

Things to consider when writing your Picture Book Proposal (Homework 1)

The CONCEPT EXPLORATION:

Who; What; Where; When; Why; How?

The CONCEPT:

Good concepts are rooted in a very simple core idea.

Topics for Children's Picture Books ideally come from personal experience or a topic that you are an expert in:

- Childhood fears or trauma.
- Childhood friends or pets.
- Childhood environment: urban, suburban, country, or foreign country.
- Special childhood events/holidays/life stages.
- Childhood hero: real, fictional, or historic.
- Sport or hobbies.
- School, church, or work.
- Ethnicity & Diversity: LGBTQ
- Current or historical Events: BLM, Me-Too, Climate Warming.
- Retelling or Updating Fairy Tale, Mythology, or Fable.

These ideas come with built-in audience recognition. It is then up to the writer and artist to blow-away those preconceptions.

The STORY BASICS:

- After establishing a strong story concept, the writer and illustrator develop strong characters with unique personalities.
- Story is about those characters and the emotional journey they take.
- The audience has to relate to the characters, and see themselves in the characters hopes, dreams, insecurities and desires.

Characters, themes, and stories should be entertaining to specific age ranges of kids. That's why we also have subcategories under this umbrella category. You now have stories for t'weens, preschool kids, and young adults (YA). Varying age brackets are treated as different audiences, according to age and school grade level.

No matter what the subject matter is, you need to have a youthful (age reflective) central character, with a dilemma. It would be best if they can solve the problems presented in the narrative, but one element always has to be present in these books: **Hope.**

A Protagonist must have a basic action (motivation):

Snow White; STOP THE SPELL

Cinderella; GET THE PRINCE

The Lord of the Rings; DESTROY THE RING

101 Dalmatians; SAVE THE PUPPIES

The Odyssey; GET HOME

Simplicity and Clarity are really important in storytelling.

What does the guy want?

Why can't he have it?

UNDERLYING THEMES:

"Don't judge a book by its cover" - (Beauty and the Beast)

"Good things come to those who wait" - (Cinderella)

"Don't stray from the path." – (Little Red Riding Hood)

**THE ASSIGNMENT: DUE NEXT WEEK
(Homework 1)**

1. Continue brainstorming ideas for your own picture book project.
2. Select the best **3 ideas** and create a formal proposal condensing each one into a 2-3 sentence elevator pitch.
3. Answer these questions for each of the 3 ideas:
 - a. **Title of the Project.** Include the tentative title and subtitle for your project.
 - b. **Concept (MANIFESTO)** – In one or two short paragraphs explain the idea behind the project. (The central theme).
 - c. Research the market:
 - I. Are there similar books in print?
 - II. How would your book be different?
 - III. Why are you the one to write/illustrate this book?
 - d. Genre: What type of book is this? (Fairy Tale, History, Informational, etc.)

- e. Who is the Target Audience for this picture book?
- f. Why is this topic important to your target audience, and why do you think there is a market for such a book?
- g. Include an **About the Author** – This is the part about you indicate why you are the best person to create this book. What are your special qualifications? Only include what applies to your subject matter. Don't be afraid about bragging here.

This assignment should be created as a PDF. Don't forget to include your name.

*****Label the PDF files: last name_hmwk1.pdf**

Upload this PDF to folder labeled Homework 1 in DropBox.

Go to: [Dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com)

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