

Some steps necessary in creating a picture book:

- ☒ inspiration
- ☒ idea generation
- ☒ character
- ☒ initial sketches/ doodles
- ☒ manuscript
- ☒ many drafts of manuscripts /dummy books
- ☒ research
- ☒ storyboard
- ☒ sharing your drafts with critique partners/an agent/an editor
- ☒ character consistency
- ☒ final sketches for the book
- ☒ submitting your dummy book to an agent or an editor
- ☒ working with an editor/art director to make the story better
- ☒ revising the text/art based on an editor/art director suggestions
- ☒ working on final images for the book

Different ways to come up with character and story ideas:

- ☒ Journaling/sketching your childhood memories. Write down the memories associated with 5 senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch). Get into that feeling of being a kid. What were your joys? Fears? Challenges? Greatest accomplishments?
- ☒ Journaling/sketching what your kids say/kids around you say, how they interact, how they feel.
- ☒ If you don't have kids or your kids are grown up, no worries. Look around, pay attention to kids in stores, libraires, events, etc. Volunteer, substitute teach, etc.
- ☒ just doodle and see what happens
- ☒ try mind maps, associations, puns, metaphors and analogies

Do you start with a plot or a character?

☒ **Plot-driven book** is focused on the actual plot itself (a story's plot is what happens in the story and the order it happens in). If you start with a plot, your process will probably go smoother and faster.

But a plot-driven book has limitations. And your main character will probably be rather flat and one dimensional.

☒ **Character-driven book** is focused on the characters and the internal change. What happens in the story happens because of the attitudes, personality and character traits of the main character. If you start with the character and get to know them, the possibilities are endless. But it takes a long time to truly get to know your character. You will end up with many many drafts of different stories for the character. But. The character will drive the story! The kids will fall in love with the character and will want to read the book over and over again.

☒ The best picture books have both a memorable unique flawed character and an unexpected and exciting plot.

Get to know your character:

- ☒ Brainstorm and write any qualities, attributes, physical characteristics that you'd like to include in your character.
- ☒ What does your character look like?
- ☒ What does he/she/they like to do?
- ☒ What does he/she/they hate to do?
- ☒ What is the character afraid of?
- ☒ What are his/her/their personality traits? Funny? Shy? Short-tempered?
- ☒ How he/she/they walks, talks, laughs, etc.
- ☒ Is the character new to a place, situation?

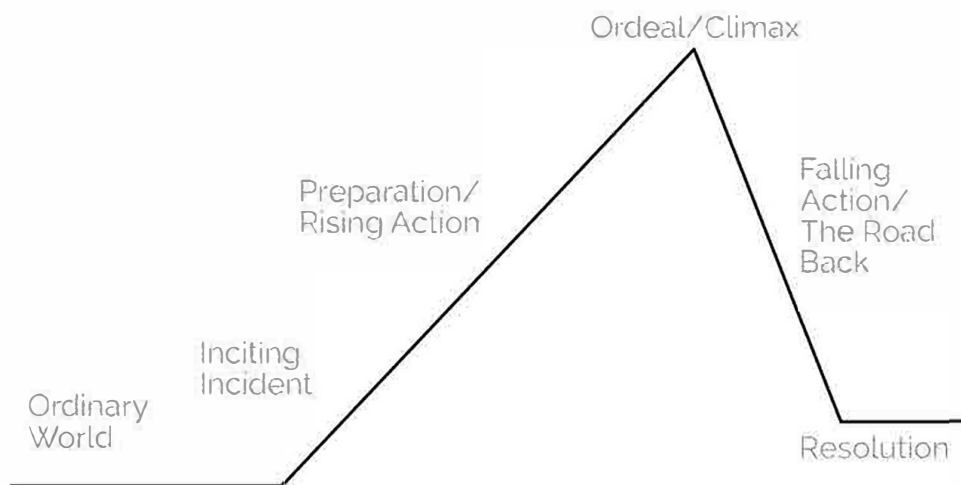
Your character needs to be:

- ☒ flawed - the character is not perfect, they have struggles or character flaws they need to overcome
- ☒ relatable - the main character should connect with readers. Kids can see themselves in the character.

PICTURE BOOK PLOT STRUCTURE

Introduce main character, setting, problem, point of view, voice.

- ☒ Inciting incident - the event that sets the main character or characters on the journey.
- ☒ Rising Action - How does the problem get worse?
 - ☒ Try. Fail.
 - ☒ Try. Fail.
 - ☒ Try. Fail.
- ☒ Dark moment - things can't get any worse.
- ☒ Climax - the character is in a situation where a choice must be made that will affect the rest of the story.
- ☒ Falling action - How does the problem get resolved? The tension has been released and the story begins to wind down.
- ☒ The character has gone through change and growth.
- ☒ End with a surprise or twist.



How many drafts do I need?

- ☒ As many as it takes. I usually go through 20-30 drafts and 10-15 dummy books.
- ☒ With each draft the story gets more focused.
- ☒ Everything that happens in the story needs to work with the main character/make sense for that character.
- ☒ Picture books have very few words. So every single word and scene counts. They need to belong to that story.
- ☒ Get rid of any scenes that don't work with your story, even if you love them.
- ☒ I always wanted the process to be linear. From character to plot and everything simple, step by step way. Working on a book is so messy and interesting and magical. And NOT linear.
- ☒ Try to write in different voices, 1st person narration, 3rd person narration, etc.
- ☒ When you look back at your earlier drafts, maybe only 5% or one or two of the scenes stayed the same, everything else is completely different. And that is ok! That is the process! As long as the character and the story is strong, nothing else matters.

Working with an editor and an art director:

- ☒ Be respectful, listen to all the suggestions they have.
- ☒ Take time to respond.
- ☒ If you feel strongly about one of the changes, write back and explain your point of view in a very polite way.
- ☒ Don't experiment with writing or art while under contract. They hired you based on the art or the writing you submitted.
- ☒ Your book is not your book anymore. It's the book of the whole team. It's their job to make the book as strong as possible and help it stand out from all the other books.

Children's book resources

- continue working on your portfolio (make sure you have illustrations of kids, animals, sequential images of 3-5 illustrations, consistent style)
- SCBWI – community, conferences, workshops and resources
www.scbwi.org
- join writers and illustrators critique groups
- Storyteller Academy - online class for author-illustrators www.storytelleracademy.com
- All The Wonders – podcast interviews with writers and illustrators and other resources
www.allthewonders.com
- Writers Loft – writing classes, writing and illustration workshops, Sherborn, MA
www.thewritersloft.org
- KidLit411 - resources www.kidlit411.com
- Purple crayon - info on writing and publishing <http://www.underdown.org>
- Children's Book Council – list of publishers research publishers and submission guidelines www.cbcbooks.org/membership/member-list/
- GrubStreet – www.grubstreet.org
- Joyce Sweeney, writing coach www.sweeneywritingcoach.com

Some questions about children's books answered:

<https://www.scbwi.org/online-resources/frequently-asked-questions/>

BOOKS

Figure Drawing:

Andrew Loomis's Books

"Bridgman's Complete Guide to Drawing from Life" with drawings and text by George B. Bridgman, edited by Howard Simon

"Drawing the Human Head", "Dynamic Figure Drawing", "Drawing Dynamic Hands" by Burne Hogarth

"The Artist's Complete Guide to Drawing the Head" William Maughan

Animal Drawing:

"The Art of Animal Drawing" by Ken Hultgren

Color:

"Color and Light: A Guide for Realistic Painter" by James Gurney

"Painter's Guide to Color" by Stephen Quiller

"Colour: A Workshop for Artists and Designers" by David Hornung

Reference:

"Facial Expressions: A Visual Reference for Artists" by Mark Simon

"Facial Expressions Babies to Teens: A Visual Reference for Artists" by Mark Simon

Sketchbooks:

"An Illustrated Life" by Danny Gregory

"Sketchbook Confidential" edited by Pamela Wissman and Stefanie Laufersweiler

"Cartooning: Philosophy and Practice" by Ivan Brunetti

Illustration Process:

"Imaginative Realism" by James Gurney

"Color and Light" James Gurney

LIST OF SUPER FUN THINGS I OFFER

- ☒ school/museum/library VIRTUAL AUTHOR VISITS
- ☒ books autographed by Katia Wish
- ☒ portfolio critique
- ☒ dummy book critique
- ☒ mentorship to an illustrator or an author-illustrator at the beginning of their career
- ☒ teaching, tutoring, workshops
- ☒ any other projects
- ☒ any private commissions