

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: PRODUCTS, AGE RANGES, GRADE LEVELS

GENERAL TERMS FOR YOUNG READERS

Toddler (Read-to-me books)	Ages 1-3
Preschooler (Read-to-me books)	Ages 3-5
Primary or Beginning readers	Ages 6-8
Middle-grade Reader, Preteen, 'Tween	Ages 8-12
Middle School	Grades 6-8, Ages 11-14
Teenager	Ages 13-19
Young Adult Reader	Ages 10-adult (mainly 13-18)

PRODUCT DETAILS

Baby Books (0-25 words*)	Babies ☺
Board Books (0-100 words*)	Ages 0-4
Picture Books (0-1000 words*)	Ages 4-8
Nonfiction Picture Books (1000-2000 words*)	Ages 4-9
Picture Storybooks (up to 1500+ words*)	Ages 6-9
Easy Readers (50-2500 words*)	Preschool-Grade 3, Ages 4-9
Chapter Books (4-15K words*)	Grades 1-3, Ages 6-9
Young Middle Grade Novels (15K-30K words*)	Grades 3-6, Ages 8-12
Middle Grade Novels (30K-50K words*)	Grades 3-6, Ages 8-12
Upper Middle Grade Novels (45K-65K words*)	Grades 5-8, Ages 10-14
Young Adult Novels (50K to 85K words*)	Grades 7-12, Ages 13-18

*All word counts are estimates; you will find exceptions.

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>AGE</u>
1	6-7
2	7-8
3	8-9
4	9-10
5	10-11
6	11-12
7	12-13
8	13-14
9	14-15
10	15-16
11	16-17
12	17-18

KIDLIT LINGO

4 SEGMENTS OF PUBLISHING FOR CHILDREN

1. Books
2. Periodicals: print and online magazines and newspapers (anything printed periodically on a regular schedule)
3. Educational markets: curricula and/or supplemental teaching materials for public school, private school, homeschool, Sunday School, VBS
4. Scripts: plays, video scripts, film scripts, gaming scripts; this often overlaps with the educational markets

TYPES OF WRITING

1. Fiction
realism, fantasy, magical realism (*Crenshaw* by Katherine Applegate, *Savvy* by Ingrid Law), sci-fi, mystery, historical, contemporary, futuristic
2. Nonfiction
concept books (teach educational concepts), biographies, slew of formats teaching science, history, math, etc.

GENRE vs. CATEGORY vs. FORMAT

1. Genre relates to the content: fiction, nonfiction, fantasy, mystery, adventure (also: romance, horror, and thriller in the adult market)
2. Category refers to the age group or reading level: board books, picture books, middle grade (not middle school), young adult
3. Format refers to the physical features of the books: hardcover, softcover, trim size, paper type (paper, cardboard), colors (black & white, full color, spot color), special features (pop-up, lift-a-flap, peek-a-boo book)

CHARACTER SKETCH

Name:
Nicknames:
Age:
Heritage:
Physical description:
Clothing style:
Resembles:
Family:
Where does she live?:
Home:
Bedroom:
Occupation/education:
Favorite color:
Favorite food:
Favorite number:
Pets:
Special sayings:
Beliefs:
Quirks:
Friends:
Enemies:
Emotional characteristics:
Special abilities:
What makes her unique?
Why would anyone care about this character?
Hates:
Loves:
Flaw:
Strength:
Fears:
Backstory:
Ordinary World:
Secret:
Long-term goal:
Deepest longing:
Dreads throughout the story:
Story goal (G):
Why she wants this (M):
What stands in her way (C):
The lie she believes/her misunderstanding:
The truth she comes to know:
What she learns:

CHARACTER INTERVIEW

How old are you?

Where do you go to school?

Do you like school?

What's your favorite or least-favorite part of school?

How are things at home?

Who is your favorite family member and why?

What do you wish you could change about your family?

What kind of childhood did you have?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Who is your best friend and why?

What historical or contemporary figure do you admire and why?

Jan Eldredge's questions:

1. What's your passion?
2. What do you want right now?
3. What do you fear?
4. What change needs to happen in your self or your life?

Leslie's additional question:

5. What's your secret?

RESOURCES

WEBSITES

12 x 12 Challenge for Picture Book Writers: www.12x12challenge.com.

100 Most Frequent Words in Books for Beginning Readers:
www.mcrel.org/PDF/Literacy/4006CM_100words.pdf

Accelerated Reader Book Find: www.arbookfind.com

Dolch Sight Words: <http://www.english-zone.com/reading/dolch.html>

Kidlit411: www.kidlit411.com.

SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators): www.scbwi.org.

Storystorm Challenge: <https://taralazar.com/storystorm/>

BOOKS & ARTICLES

Ashman, Linda. *The Nuts and Bolts Guide to Writing Picture Books*. This extensive booklet is available through her website: www.lindaashman.com.

Dils, Tracey E. *You Can Write Children's Books*. Writer's Digest Books, 1998.

Jones, Amy, editor. *2020 Children's Writer's and Illustrator's Market*. Writer's Digest Books, 2019.

Kole, Mary. *Writing Irresistible Kidlit*. Writer's Digest Books, 2012.

Lamba, Marie. "The Key Differences Between Middle Grade and Young Adult." *Writer's Digest*, August 7, 2014. <https://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/the-key-differences-between-middle-grade-vs-young-adult>

Shaffer, Sylvie. "New for New Readers: What (Exactly) Is An Easy Reader." *The Horn Book*, May 12, 2019. <https://www.hbook.com/?detailStory=what-exactly-is-an-easy-reader>

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. *The Book: Essential Guide to Publishing for Children 2020*.