

Children's Book Insider

June 2018

Writing for the Educational Market



ABOVE THE SLUSHPILE CODE: AMAZON AUDIBLE ORIGINALS

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Published 12 times/year by Children's Book Insider, LLC,
901 Columbia Road, Ft. Collins, CO 80525-1838.
970/495-0056.
ISSN 1073-7596
mail@CBIClubhouse.com
<http://www.writeforkids.org>

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Children's Book Insider, *The Children's Writing Monthly* is an electronic monthly newsletter that is included in the paid membership to the Children's Writing Knowledge Base (<http://www.CBIClubhouse.com>). The cost of membership is \$49.95 per year, or \$5.49 per month if billed monthly. For more information, go to <http://writeforkids.org/come-join-the-insiders/>

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Children's Book Insider makes every effort to verify the legitimacy of small and new presses and literary agents before printing information in "At Presstime." However, authors and illustrators should always proceed with caution when approaching publishers or agents with whom they are unfamiliar, and read contracts carefully. All "At Presstime" listings are current at the time of initial publication. Members are urged to verify listings past the month of publication.

At Presstime:

New Visions Award for MG/YA Author of Color

Tu Books, the middle grade and young adult imprint of Lee & Low Books, is sponsoring the sixth annual **New Visions Award** for a middle grade or young adult novel by a writer of color or a Native/Indigenous writer. The Award winner receives a cash prize of \$2,000 and a standard publication contract, including basic advance and royalties for a first time author. An Honor Award winner receives a \$1000 cash prize.

The contest is open to writers of color who are residents of the United States and who have not previously had a middle grade or young adult novel published. Writers who have published work in other venues such as children's magazines or picture books, or adult fiction or nonfiction, are eligible. Only unagented manuscripts will be accepted. Work that has been published in its entirety in any format (including online and self-publishing as well as other countries) is not eligible.

Manuscripts should address the needs of children and teens of color by providing stories with which they can identify and relate, and which promote a greater understanding of one another. Themes relating to LGBTQ+ topics or disabilities may also be included. Submissions may be any fictional genre novels for children ages 8 to 12 (up to 75,000 words) or young adults ages 12 to 18 (up to 95,000 words). Particularly interested in fantasy and science fiction, but also welcome contemporary, historical, mystery, and suspense. Graphic novel scripts in those categories are also welcome (up to 150 scripted pages). Nonfiction will not be considered. Submissions should include a synopsis of the story plus the first five chapters, accompanied by a cover letter that includes the author's name, address, phone number, email address, brief biographical note, relevant cultural and ethnic information, how the author heard about the award, and publication history, if any. Do not send the entire manuscript. For graphic novels, include the equivalent of 24-30 scripted pages and 6-10 pages of final art samples and optional character sketches in PDF format only if you are an author/illustrator.

Submissions should be submitted online at <https://tubooks.submittable.com/submit/b397609c-c8a6-4c3d-bd0c-78a92d00ffc8/new-visions-award>. You will receive a confirmation email stating your submission was received. Manuscripts may not be submitted to other publishers while under consideration for this award. **Submissions will be accepted through August 31, 2018.** Finalists will be notified and full manuscripts requested no later than January 31, 2018. If your full manuscript is requested, it must be received by Tu Books by Feb 19, 2018. The winners will be notified by March 1, 2019. For more information, go to <https://www.leeandlow.com/writers-illustrators/new-visions-award>

Publisher Seeks High-Quality Nonfiction

Chicago Review Press publishes an award-winning line of children's and young adult nonfiction books that cover a wide range of subjects about history, science, math, music, literature, and art. Most of their children's books feature hands-on activities and projects that extend learning for children ages 7 & up. Among these are the bestselling *For Kids* series, the build-it-yourself *Science in Motion* series, and the multicultural *A Kid's Guide* series. Chicago Review Press also publishes a young adult nonfiction biography series *Women of Action* that introduces young adults to women and girls of courage and conviction throughout the ages.

Looking for nonfiction in the above categories for ages 7 through young adult. Submit a proposal with the following: A one sentence summary of your book; a brief synopsis of your book in 1–2 paragraphs; the estimated word count of the final manuscript; the estimated completion date; author biography specifying credentials and past publications credit, where appropriate; approximate sales of previous books published, if any; a complete table of contents and/or a complete outline of the proposed chapters; the first three chapters; any information regarding photographs or artwork for the book; a description of the target audience and any information about the market; a list of competing and comparable titles and how your book differs—be sure to state what makes your book unique. For children's activity books, include a few sample activities with a list of the others you plan to use in the book.

Email your proposal directly to the appropriate editor. You can view all three acquiring editors, and their emails, here: <http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com/acquisitions-editors-pages-98.php>

Magazine for Babies and Toddlers Accepting Submissions

Babybug is a “look and listen” magazine for babies and toddlers. When reviewing submissions, the editors look for manuscripts that please the ear and beg to be read again, as well as those that capture a baby’s discoveries in a few simple, concrete sentences. Particularly interested in manuscripts that explore simple concepts, encourage very young children’s imaginative play, and provide opportunities for adult readers and babies to interact. Welcomes work that reflects diverse family cultures and traditions.

Topics of interest include: babies’ and toddlers’ relationships with others (immediate and extended family members, caregivers, other babies and older children); relationships with animals (pets, wild creatures, imaginary animals, etc.); learning new things (rolling, crawling, standing, walking, dancing, feeding oneself, talking, joking, singing, holding/using crayons and other art materials); daily routines; becoming independent and saying no; imitating adults and helping with household chores; young children’s observations of their surroundings (home and childcare settings, neighborhood and city life, the natural world, familiar places like libraries and stores); favorite games and toys; wordplay and silly situations that babies and toddlers find funny.

Looking for poems, action rhymes and finger plays (up to 8 lines); and simple stories in the above categories (up to six sentences). All manuscripts must be submitted through *Submittable* at <https://cricketmag.submittable.com/submit/17819/babybug-magazine-for-ages-6-months-3-years>. Allow 3-6 months for a reply.

Babybug is actively seeking short stories, poem, finger plays and action rhymes in the following two categories: My Friend (**deadline for submission, June 15**)--how do young children make friends, and what roles do friends play in their lives? Where To? (**deadline for submission, July 15**)--How do babies observe the world around them during ordinary daily trips or on special excursions?

Agent Seeking Picture Books, Middle Grade and Young Adult Submissions

Jennifer March Soloway is an Associate Agent with Andrea Brown Literary (<http://www.andreabrownlit.com/>) Looking for picture books (she is drawn to a wide range of stories from silly to sweet, but she always appreciates a strong dose of humor and some kind of surprise at the end). In middle grade, she likes all kinds of genres, including adventures, mysteries, spooky-but-not-too-scary ghost stories, humor, realistic contemporary and fantasy. Young adult is Jennifer’s sweet spot. She is a suspense junkie. She adores action-packed thrillers, full of unexpected twists. Also loves romance, conspiracy plots, and psychological horror that blurs the lines between the real and the imagined. But her favorite novels are literary stories about ordinary teens, especially those focused on family, relationships, sexuality, mental illness, or addiction. In such stories, she is particularly drawn to a close, confiding first-person narrative. But regardless of genre, she is actively seeking fresh new voices and perspectives underrepresented in literature. She’s also interested in nonfiction and graphic novels.

Submissions should be emailed to soloway@andreabrownlit.com. Send a query letter and, depending on the project you are submitting, include:

- Picture Book Writers: full manuscript text pasted below your query letter
- Illustrators: 2-3 illustration samples (in jpeg format), and link to online portfolio
- Illustrators with dummy: full dummy (in pdf format) that includes 1-2 color samples, and link to online portfolio
- Fiction Writers (chapter books, MG, YA): first 10 pages pasted below your query letter
- Non-fiction Writers: proposal and sample chapter pasted below query
- Graphic novels: 2-3 sample page spreads in jpg or pdf format, summary/synopsis pasted below query, link to website/online portfolio

Please be sure to enclose a contact phone number as well as your email address. If interested in seeing more of your work, you will be contacted in 6-8 weeks. If you have not heard back after 8 weeks, assume the material is not right for the agency at that time, but you are free to submit a new manuscript.

Note: Please see page 18 for one more At Presstime listing

Writing Nonfiction for the Educational Market

by Jean Daigneau

When *Harry Potter* was published, there was a renewed interest in writing fantasy. Soon editors complained they had seen enough of boy-turned-wizard submissions. Most writers know they shouldn't write to trends. But one genre that has shown a major uptick lately and is hotter than ever is nonfiction. And it's worth considering. For this column, I'll focus on nonfiction, specifically for the educational market.

It's Not Your Mama's Nonfiction

The days of nonfiction books spewing fact after fact in a dry, humorless way are—fortunately for all of us—gone. Today's nonfiction can be funny, entertaining, interesting, and exciting. Actually, editors will tell you, it should be. Nonfiction can open up a world of subjects such as human cadavers, taxidermy, and trivia buffs—all published books! It can capture a child's imagination. And it can spark an interest in lifelong learning. As Conrad Storad, award winning author and editor of close to 50 titles, says, "I've done my job well if I can make a reader curious to learn more."

Nonfiction for young readers and elementary school students is a wide-open market. But don't discount teens. Recent young adult titles include *Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers*, *#NotYourPrincess: Voices of Native American Women*, and *The 57 Bus: A True Story of Two Teenagers and the Crime that Changed Their Lives*.

The Bright Side of Writing for the Educational Market

While building a writing resume may seem daunting for unpublished writers, targeting the educational market is a great way to break in. Gina Kammer, editor at Capstone, says, "Don't fear the work-for-hire projects!" She says, "This route is a great way to gain publishing credits and experiences in the industry.... By consistently meeting deadlines and delivering quality, well-researched work, authors will likely be offered many other projects." Lisa Amstutz, with over 80 books published in the educational market and two picture books with trade publishers, knows about the perks of tackling this market. "Educational publishers hire writers to create fiction series as well as nonfiction, so no matter what type of writing you do, this can be a good opportunity to practice and get feedback on your craft."

Another benefit of writing for the educational market? It's

definitely one place where having an agent isn't an advantage. While an agent may have a relationship with an educational editor, there are plenty of places you can meet these editors—conferences as well as writing events and even online social networks. Kammer, who is happy to share her Twitter handle @GinaLKammer, says she keeps the names of writers handy if she learns about amazing STEM projects on Twitter.

What Can You Bring to the Table?

But, what happens if you aren't published? Or if you don't have an educational background? How can you build writing credentials if you don't have writing credentials?

The simple answer is probably the most obvious. Give an editor what he wants, and he will come. For Storad, that means "succinct, well-written, specific writing samples that meet the needs of the publisher at that moment."

Requirements for educational writing are the ability to meet deadlines, spot-on research, and enough kid appeal to attract readers. Storad explains, "The guidelines are strict and need to be followed." This includes meeting deadlines. When an editor plans a series, he knows his time frame. This is not the time to get lackadaisical. Not if you want to establish the kind of relationship that will have him asking for more.

Research is also important. Many writers know—or should—that you want at least three reputable sources, and that doesn't mean Wikipedia. Published sources you can hold in your hands are one way to ensure accuracy. This might take a little digging, but that's what research is all about. And as a personal aside, sometimes researching one subject garners leads on other ideas.

Writing nonfiction is about bringing enthusiasm and passion to your work. One way to know if you've done enough research is when you've become an "expert" of sorts. When your friends shy away from asking about your writing because you won't shut up when you do, you're probably there! But that's good. Because when you're passionate about a topic, that passion will shine through your writing. And the way onto a kid's reading list is by great writing.

Alyssa Kerkelberg, editor at book packager Red Line Ed-

Writing Nonfiction for the Educational Market continued

itorial, sums it up. “Meet deadlines set by the editor, have an upbeat attitude, and be willing to make any changes that the editor and client need. It’s also essential for authors in this market to have good research skills.”

What to Do and How to Do It

Even if you’re a published writer, there are still “rules” to follow. Astutz, Storad, and Kammer all strongly recommend you start by checking publisher guidelines. One of the easiest ways to get rejected is to ignore guidelines.

Amstutz recommends sending a “resume packet,” which she describes as “a cover letter, resume, and several writing samples.” And by “writing samples” she recommends “three samples to show a range of skills.” She notes these should reflect the age level and subjects you’re interested in writing. She also suggests querying a new or existing series, but adds, “you’ll still want to include the other items and note that if they’re not interested in this particular idea, you’d like to be considered for other projects.” Storad agrees. “Most likely, you will always be asked to provide a sample book outline (for chapter books) and a writing sample or sample chapter.” In order to “craft the strongest submission possible, think of where the proposal goes for submission.” That’s the advice of Kammer, who points out that “someone at the publishing house has to love the proposal enough to make a case for it before other decision-makers concerned with the product list.”

What Exactly Is Work-for-Hire?

Most educational writing is called work-for-hire. You, the writer, are hired to do the work, the writing. While some educational publishers have moved toward paying advances and royalties, most pay a flat fee. You’re paid according to a contract for a project and the publisher retains all rights.

But don’t let that stop you. Educational publications are among the best. As Kammer says, “At Capstone, we aim to improve the world through literacy, so making sure we produce quality content is one of our highest priorities.”

Where to Go from Here?

First of all, be sure you like writing nonfiction. The tight turnaround time and structure aren’t for everyone. But, if it’s right up your alley, start with resources like the *Children’s Writers’ & Illustrators’ Market*. Another website that’s been around for years is by award-winning author and puzzle creator Evelyn B Christensen. Go to www.evelynchristensen.com and click on the writers’ link on the left to get a great list of educational publishers. For Redline, it’s as simple as sending a resume and cover letter to jobs@redline.com, outlining your subject or grade-level areas of expertise and interest.

Finally, listen to what Storad says when he talks about writers he meets who “have a story in their head” and

want to write for kids, but don’t follow through. “Be the writer that takes that next step. Get the story out of your head and onto paper or onto a computer screen. Enough reading for now. Time for you to get to work and start writing.” Why not? Like Storad and Amstutz, you too could have a long list of great books that kids will love and other writers will envy.

For Further Reading

Here are some great titles to check out. One trick is to find books you wish you had written and then see who published them. You’ll be one step ahead of the competition if you target the right publisher from the start.

Duke n’ Matt, Rescue Road Warriors
by Rhonda Paglia

My Life at Sweetbrier, A Life Changed by Horses
by Deanie Humphrys-Dunne

Squash Boom Beet, An Alphabet for Healthy, Adventurous Eaters
by Lisa Maxbauer Price

In the Shadow of Liberty: The Hidden History of Slavery, Four Presidents, and Five Black Lives
by Kenneth C. Davis

Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids
by Carol McCloud

Samurai Rising: The Epic Life of Minamoto Yoshitsune
by Pamela S. Turner

GETTING STARTED WRITING RHYMING STORIES FOR THE YOUNGEST READERS

by Jane McBride

Have you ever thought of writing a rhyming picture book or board book for the youngest readers? After all, how hard can it be to pen a book of a couple of hundred words? Get your idea, jot down a few rhyming words, and you're done. Right?

Wrong.

Rhyming young picture books (ages 3-5) or board books (ages 1-3) require an engaging read-aloud rhythm, action words that inspire audience participation, and often a simple refrain that children can repeat along with the adult reader. Individual lines of text are usually short — which moves the pacing along — and employ a perfect rhyme scheme (words that end in identical sounds).

The best way to understand how to write rhyming stories for the young end of the picture book audience is to read some excellent examples, such as the books listed below.

RHYME AND ACTION

Prolific board book writer/illustrator Sandra Boynton employs an abcb rhyming pattern in *Barnyard Dance* (lines 2 and 4 have perfect rhyme).

*Bow to the horse.
Bow to the cow.
Twirl with the pig
If you know how.*

*Stand with the donkey.
Slide with the sheep.
Scramble with the little chicks—
CHEEP CHEEP CHEEP!*

Part of writing any picture book for young children, rhyming or not, involves using action words that invite imitating those very actions. *Barnyard Dance* practically vibrates with energy.

In Susan Hood's captivating *Caterpillar Spring Butterfly Summer* (published in both 12-page hardcover and board

book formats), she uses a different rhyming scheme, the couplet, aa, bb, cc, dd. The nouns and verbs all imply movement.

*It's a caterpillar spring—
a fiesta, a field day, a fling.*

*A fine time for stepping out,
a fine time to wiggle about!*

*It's a caterpillar song.
Bugs sing, bouncy-bouncing along.*

*Stretching high, they swing and sway,
dancing in a springtime ballet.*

THE POWER OF REPETITION

Mem Fox's picture book *Boo to a Goose* illustrates the power of repetition.

*I'd dance with a pig
in a shiny green wig
But I wouldn't say
"BOO!" to a goose.*

*I'd feed my pajamas
to giant piranhas
But I wouldn't say
"BOO!" to a goose.*

The repetition and the sheer silliness of the rhyme make this book a favorite of preschoolers.

SENSORY DETAILS

Illustrations take center stage in books for the youngest readers, and so the text must remain spare and use sensory details to engage the reader in the action. Leave out the adjectives and adverbs, as descriptions will be handled in the pictures.

Mini Blueprint continued

Hood involves the senses in these two couplets.

*It's a caterpillar treat.
Baby bugs gather 'round to eat!*

*A time to chompity-chew,
munching leaves as they march through.*

Here, we have taste and sound as the reader imagines what caterpillars would eat, what that would taste like and the sound of munching leaves.

CONCEPT

Many picture books use poetry techniques such as Debbie Tarbett's *Ten Friendly Fish* (published in hardcover, paperback and board book formats) to teach concepts, such as the ABCs, or, in this case, numbers and counting.

*Ten friendly fish,
on a swim one day.
One sees a starfish
and splashes off to play.*

*Nine happy fish
like to splash and splash.
One goes to visit
a yellow pufferfish.*

You can probably guess the rest of the story. It goes on until only one fish is left and the young child reading or listening to it has had an engaging introduction to counting.

Now that we've looked at some examples of rhyming young picture books and board books, let's take a look at how you might put together a rhyming story in the *Mini Blueprint* lesson below:

STEP 1: Decide if you're writing a board book for children up to age three, or a young picture book for ages 2-5. While many young picture books are also published in the board book format, this generally happens after the picture book version has gained a wide audience (the board book version often has an abbreviated text). Board books are shorter (they average 12-16 pages), while picture books are 32 pages (some educational publishers will offer shorter picture books for young children, but trade publishers almost always stick to the 32 page format).

Board books tend to focus on concepts, or stories that depict everyday experiences of toddlers and preschool-

ers. The texts are shorter (up to 200 words), and stories may revolve around a simple idea or series of connected humorous incidents. If you're teaching a concept with a rhyming picture book, be sure to have a unique approach (as in the classic *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr., a delightful take on the alphabet). Young picture books have up to 500 words of text on average (though many are shorter), and the stories can have a simple plot with a beginning, middle and end. These stories often feature familiar incidents from a young child's life but told in a fresh, creative way (such as Anna Dewdney's *Llama Llama* series). While young picture books may also teach concepts, they are usually layered within a simple plot.

ACTION: Review popular rhyming board books and young picture books and see what has been done, what has been overdone. Note the subject matter as well as the approach to it. Pay attention to the rhyming patterns, the word choice, the rhythm. Read the classics, of course, but don't forget to study current books, which show what editors are looking for right now. The picture book market is like any other with constantly changing needs and shifts in subject matter.

STEP 2: Decide upon a rhyme scheme and rhythm for your story.

ACTION: Experiment with different rhyming patterns. Does abab fit your story best or would it work better in an aabb or abcb pattern or maybe even in couplet form, aa, bb, etc? What about rhythm? How many beats per line will your book have? Will the rhythm remain the same throughout the stanza (a paragraph in poetry) or will it vary according to the rhyme, for example the a lines having one rhythm and the b's having a different one?

STEP 3: Think about the pacing of your text, and the illustrations. Paint a picture in your mind of how the pages of your story will look illustrated. Browse through the picture book section of your local bookstore or library. Give special heed to the illustrations found on the pages. Note the number of words per page and how text is divided between the pages.

ACTION: Make a list of action words that get the characters moving on the page. Add sensory details to your text that imply the content of the illustrations without telling the illustrator what to draw. Brainstorm words that sound appealing when read out loud.

Mini Blueprint continued

STEP 4: Write a rough draft. You didn't expect to get it perfect the first time out, did you? Revise and write a second draft, a third, a fourth.

ACTION: Check your rhythm and rhyme scheme. You may need to tweak it to make it just right. Read your work aloud. Picture books are meant to be read aloud. Does it flow? Or does it stutter?

STEP 5: Go back and repeat. Whatever form you choose in writing your rhyming picture book, remember you are writing a book. Revision is a necessary process. Do not be fooled by the seeming simplicity of a rhyming picture book or board book.

ACTION: In revising, pay attention to your word choices, your pacing, and your rhyme. The story must always come first. If you're shoehorning the story into your rhyme scheme, or adding unnecessary details or characters just to make the rhyme work, then you're not putting the story first. The rhyme and rhythm are the vehicles you're using to tell the story, not the main point of the book. If necessary, write out the story first in prose, so you'll see what needs to happen, which characters are involved, and the order of the events. Then convey those same details in rhyme, without adding any new information.

Writing a successful rhyming board book or young picture book takes practice. If your text isn't flowing as you'd like, experiment with different rhyming schemes, add more vivid verbs that beg for reader participation, or create a refrain that ties the story together. Listen to the rhythm of the text as someone else reads it out loud to you. Imagine a preschool teacher reading your story to a group of three-year-olds. Work the story until you've achieved that "Read it again!" quality every young picture book needs.

For more tips on rhyming, see Jane McBride's article on literary devices, also in this issue.

MORE RHYMING BOOKS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN TO STUDY

The Great Big List of 55 Rhyming Picture Books for Kids:

<https://childhood101.com/best-rhyming-books-for-kids/>

Best Rhyming Books for Preschoolers:

<https://www.pre-kpages.com/best-rhyming-books-for-preschool/>

Best Rhyming Board Books for Babies and Toddlers:

<https://www.joyfullythriving.com/rhyming-books-babies-toddlers/>



writing blueprints

Each month, we will be incorporating Mini Blueprints into CBI, which are based on the step-by-step way of learning in our full Writing Blueprints. If you're not familiar with our longer Writing Blueprints that take you through the process of writing, marketing, or self-publishing your book, go to www.writingblueprints.com

Heather Alexander

Executive Editor at Amazon Audible Originals

interview by Lynne Marie

Heather Alexander is an industry name we all recognize, formerly an editor with Dial Books for Young Readers/Penguin Random House, an Agent with Pippin Properties and creator of Heather Alexander Editorial. She is now an Executive Editor at Audible Books, the audiobook arm of Amazon.

Lynne Marie: This is certainly an exciting new venture for you. How does this venture differ from your previous work of editing middle grade books?

Heather Alexander: It is indeed an exciting new venture. Audible has been creating more and more original content for audio, and that's what I'm doing in the kids' space. It's a bit different from traditionally published print books, because we can do all kinds of things that might not work in print, like scripts and sound effects. When I'm reading submissions, I have to keep an ear tuned to how something might sound, and I'm looking for projects that have a particularly strong audio angle or element.

LM: Please tell us a little bit about Audible Originals and its mission, as well as your new role.

HA: Audible was founded 20 years ago by Don Katz, who is still our CEO. He was ahead of his time when he created the first digital audio player—even before the iPod. Our mission at Audible Originals is to produce excellent audio-first or audio-exclusive content, meaning that it was created with listeners in mind. In kids'

audio especially, I hope to foster family listening, and to provide an alternative to screen time. My goals are for kids to listen while they're drawing or Lego-ing, and for families to listen together, in the car, or around a smart speaker like Alexa.

LM: Do you feel that this position better utilizes your Bachelor's degree in linguistics from George Washington University? If so, in what way? And how would an understanding of linguistics inform success in this medium?

HA: That's an interesting question! I hadn't considered it, but language has always been rather musical to me. I really hear text when I read it, and it's delightful when the narration matches what I hear. Linguistics is a broad area of study, and I've always been interested in how people learn, use, and change it to suit their needs. I think being open to different voices, both literary and biological, is an asset in audio.

LM: Do you think that current life and times support that “listening is the new reading”? Why, or why not?

HA: I do believe that. I mean, nothing will ever replace reading entirely, but a lot of people struggle with text on a page. Kids, and parents, too. Studies have shown that lots of people retain information more easily when they hear it, and that listening to books before reading the text can help struggling readers more readily connect with books afterward. In other words, listening can improve reading skills and comprehension.



LM: In that all content is read-aloud, what criteria is different for the prospective Audible manuscript than would be for a traditional middle grade novel? What would not make a manuscript viable for this medium?

HA: I work with lots of different formats, from full scripts with a whole cast of characters and actors, to traditional novels that would have a single narrator. In more straightforward novels, I look for things that have a strong voice, a fast pace, and really strong world-building. I love quiet, leisurely novels for reading “with eyes” as I’ve taken to saying, but those don’t necessarily make the best audios. I think we all have the tendency to drift a bit when we’re listening, so it’s important that the story is really engaging and not too meandering. I also will often ask authors to sometimes repeat a point if it’s really important to the story, or hit it a little harder so it doesn’t get lost in a drifting moment.

LM: What top five tips would you have for a writer preparing their manuscript?

HA: 1. I always recommend this to authors, but especially when writing for audio, read the work out loud. One of our narrators recently mentioned that he can always tell when a writer does this.

2. Consider removing dialogue tags. They aren’t really necessary in audio, and can slow the pacing down.

3. Think about whether the story would work as a script. If it would, try converting it!

4. Add more visuals and setting. The stories that have stuck with me in my life always provide strong imagery, and that’s a must for audio.

5. Pay attention to the audio-angle. What makes this work perfect to listen to? Stir that part up.

LM: Are there any courses or sites you would recommend to prepare a writer for embarking on such a venture?

HA: I adore *Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder for pacing. I also like *The Hidden Tools of Comedy* by Steve Kaplan. Both of these are screenwriting books, but the advice applies to novels as well. *Gotham Writers Workshop* offers great screenwriting classes online for people interested in trying their hands at scripted content.

LM: What are your thoughts about an author narrat-

ing his/her own book versus utilizing an independent narrator?

HA: This comes up a lot! We have a roster of amazingly talented voice actors who have trained for years to learn the craft. It’s almost the same as writers who are interested in illustrating their own books: if they have studied it, and have an exceptional talent for it, then we would consider it. The best actors make it look easy, but it really, really isn’t. Authors can definitely audition to read their own books, and I’ve heard some awesome ones, like Alison McGhee and Jason Reynolds.

LM: What qualities, in particular, are you looking for in your new list of original middle grade audio content? What things are you NOT looking for? Please explain if helpful.

HA: I’m definitely looking for content that would appeal to a whole family and is at least two-hours long. That means around 20,000 words if it’s a novel (the rule of thumb is about 9300 words per hour) or 120 pages of scripted content. But it can be much longer than that, too. Story-wise, I’m really open.

I can’t really consider content shorter than two-hours, but I can consider shorter content bundled together as one title. For instance, *The Sunnypoint Chronicles* was conceived as 12 15-minute episodes, but we put them all together as one 3-hour title. And I’m working on an anthology of 4 one-hour stories that all tie together thematically. That sort of thing can work well for kids, who don’t always have a lot of listening time.

LM: Please share something you have always wanted to come across your desk during your days as a traditional publisher and agent, but have not yet found, and/or anything that may be lingering on your “Manuscript Wish List.”

HA: I’m especially eager for diversity and [#ownvoices](#) works, and I’d love to find a great mystery, or something with a puzzle aspect like *The Westing Game*. I adore criminals and thieves, especially in fantasy settings. Something with a performative aspect is a natural choice for audio, like a kid with a podcast, or doing the school announcements, or with a stand-up routine.

LM: Name a book that you love so much that you wish you had been the one to discover it.

HA: There are a lot of these. Lately, *The Stars Beneath*

Heather Alexander continued

Our Feet by David Barclay Moore, *The Book of Dust* by Philip Pullman, and *Lucky Broken Girl* by Ruth Behar.

LM: If you could choose five words to describe your tastes and the things you would like to acquire, what would they be?

HA: Funny, smart, voicey, innovative, exceptional

LM: Has there been a project that you have recently screened that has made you exceptionally excited? Please tell us about it.

HA: I'm in the studio this week with the five narrators for *Rivals! Frenemies Who Changed the World* by Scott McCormick (of the *Mr. Pants* graphic novel series). He's hilarious, and he brought his comedy skills to nonfiction. This is a series of four short pieces about people whose hatred for each other changed the world in a beneficial way. The voice is on-point, and he loaded it with interstitial comedy bits, which the actors are having a blast performing. It will be out on May 29th.

And D.J. MacHale's *The Equinox Curiosity Shop* is a really fun fantasy voiced by Josh Hurley, which came out in April. It's a great whole-family listen!

LM: How far are you willing to go to work with an author on narration and other elements if you see promise in a submission?

HA: If a story has a strong concept and voice, and great characters, I'm very willing to work with an author to make it just right for audio. *The Mystery of Alice* by Lee Bacon (of the *Joshua Dread* series) was initially written as a series of blog posts. We've been working on shifting it to a video-diary format, which has been a ton of fun (and work)!

LM: What would be the process through which an author would prepare a manuscript to submit to Audible Books? Please share your subsequent submission guidelines and your response policy.

HA: I'd like to see a query letter (the standard kind) in the body of an email with the full manuscript as a word document attachment. I would also consider a pitch with a full outline and some sample chapters. Please highlight what the audio-hook is. I will do my best to respond within three months of submission (and will respond to all submissions).

LM: Are there ever any occasions in which you would consider text submissions from an author? Under what circumstances would this be?

HA: We don't publish print books, so I can't consider anything for that format. However, in some cases, the author may keep print rights, so could sell the text to a print publisher after the agreed upon audio-exclusive window.

LM: Would an author with any formal vocal and/or theatre training have a leg up in this medium? Please explain why or why not?

HA: Yes, I think so. Again, it comes down to having an ear for audio. Listening is a different skill than reading, and writing toward the ear, rather than the eye, might be easier for someone with a performance background.

Above the Slushpile

Heather is offering an Above the Slushpile opportunity for CBI subscribers interested in submitting middle grade audio submissions for Audible Originals.

Email a query letter and attach the entire manuscript as a Word document. Send to Heather Alexander at AlexaHea@Audible.com. Please include the Code: **6/2018 CBI – HA Audible** in your subject line to take advantage of this exclusive opportunity.

Please note that this opportunity expires on: September 15, 2018

Making the Most of Literary Devices

by Jane McBride

What are your favorite literary devices? Do you like alliteration (one of my favorites)? Or do you prefer cacophony? In this article, we're going to take a look at some of the more common devices. We'll take them alphabetically.

Alliteration. Alliteration is the repetition of the same beginning of two or more words that are next to each other or within a few words of each other.

The fat fly flew over my nose. In this sentence, the "f" sound is used three times; the effect is intensified in the words fly and flew by repeating the "fl" sound. Elizabeth Spurr uses alliteration to good effect in her delightful picture book *Pumpkin Hill*:

The mayor called a meeting. "What shall we do with this pre-pos-ter-ous pre-dom-i-nance of pumpkins?"

Did you count how many "p's" were used in this sentence? Four (five if you count the second "p" in pumpkins). Dividing the words into syllables emphasizes the alliterative effect.

"A pro-pi-tious solution," said the mayor, "for our pumpkin pollution."

How many "p's" were used here? Four again. Who can resist such charming alliteration?

Why does alliteration work? It appeals to two senses at once: that of hearing and that of sight. Since picture books are most often read aloud, using the sense of sound makes ... well, sense. Young children immediately and enthusiastically respond to the use of senses which helps them understand concepts.

Allusion. Allusion hints at similarities, often through people, places, and objects that are well known. For example, in a middle grade story where a boy describes his grandfather who routinely cheats at cards and other games, the boy might well say, "Gramps was no George Washington." The reader grasps the idea that the grand-

father is dishonest without the author having to spell it out.

Assonance. Assonance is a fancy word for rhyming. We are all familiar with rhymes that come at the end of a line. Interesting rhyming can also take place within a line. Notice the internal rhyming in the following passage from *Pumpkin Hill*:

There came a mighty wind
The *whirly swirly* kind
It blew the vines into a tangle
And sent the pumpkin *rumble-tumble*
Hurling down the great green hill.

The internal rhyming of *whirly swirly* and *rumble-tumble* heightens the effect of dozens of pumpkins rolling down the hill. (Note: did you notice the use of alliteration in the words *great green*?)

For simple and pure rhyming verse, we need look no further than the timeless poetry of Mother Goose.

Pease porridge hot,
Pease porridge cold,
Pease porridge in the pot,
Nine days old.

Cacophony. Cacophony is the "special effects" of poetry and prose. Cacophony is really another form of onomatopoeia, using unpleasant sounds. What are some examples of cacophony?

The chickens *squawked* at the intruder.
Fat raindrops went *splat* on the sidewalk.

Figures of speech. A figure of speech is a word or phrase employed to describe something in an unusual and often unrelated way. Allusion, metaphor, and simile are all examples of figures of speech.

Hyperbole. Hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration used as a figure of speech. Mothers (at least this one) are infa-

mous for using hyperbole, such as “If I’d told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times to PUT DOWN THE TOILET SEAT!” (What can I say—I had three sons.) I probably hadn’t really said “Put down the toilet seat” a thousand times, but it had more impact than to say “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you 17 times to put down the toilet seat.”

How can use hyperbole in your writing? How about a size-obsessed 17-year-old girl who is bemoaning the fact that her size 2 jeans are too tight and cries to the heavens with something like, “I’m as big as a hippopotamus. I’ll have to start buying my clothes at the tent and awning store.” Obviously the girl is not as big as a hippopotamus and will not need to resort to buying her clothes at the tent and awning store.

Metaphor. A metaphor is a comparison of two disparate things to demonstrate a likeness that does not use *as* or *like*. The comparison is stated straight out.

He was a bear of a man. Such metaphors can be more effective than saying “He looked like a bear” or “He was the size of a bear.”

Metaphors don’t have to be a straight-out statement. They can be employed very cleverly in verb form:

The narrow road ribboned through the countryside.
Her waist-length hair flowed in a river down her back

In none of the above sentences have we said, “The narrow road was a ribbon” or “Her waist-length hair was a river.” Allowing the metaphor to be implied in verb form has more impact.

Meter. Meter is the rhythm of stressed and unstressed syllables in poetry. Some meters are immediately recognizable such as that of the limerick while other rhythms are more subtle. Meter is especially important in writing picture books.

Listen to the seemingly effortless meter in this passage from Julia Donaldson’s *What the Ladybug Heard*:

Once upon a farm there lived a fat red hen,
A duck in a pond and a goose in a pen,
A woolly sheep, a hairy hog,
A handsome horse, and a dainty dog,
A fine prize cow, two cats that purred,

And a ladybug,
who never said a word.

The meter appears simple, but it is actually very pronounced and flows almost organically in this book. The change in meter with the last two lines forces the reader to slow down and emphasize the content.

Onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia are words that imitate real sounds. *Bang, grrrr, crash* are all examples of onomatopoeia. Experiment with made-up words to imitate sounds in your story, but don’t go overboard with it.

Personification. Personification is the attribution to things that are not human the personalities and behaviors of humans. The movie *Cars* is a prime example of personification where Lightning McQueen and his cohorts are very believable characters displaying such human characteristics as envy, competitiveness, vanity, loyalty, etc.

Simile. Similes are figures of speech that compare two dissimilar things that use *like* or *as*. As with metaphors, similes are great for describing something in a few words; however, they can be overused.

What are some clichés of similes that we occasionally fall into the trap of using?

Her face was white as a sheet.
The invalid’s hand was white as paper as it clutched the sheet to his chin.
The old woman’s mouth pulled up like she’d just eaten a lemon.
The man’s face looked like it had been chiseled from granite.

The list is endless. Let’s take two of these cliches and see if we can come up with something a bit more original.

Likening the sourness of a hag’s face to a lemon is older than I am. What if we wrote instead, “The old woman’s mouth stitched up like the drawstrings of an old-fashioned purse?”

Comparing a man’s face to chiseled granite was fresh at one time, but it has lost much of its impact from overuse. How else could we say it? “The man’s face looked the muscles were frozen in hate.”

Literary devices are fun and effective ways to express meaning. Use them as you would a fine spice. Sprinkle them in sparingly to allow their flavors to come through with subtlety and flair.

Persistence Pays Off for Middle Grade Author

ERIN TEAGAN



interview by PJ McIlvaine

Erin Teagan (www.erinteagan.com) had it all planned out: she'd become a scientist first, then a writer. Yeah, makes perfect sense to me. And you can't really argue the logic of it with someone who got 110% on a high school biology test. Combining her passions, Teagan's debut middle grade novel, *The Friendship Experiment* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2016) led to her being hired to pen the *Luciana* books for the *American Girl: Girl of the Year 2018* series for Scholastic, Inc. Teagan lives in Pennsylvania with her two little self-described "mad scientists" and her extreme-sports obsessed husband.

PJ McIlvaine: From budding kid scientist to published kid lit author. How did one thing lead to the other? Did you always know you wanted to write?

Erin Teagan: I always wanted to be a writer, as far back as second grade, I remember feeling like maybe I wanted to write a book. I was the oldest of four kids and I wrote a lot of stories for my younger siblings. By the time I got to high school, writing was my outlet. I loved it so much that I worried I'd somehow lose the spark if I studied writing in college and had to depend on it to feed myself when I entered the real world.

So, I surprised everyone by going into science first. Science was something I had discovered when I job shadowed a woman working in a lab for a school project. And, actually, going into science was the best decision I ever made for my writing. Not only does thinking like a scientist help me in my writing process, but I draw from my experiences in the lab to find inspiration for stories all the time.

PM: With your first book, how long did it take from

idea to first draft to actual publication?

ET: *The Friendship Experiment* was my first ever NaNoWriMo project. That year, I spent most of October thinking about plot, working out challenges I might encounter while I fast-drafted. Going over characters and stories in my head. By the time November 1 rolled around, I was ready to get writing. I finished the first draft that month, but I revised for nearly two years before I found my agent. And then, my agent and I revised for another six months after that! *The Friendship Experiment* came out in November 2016, almost exactly five years from when I had the first glimmer of an idea.

PM: How long did it take TFE to sell once it was out on submission?

ET: The *Friendship Experiment* went on two rounds of submission before selling. We started the first round in the beginning of April and then after some feedback, I spent the summer revising. My agent sent the manuscript back

out at the end of August and we received our first offer in October. It was equally exciting and nerve-wracking!

PM: How easy, or difficult, was it for you to get an agent?

ET: Difficult. Finding an agent was a long road for me. I sent out my first submission to an agent in 2003, and I didn't sign with an agent until 2013. During those ten years, I kept writing and producing new work and trying new things. I went to conferences and read books and joined a critique group. By the time I found an agent for *The Friendship Experiment*, I had seven full manuscripts in a drawer and about a million rejection letters.

PM: How did you know that your agent was the one?



Erin Teagan continued

And since it took you ten years to get an agent, how did you manage to stay confident in the face of so much rejection?

ET: It was definitely a challenge for me to stay positive when I was in the query trenches. I faced a ton of rejection. I survived by celebrating every success, (I got a response! I got a request for full!) and by connecting with the writing community for support. I also kept writing and sending out more submissions, which helped me stay hopeful and stopped me from lingering on the rejections. I knew my agent was the one when I spoke with her on the phone. Her personality was the perfect combination of warm and professional. Most importantly, I didn't feel intimidated when I talked to her, and her vision for my book was in line with my own goals.

PM: What do you like best about the writing process? Outlining? Research? Revising?

ET: Basically, I love every part of writing when it's going well! I was never an outliner until I had to turn in outlines for *Luciana*, and by the third book, I started to really enjoy the outlining step in the process. It felt like brainstorming, and I loved that freedom. I think that's why I like fast-drafting as well. When you're outlining or working on a messy-first draft, anything goes, because you know the real work (revisions!) and the fine-tuning will come later.

For me, though, the worst part is that first time I read the messy-draft all the way through and have to face the reality of revisions. At first it feels paralyzing, like I can't do it, like this will never grow into a polished manuscript, but as soon as I get my revision momentum going, things start looking up. That's when I start enjoying the revision part of the process as well.

PM: Is a project ever finished for you? Or do you continually revise until your brain gets so fried you can't do it anymore?

ET: I definitely revise until my brain is fried! I think it's

really hard for writers to know when their own project is finished. Or at least, it is for me! I rely on my writers group and my beta readers to help me figure out when a manuscript is ready to send to my agent.

PM: *The American Girl* book series about “*Luciana, 2018 Girl of the Year*” — how did that come about? How many books are planned for the series?

ET: I feel so thankful for the opportunity of writing the *Luciana* books. It was an amazing experience, and a big surprise. American Girl was looking for an author that wrote for a middle grade audience and brought science into fiction. *The Friendship Experiment* had just come out and was on the SCBWI's Winter Reading List, a list that any SCBWI member can volunteer their book for. The editor I worked with spotted my book on the list, read it, and thought my voice and background was a good match for the character and story they were creating. She reached out to my agent, and the rest is history!

PM: Your school presentations, as described on your website — how did you develop those? Do you tie the presentations in with your books/subject matter?

ET: I have a lot of fun developing the programs I offer. As a kid that didn't connect with science until I was in middle school, I really looked forward to visiting schools and exposing students to a fun and/or weird part of science. All of my programs tie into my books. For example, in *The Friendship Experiment*, my main character likes to go around swabbing things (cleats in the lost-and-found, floors of the school bus, retainers...) to see what grows on petri dishes.

I've visited a lot of schools and libraries and swabbed everything from tablets, door handles, trash cans and toilet seats to a favorite classroom book (*Diary of a Wimpy Kid*) with students. It's fun and funny to see the results.

PM: What are you currently working on? Do you work on one book at a time or do you juggle multiple projects?

ET: I juggle a few projects at once, but on a daily basis, I focus on one. Right now my main focus is with *Survivor Girl*, a book that will come out with Clarion in 2019. It's a humorous adventure novel set in the Great Dismal



Erin Teagan continued

Swamp (a real place!) about a middle school girl that has a celebrity survivalist father. When I need a break from *Survivor Girl*, for example if I've just finished a big revision, I'll turn to something else for a bit. I usually have a fairly polished project, like *Survivor Girl*, a messy first draft of another project, and then an inkling of an idea percolating in my brain. I cycle through these projects until they move from idea to messy draft to polished – over and over again – until something is ready for sharing!

PM: Now that you've had several books published, do you find the process easier or harder?

ET: I'm not sure that publishing my books has made the process of writing easier, but each time I finish a manuscript, I've learned something that I can bring to the next project. And every time my writers group critiques something I'm working on, or an editor sends me notes, I learn even more. Because of this, sometimes I can read something I've written and figure out what's not working. It can still take me two or five or ten revisions to fix it, but at least it's a step in the right direction!

PM: Do you get inspiration from your two little mad scientists?

ET: My kids are now 8 and 10, the perfect ages for my audience! So far, most of my books have been inspired by my own experiences as a kid or working in science. Although, my current messy-draft project came from a tiny conversation I had with my son when he was in first grade and he mentioned something about being the boss of a team at school. I can't even remember exactly what he said but 'boss' and 'team' stuck with me and two years later (he's in third grade now!) I have something that resembles a story. My kids inspire me in so many ways. They are two of my greatest supporters and harshest critics, and I love them for it. But, generally, it's important to me that their stories stay their own.

PM: Where do you see yourself, creatively, five years from now? Do you see yourself branching out into other genres?

ET: The past five years have been truly amazing with a lot of mostly great surprises. Publishing is a business with many ups and downs. I still feel new to the world of 'published author' and so I hope that in five years from now, I'll still love the writing part of this as much as I do now. I hope that my writing time will remain sacred, even with juggling school visits and other events. And, I hope most of all that I'll have a new idea or two percolating in my brain!

My writing voice is pretty solidly middle grade. I've tried branching out and I even wrote a YA once. But, it didn't take long for someone to tell me I had actually written a

wordy middle grade novel about a high school kid. So, I've since embraced where my voice naturally falls, between the ages of eight and twelve years old.

Writing For Girl of the Year

Since 2001, American Girl has come out with their popular "Girl of the Year" line, which focuses on contemporary dolls with themes and issues that young girls can identify with; the tie-in books expands that universe. The in-house editors at Scholastic Inc. usually turn to established authors with whom they've worked with previously, but as in Erin Teagan's case, her debut novel caught the eye of one of their editors. Generally, the books take 18-24 months from the initial idea to publication, according to Susan Jevens, Associate Manager, Public Relations/American Girl, who also says that working with Teagan was "amazing".



interview by Sharon O. Blumberg

Let's meet up with Violette Burger, as she explains how she and her husband came to be editors of *The Kids' Ark* children's magazine. This is an online and print magazine for children readers.

Sharon Blumberg: Please tell me a little about your background, and how you and your husband, both, came to be editors of *The Kids' Ark*?

Violette Burger: I married my high school sweetheart when I was 19 years old. He was the only guy I dated all through high school. He died in an accident 14 months after our wedding. I was only 20 years old when he died. I got hired by the airlines as a flight attendant when I turned 21. God opened that door for me to travel all over the world. I was employed by the Braniff International Airlines for eight years before they went bankrupt. I was living in Houston, Texas at that time, but later I moved to Victoria, Texas. I met Jim, my current husband, at the hospital we both worked at. The Lord gave the idea for a Christian Magazine to Jim about 15 years ago. Since God put the magazine in my heart, we began publishing *The Kids' Ark* in 2005.

SB: How would you describe the focus of *The Kids' Ark* as a magazine for children regarding age range? Also, do all writings submitted need Christian content?

VB: Every issue has a theme. All stories can be submitted on our website (<http://www.thekidsark.com/>).

The magazine is for children ages 6 thru 12 years old. Every story has to be Christian or Bible-based. Our purpose is to reach children around the world with the gospel of Jesus, and to build in them a biblical foundation on which they can base their decisions and choices throughout their lives.



SB: Is *The Kids' Ark* a print magazine, an ezine, or both, and can future writers view a sample issue online?

VB: *The Kids' Ark* is both a print magazine and an ezine. Writers can see a sample on our website. If they contact us we can mail them a copy of the print magazine.

SB: What kinds of writing do you accept for *TKA*? Also, what is your word count requirements?

VB: We are looking for Christian stories that encourage children to trust in God and make the right choices in life. We like Christian adventure stories. All stories must be 650 words per story and must apply to the designated theme.

SB: Why would you reject a piece for *TKA*? If so, do you offer potential authors a chance to correct their piece?

VB: We would reject a story if it is not faith-based, does not apply to the theme, or talks about magic. We would also not publish a story that contradicts what the Bible says regarding that particular topic. Writers can change

The Kids' Ark continued

their story and resubmit by the due date on our website.

SB: Do you pay your contributors? Also, what kinds of rights do you license to writers after you accept their submissions?

VB: Yes, we pay our contributors \$100 for first time worldwide print and electronic rights, with the right to reprint at a later time for a payment of \$25.

SB: Do teachers use *TKA* for teaching with their classes? If so, in what way?

VB: Teachers can and have used *The Kids' Ark* for teaching. *The Kids' Ark* has three study pages that teachers can use. It involves questions for children to answer.

SB: How often is *TKA* published?

VB: It is published every quarter for a total of four issues a year.

SB: Is there anything else you would like to add, regarding children's writers submitting for you?

VB: In the back of *The Kids' Ark*, there is a "fill in the blank" puzzle for children. The answers to the puzzle can be found throughout the magazine. The kids can mail it in and then participate in a monthly drawing to win \$100.00. Afterwards, we put photos of the winners in the following issue. This encourages children to read the entire magazine.

There is also a religious-based page for followers of the Christian faith, that explains that God sent His son, Jesus, to Earth where He died on the cross to pay for our sins. It points out that we have to make Jesus the Lord of our lives, repent from our sins, and that Jesus said we would be "born again" into God's family. If the child sends in the form that states that they made this commitment to Jesus along with the date of their decision, we send them a "Re-Birth Certificate." They can frame and put this on their wall, in order to help them remember their commitment.

The Kids' Ark is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Yearly subscriptions are sold for \$20 but the majority of the magazines are distributed free of charge to other organizations ministering to "at-risk" kids, such as YMCA's, Boys & Girls Clubs, orphanages, foster care agencies, etc.

SB: Could you please include a link to your submission guidelines?

VB: Sure, please click this link for submission guidelines: <http://thekidsark.com/guidelines.htm>

Now that you have met the editors of *The Kids' Ark*, I hope you're inspired to write for them and submit. As you can see, they offer a number of options in which future writers may contribute, in the spirit and teachings of the Christian faith.

At Presstime, continued from Page 2

We Need Diverse Books Extends Deadline for Application for the Walter Grant to June 15, 2018

Here's the original listing from the May 2018 "At Presstime":

We Need Diverse Books will award up to six Walter Grants (named after the late Walter Dean Myers) of \$2000 each to unpublished diverse authors and/or illustrators. Applicants must be working toward a career as a children's book author and/or illustrator in one of the following categories: Picture Books, Early Reader Books, Chapter Books, Middle Grade Books, Young Adult, Graphic Novels, Nonfiction, Poetry. Applicants must be US residents and identify as one of more of the following: person of color, Native American, LGBTQIA+, person with a disability, marginalized religious or cultural minority. Note: The applicant themselves must be diverse. Being married to, a parent of, or a sibling of a diverse person, or being someone who has grown up with diverse people, will not qualify an otherwise ineligible applicant. Work considered for the Walter Grant must not currently be on submission.

Application details can be found at <https://diverse-books.org/our-programs/walter-grant/submission-guidelines/> All applications must be emailed by June 15, 2018 at 11:59PM EST.