

# Researching to Write

How to Research Nonfiction Children's Books

## It All Begins with an Idea

- What do you find interesting?
- What's missing in the market and/or still marketable?
- Is the topic appropriate for your target age group?
- Do you fully understand the topic yourself?

## Facts About Facts

- The #1 thing you must know about writing nonfiction
- The funny thing about facts



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## Time to Get Digging

- Straight from the Horse's Mouth
  - A primary source is . . .
  - Examples of primary sources and where to look for them
- Not Straight from the Horse's Mouth
  - A secondary source is . . .
  - Examples of secondary sources and where to look for them
- From the Horse's Cousin's Next-door Neighbor's Mouth
  - Why to be wary of Wikipedia
  - Surprising uses of Wikipedia

- Mining the Depths of the Internet
  - The best advice I've ever heard . . .
  - Identify the key words and phrases
  - Say it another way
  - Page 2 of Google search results
  - Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](http://scholar.google.com))
  - The scary power of Boolean searches
    - Quotation marks
    - AND
    - OR
    - NOT

## **Keeping Track of All That Research**

- Digital versus Paper
- Spreadsheets and Comments

## **When Is It Enough?**

### **And a Couple of Bonus Writing Tips**

- For understanding, compare the unknown to the known . . .
- For application, connect to kids' real lives and problems (and how to know what those are) . . .