

# How to write a picture book

I have posted many writing tips, but I think the most common question I get on dms is about picture books, how to write them, and their expected format. And while I encourage authors to take real writing courses by people much more qualified than me, I will list a few things that are standards in the picture book industry that I also expect to see in the majority of books I review.

Format: around 750 words preferably (1000 is maximum, don't go above this)! Around 32 pages. Cut unnecessary scenes that don't support the plot, and anything illustrated shouldn't be described.

1. Conflict- there has to be a conflict, preferably both an external one (outside of the body/emotions) and an internal one that are interconnected.
2. Something has to happen, an actual story, with different scenes, different places, and showcasing the conflict and resolution.
3. The characters have to have reasons for what they do. Make those obvious to the reader. Why do they act a certain way? Is it relatable to kids?
4. The majority of the book should be scenes that show heightened emotions and tensions until you reach the main climax, and the resolution is usually a few lines at the end.
5. You have to feel invested. Do you find yourself rooting for the main character on their quest? Or do you find them annoying or boring? Or perfect- perfection in books is dull.
6. What do the characters learn and how do they change? This should not be stated outright and should be something learned by the reader through the pages and a conclusion they naturally reach at the end.
7. Be original! Please, if there is something I am tired of seeing, it is the same old cliché book. Think- what makes your story unique to all others out there?

Save and read this over when developing your own manuscript!! It is easy to forget when it is your own work, trust me, my editors constantly remind me of these same issues in my own work! 🙄

Also: please use a professional children's book editor! They will point this stuff out to you in your work. Look at my other post for editor suggestions.