling across all genres. Get ready to apply these techniques to your own stories. Dive into the elements of worldbuilding with Tracey Baptiste.

[Read more >](#)



SCBWI San Francisco South: Agents and Editors Day 2025

April 25, 2025 (registration closes April 24): SCBWI SF/South is pleased to present our 2025 Virtual Agents and Editors Day! Get the inside scoop from the professionals' points of view! Manuscript critiques and first-look roundtables will be available. Early Bird pricing for premium members until March 15th.

[Read more >](#)



SCBWI Maryland/Delaware/West Virginia: Mastering Marketing without Ad Spend

April 26, 2025 (registration closes April 25): In this highly informative webinar, with a detailed case study about his self-published graphic novel, author and illustrator Roger McMullan teaches you how to find people who want your book, how to build a community around those people, and how to sell your book - all without spending a penny on ads. He'll rate his wide range of promotional efforts with how effective they were in relation to cost and effort, and if they would be worth doing again for a future book.

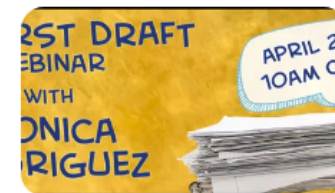
[Read more >](#)



SCBWI Southern Breeze: Put It In Writing - What Authors Need to Know about Publishing Contracts

April 26, 2025: Christyne Morrell, contracts attorney and kidlit author, will walk us through some common provisions in agency and publishing contracts, provide examples of red flags to avoid, and reveal the legal provision that almost ended her writing career.

[Read more >](#)



SCBWI Oklahoma/Arkansas: The First Draft with Monica Rodriguez

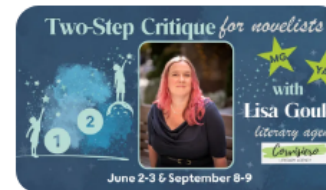
April 26, 2025: Please join the Oklahoma/Arkansas Region of SCBWI in an inspirational and informative webinar by Monica Rodriguez, Literary Agent at Context Literary on "The First Draft: How to NOT be Afraid of the Blank Page." The webinar will be recorded for attendees to rewatch for 30 days following the presentation. Attendees have the opportunity to purchase a critique for \$55, until they are sold out. Attendees also will receive submission guidelines on the day of the webinar for post-webinar submissions to all three faculty members.

[Read more >](#)



SCBWI Arizona: Edelweiss - The Secret Tool to Getting Inside the Industry Mindset

April 26, 2025 (registration closes April 25): What's the first image that comes to mind when someone mentions the word "edelweiss"? If it's Christopher Plummer strumming his guitar in The Sound of Music or the star-shaped alpine flower, you're not alone. What if we were to tell you that Edelweiss is also the name of a free — and shockingly underused — online platform that will give you valuable insight into the mindset of publishing industry insiders? In this webinar, freelance developmental editor Susan Chang (former acquisitions editor at HarperCollins Children's Books, Disney



SCBWI Pennsylvania East: Two-Step Critique for Novelists

Registration ends April 26. Program dates are June 2-3 and September 8-9, 2025. Calling all Novelists! Ever wish you could have the same publishing professional look at your manuscript a second time? After you made their suggested revisions? Well now you can! Two-Step Critique participants will meet with literary agent Lisa Gouldy to discuss their synopsis and the first 10 pages of a manuscript once in June, then have about eight weeks to revise and resubmit for a second round of feedback in September.

[Read more >](#)



SCBWI San Francisco North East Bay: Unlock Secrets to a Thriving Illustration Career

April 27, 2025 (registration closes April 26): Put on your entrepreneur's hat, let's have a fun, no-nonsense deep dive into building a freelance illustrator career—bumps, breakthroughs, and all! Whether you're starting fresh or leveling up as an illustrator or author-illustrator, Anoocha Syed is here to offer an open, honest chat about freelancing, time management, and making art that pays. No gatekeeping, just real talk, insider tips, and a chance to ask her anything! Topics include a deep dive into Anoocha's career journey; the importance of multiple income streams as a working

See if any of this is of interest to you as general guidelines. You decide.

Remember, it's not written in stone. Create your own version of sharing your work someone and getting feedback. And maybe vice versa? Help each other create the best stories that you can.



CRITIQUE GROUPS 101:

- ❖ **Setting up a Critique Group**
- ❖ **How to Choose a Critique Group**
- ❖ **Etiquette for a Critique Group**

HOW TO CRITIQUE:

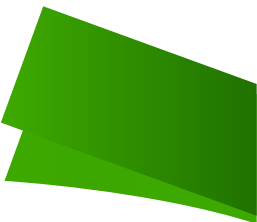
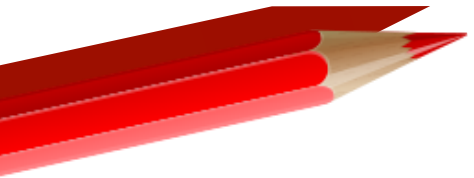
- ❖ **General Critiquing Etiquette**
- ❖ **SCBWI Critique Gold Form with Talking Points**
- ❖ **How-To Critique Guidelines for Writers**
- ❖ **The Nuts & Bolts of Critiquing a Writer**
- ❖ **Checklist: Preparing Your Manuscript for Critique**
- ❖ **How-To Critique Guidelines for Illustrators/Visual Artists**

Critique Group Resources - PRINTABLE VERSION

Bonus!



So how do you get your published
book into the Camarillo Library? - refer
to Lisa Padgett's handout



Getting Started

A super easy (very short!) brainstorming activity – **FOR YOUR EYES ONLY**



In Square 1:
quickly jot down
several ideas you
have for your
children's book

In Square 2:
quickly jot down
what you're really
good at doing or
being (doesn't
have to be
related to writing)

In Square 3: look
at what you wrote
in square 2...now
translate a
couple of those
to writing your
book

In Square 4:
quickly write
down a few next
steps you can do
next on your
journey



Fold your paper in
half then fold that in
half to create 4
squares like this:

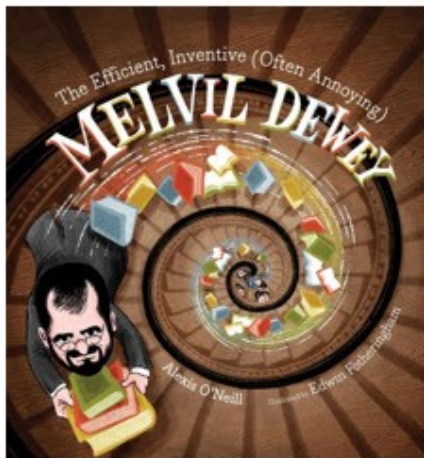
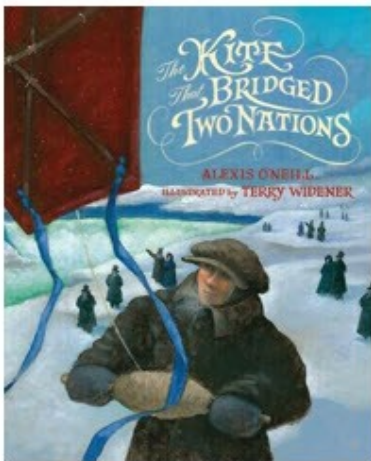
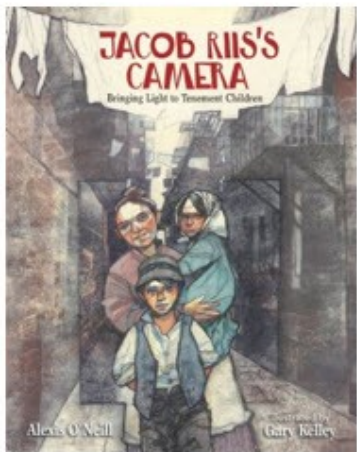
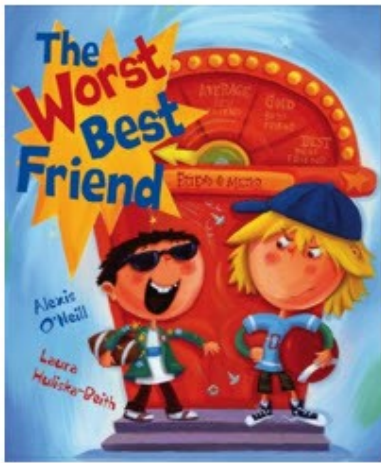
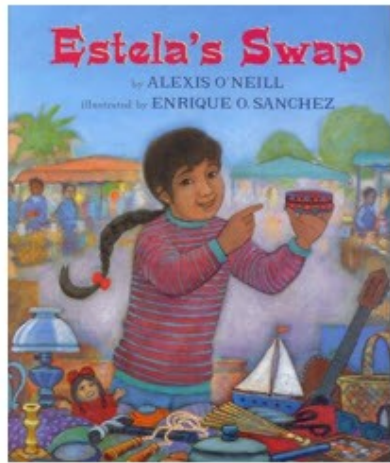
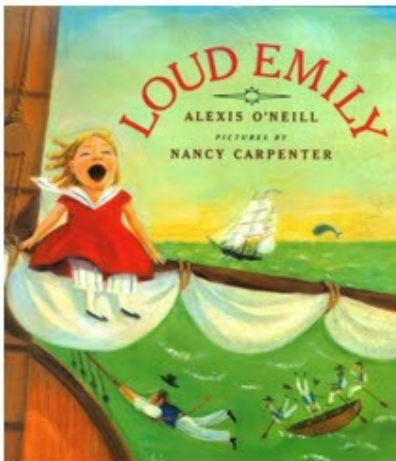
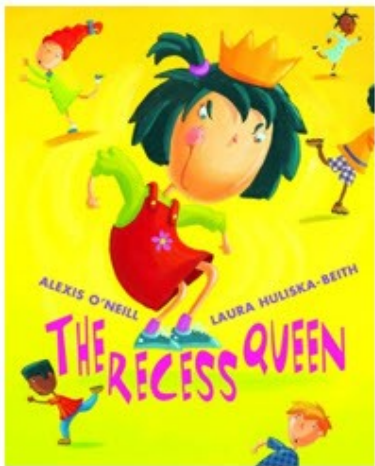


Meet our local published author guest!

Alexis O'Neill



Books by Alexis O'Neill



www.alexisoneill.com

Thank you!

A few bonus slides for
you....





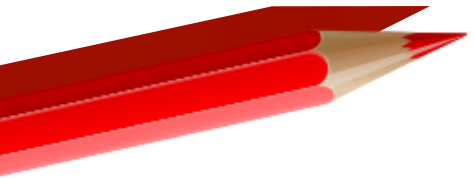
Tips



These tips helped make me a better writer:

1. Intend a specific person as your 1st level of your audience for your book
2. Use the Rule of 3
3. Use movement in your plot, action, dialogue
4. It's harder to unchoose than to choose

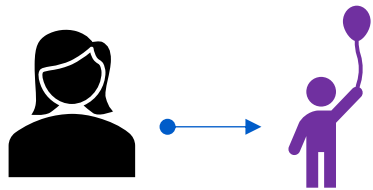
See next few pages for a bit more detail...



Intend your (specific audience)

Level 1 Audience

"This story is for you, James."

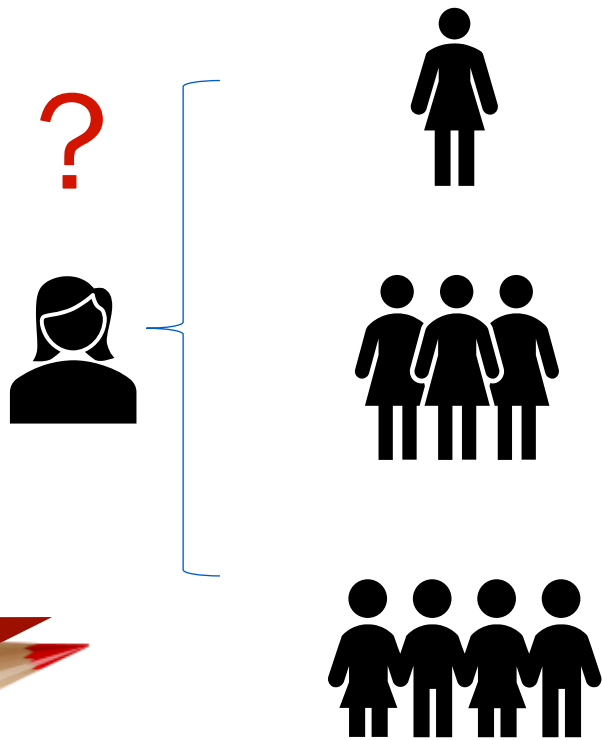


General Audience



Why? Because your story will be much more powerful than if you are writing for "every one out there that wants to read my book" -- or some version of "everyone". Don't worry. If you write a good book, it should carry over to your general audience 😊 Try it to see if it works for you.

Use the Rule of 3



Why?

In writing, the Rule of 3 suggests that things presented in threes are more satisfying, memorable and effective. Example: “Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. It’s popular in storytelling, speeches and marketing.

Why?

- 3 is the smallest number needed to establish a pattern.
- It creates an interesting rhythm: not too short (like 2), not too long (like 4+).
- It feels complete and balanced with the center balancing the outer two.
- The odd number adds interest.

Use "Motion"

Why?

- 1) Every living things *moves*.
- 2) And as humans, our brains are hard-wired to track motion because it helped (and continues to help) us survive.

Motion can be in:

- Your dialogue (use action verbs)
- In the descriptions of your settings (leaves rippling in the breeze)
- In your characters (have them move)
- And more...(you fill in the blank)

Example 1:

Which one would **make you laugh the loudest?**

A **Mischief of Mice**

standing on top of each other,
trying to snatch a cupcake
off your kitchen counter?

OR...

A **Bamboo of Pandas**

tumbling and bumbling around,
then rolling sideways
down your street?

Note: Don't overdo it, because you will also want moments of stillness in order to let the story (and reader) "breathe". Deciding *how* to make your story breathe is part of your unique author's voice.

Example 2:

Title: "Milo and the Thunder Chase"

Page 1-2

Milo the dog heard a **BOOM!**

A storm was coming.

His ears perked up. His tail twitched. His paws were ready.

"I've got to save my toys!"

Page 3-4

He **raced** to the backyard.

He **dug** under the flowerpot.

He **snatched** his squeaky dinosaur.

"Gotcha!"

Page 5-6

CRACK! went the thunder.

Milo **zoomed** through the kitchen.

He **leapt** over the cat.

He **grabbed** his flying disc.

Page 7-8

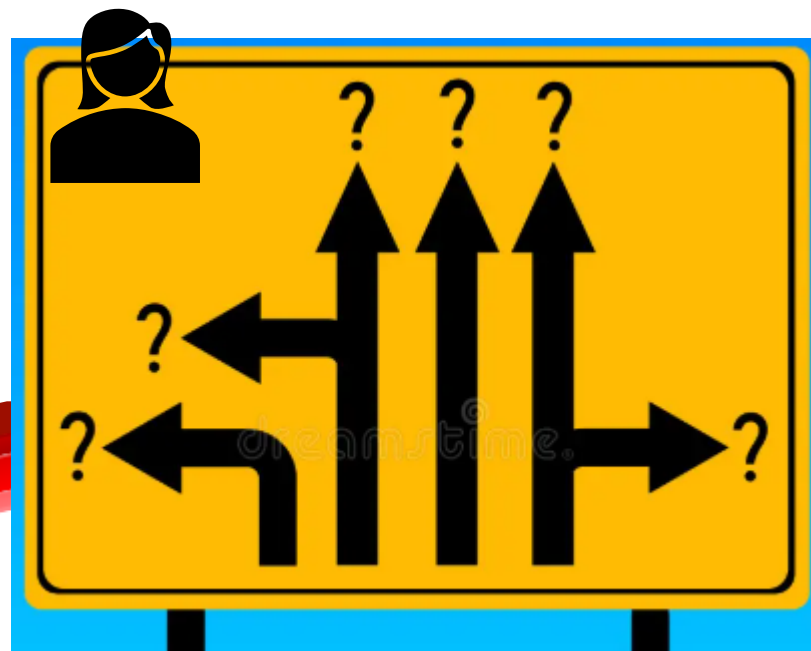
FLASH! went the lightning.

Milo **scrambled** up the stairs.

He **spun** across the hallway.

He **rescued** his rubber chicken.

It's harder
to unchoose something
than to choose something



Why? Some reasons:

- Because we're afraid of making the wrong choice.
- Because we *want* something even though we know it's not the right choice. This is usually because we're in love with it, or in love with the idea of it. So, we try to keep all our options open. When we do that, everything gets muddy like when you use every color in the watercolor paint box.

So, what can we do?

- Put your "precious" (think of the ring in Lord of the Rings) somewhere where you can safely store it for a while, knowing you can come back to it later if you really want to.
- Take a deep breath, make your best choice in that moment, then get *behind* that decision.