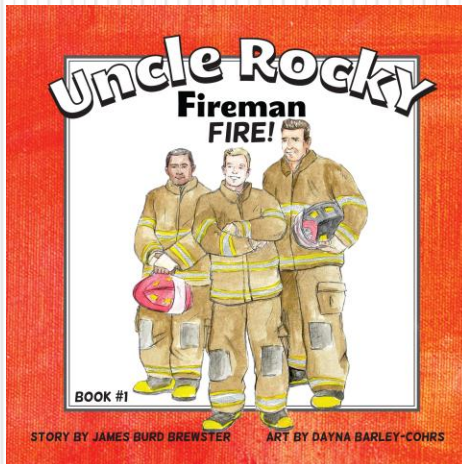


Children's Picture Books

The Complete How -To



James Brewster

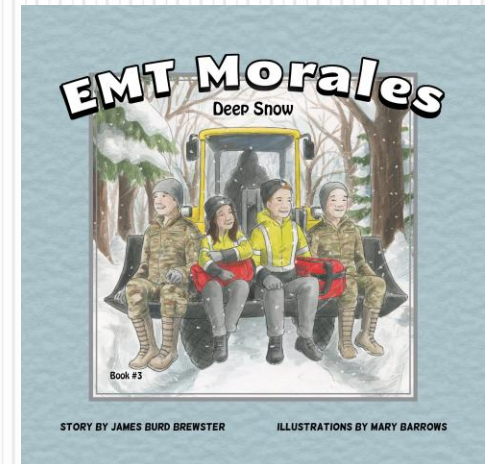
President, J2B Publishing

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202-557-8097



Agenda



- Introduction
- Children's Book Genres
- Children's Picture Book Concepts
- Children's Picture Book Process
- A Successful Children's Book...
- The process to Write and Illustrate a Children's Book
- Resources
- Q & A

Introduction



James Burd Brewster

- President of J2B Publishing, an Independent Press
- Author of 21 children's picture books in the "Glad to do it!" Series
- Descended from William Brewster on the Mayflower.
- Raised Christian – Episcopalian; Made Profession of Faith – 12
- Episcopalian – Protestant Chapel – Baptist – Presbyterian – Non-Denominational – Baptist.
- Homeschool Father of 5 (4 boys, 1 girl)
- Homeschool Grandfather of 8 (6 boys, 2 girls)

3rd Career



- Writing is my 3rd Career
 - 1st - USCG Active Duty (25 yrs.)
 - 2nd - Corporate Project Manager and USCG Contractor (19 yrs)
 - 3rd - Publisher and Author (12 yrs to date)

We rarely “end up” doing what we “started” doing.

God gives us time, so we don't have to do everything at once.

Children's Book Genres



You Write for Specific Children, Not All Children

Different Publishers for Different Age books

- Board Books 0-3 yrs Max 300 words
- Picture Books 4-8 yrs 600-1000 words
- Early Readers 5-8 yrs Max 2000 words
- Chapter Books 6-10 yrs 8.5K -12K words, Max 20K
- Middle Grade 8-12 yrs 30K – 50K words

Fiction

- Young Adult (YA) 12+ yrs 45K-80K words

Board Books (0–3, 300 words)

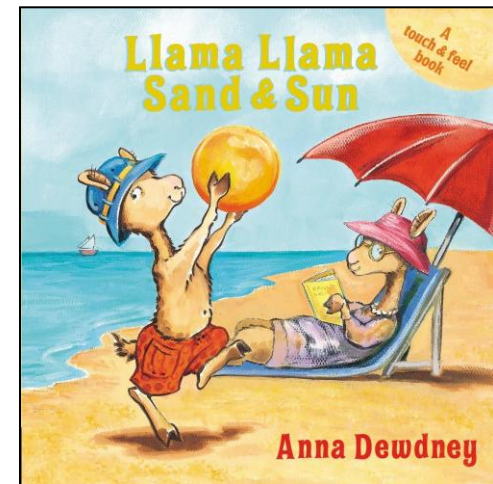
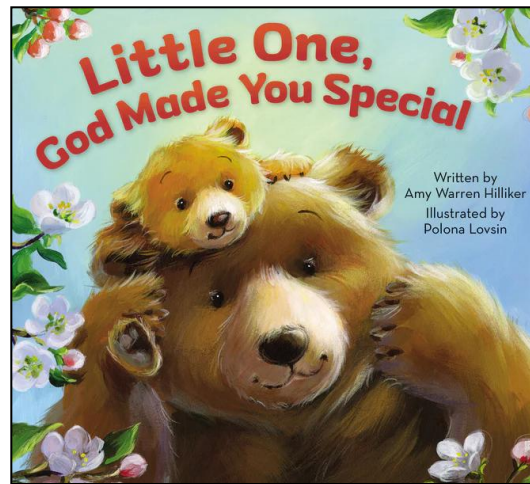
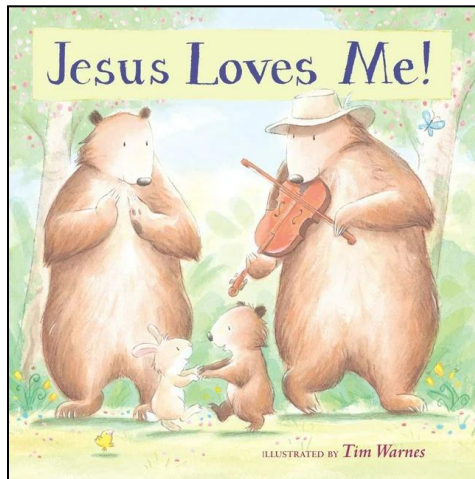


Board books use words and concepts appropriate for the 0-3 age group. These can be introduced in a way that is engaging and interactive, such as through touch-and-feel experiences or interactive elements in the book.

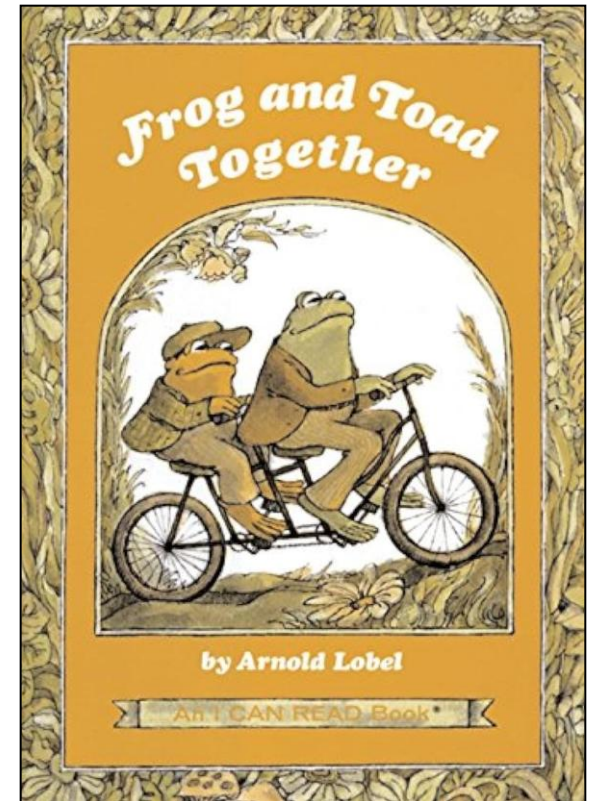
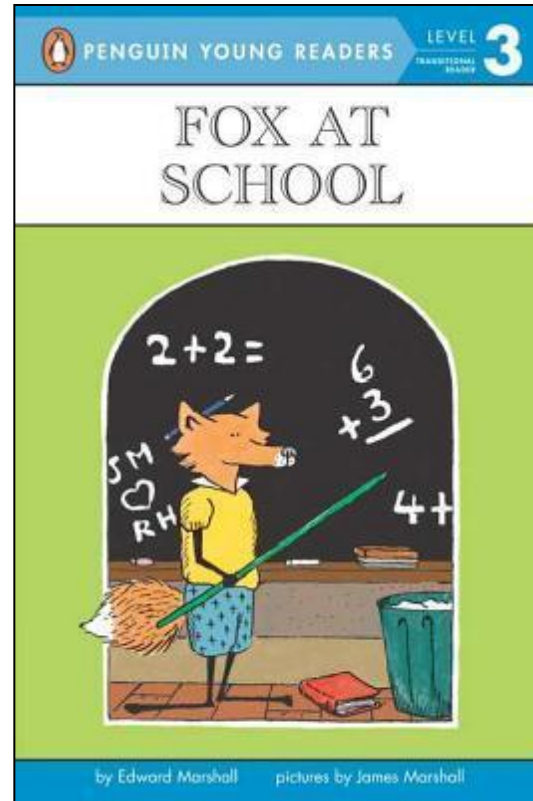
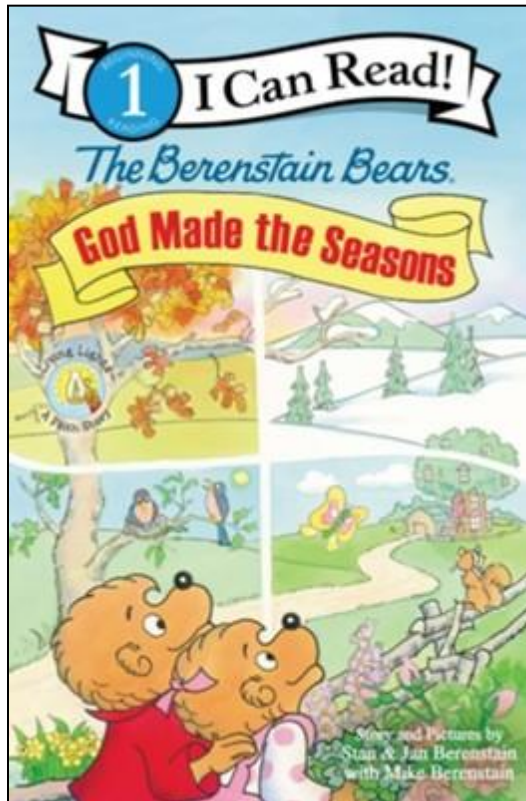
Words and concepts like:

- Colors: red, blue, green, yellow, and so on.
- Shapes: circles, squares, and triangles.
- Animals: shapes and names of animals like dog, cat, and bird.
- Numbers: teach counting with numbers like 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Relationships: mommy, daddy, brother, sister

Board Books (0–3, 300 Words)

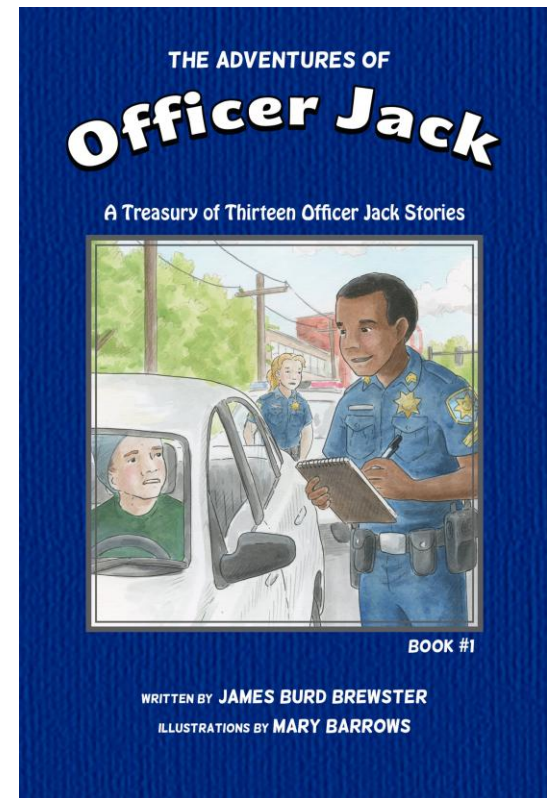
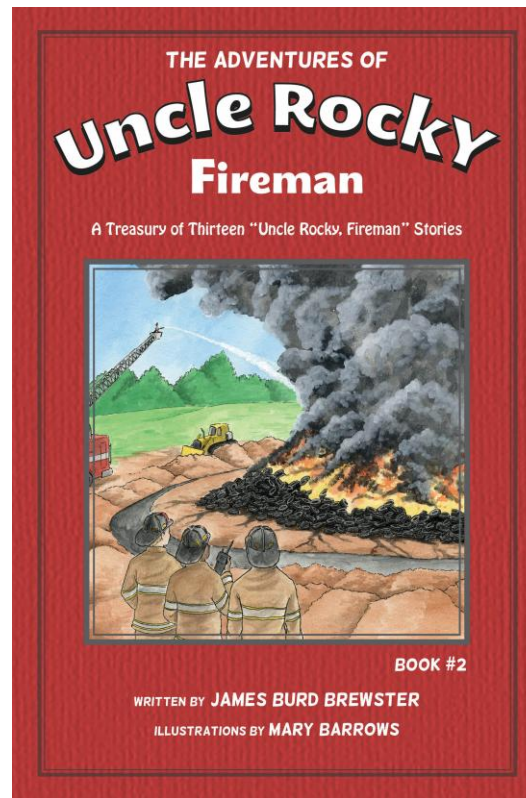
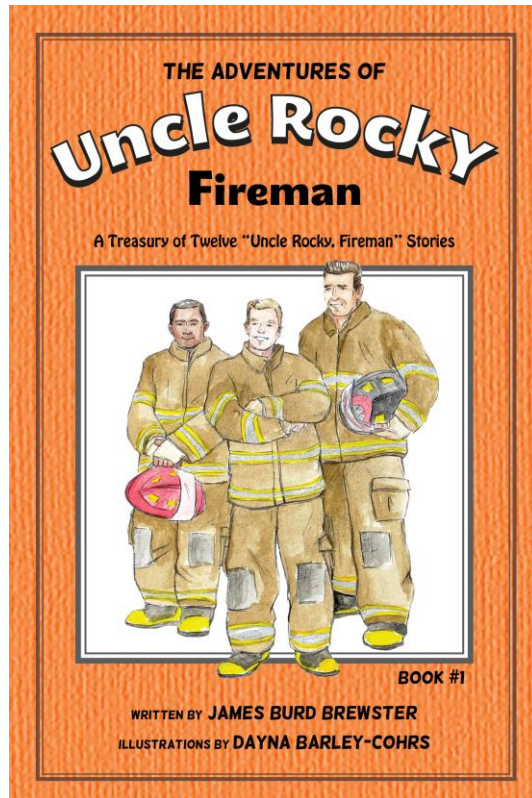


Early Readers (5-8, Max 2000 Words)

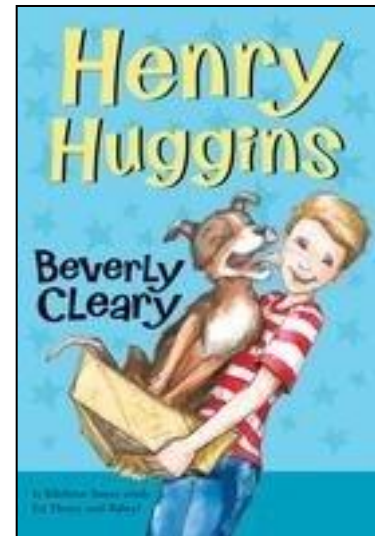
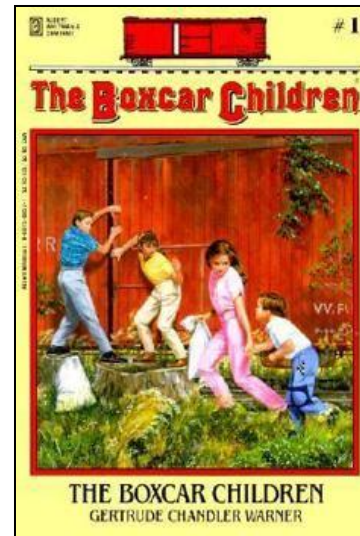
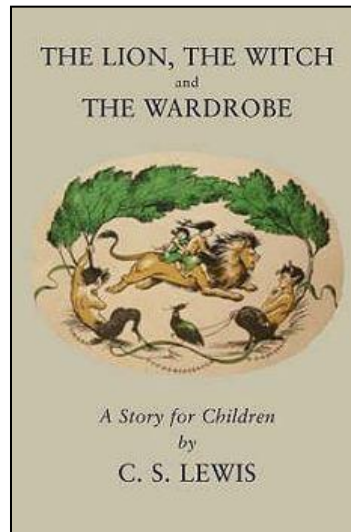
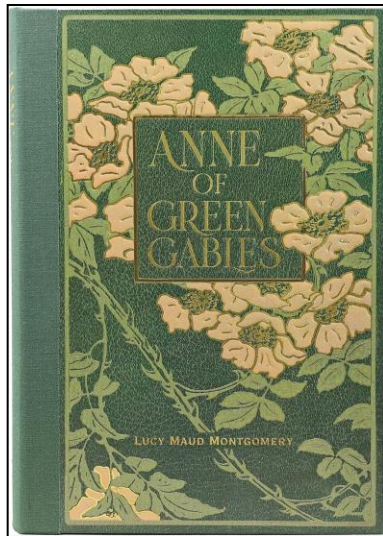


Chapter Books (6-10, 8K-12K Words)

About 12K words each

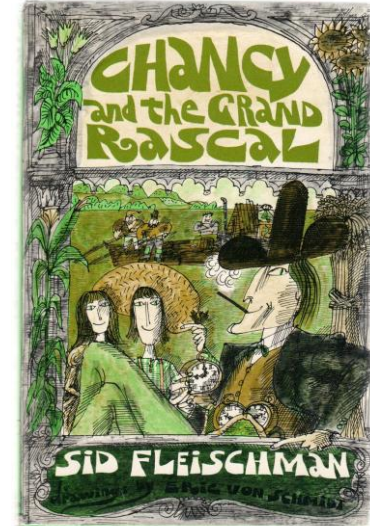
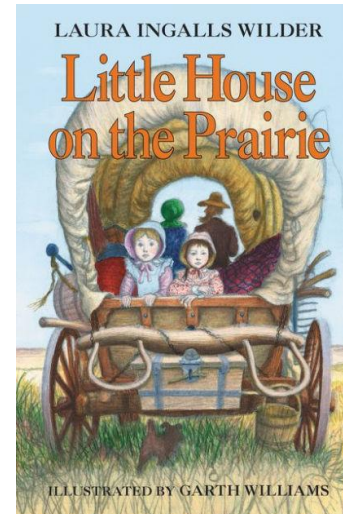
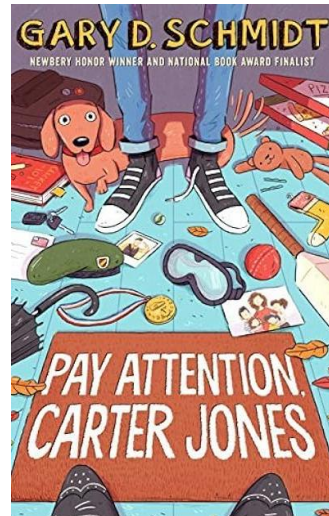
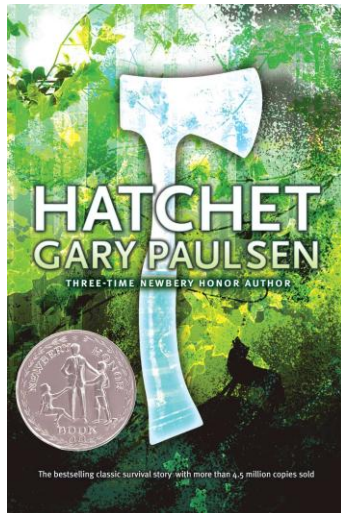


Middle Grade Fiction (8-12, 30k-50k Words)



Young Adult Fiction (12+, 45K-85K Words)

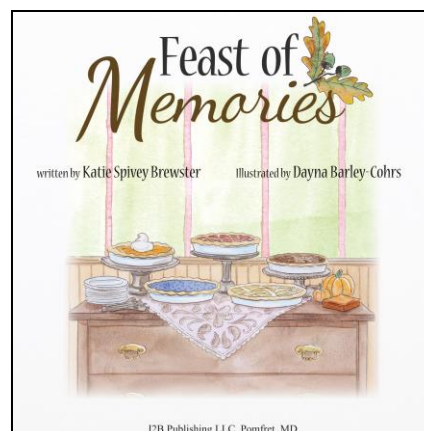
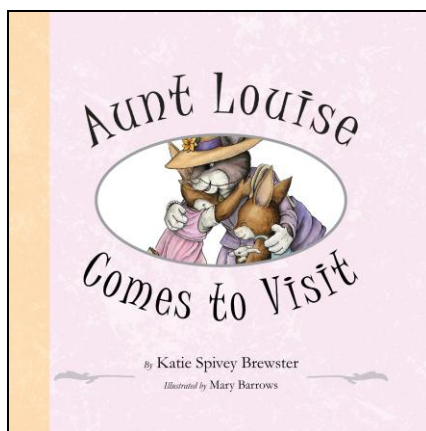
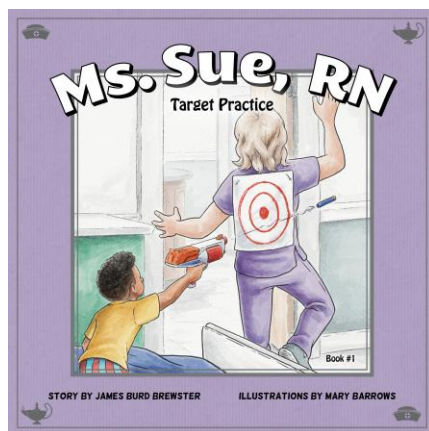
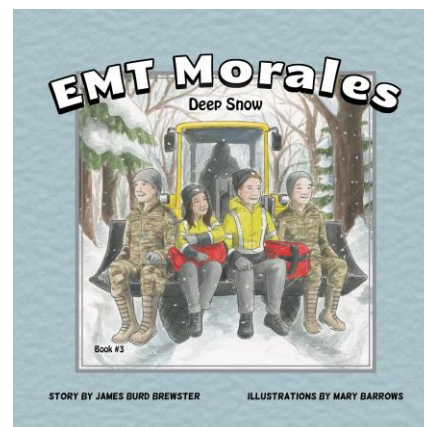
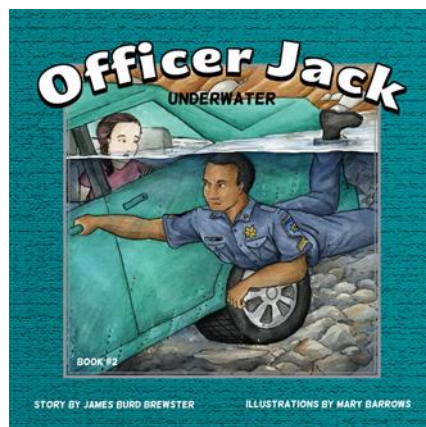
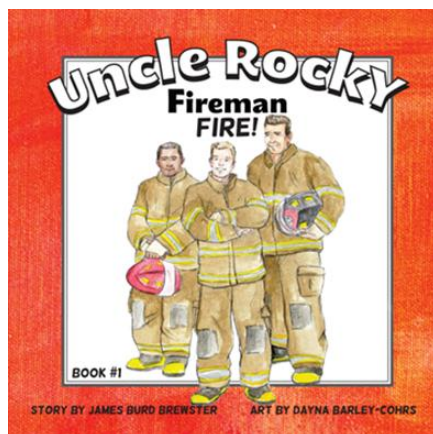
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- TIP - Children like to read about children their age or older

Picture Books (4-8, under 1000 Words)

32 page, 16 illustrations, under 1000 words



James Burd Brewster - Uncle Rocky, Fireman Series - WWW.GladToDolt.net - GladToDolt@gmail.com - 202-557-8097

Picture Book Concepts (4-8)

Picture books move from the concrete language of Board Books into the imaginative because kids are expanding their vocabulary, grasp of humor, and enjoyment of rhythm, storytelling, and emotion. Concepts such as:

- **Characters & Relationships**

- Friend, Neighbor, Hero, Monster, God
- Princess, Pirate, Knight, Explorer, Police Officer, EMT, Firefighter
- Teacher, Farmer, Chef, Artist, Nurse

- **Emotions & Inner World**

- Brave, Lonely, Curious, Excited
- Worried, Grumpy, Proud, Silly, Helpful
- Surprised, Scared, Kind, Shy, Grateful

Picture Book Concepts



- **Actions & Adventure**

- Sneak, Wiggle, Tiptoe, Race
- Splash, Build, Fly, Spin, Climb, Slide
- Discover, Rescue, Pretend, Hide

- **Imagination & Magic**

- Dragon, Fairy, Wand, Potion
- Treasure, Map, Secret, Spell
- Rocket, Spaceship, Robot, Time

- **Descriptive & Sensory Words**

- Sparkly, Bumpy, Slimy, Crunchy
- Loud, Quiet, Soft, Fuzzy, Smoky,
- Twisty, Glowing, Icy, Soggy

Picture Book Concepts



- **Places & Settings**

- Jungle, Castle, Cave, Forest, Hospital
- Ocean, Farm, Village, Galaxy, Township
- Attic, Treehouse, Playground, Firehouse, Police Car, Hospital

- **Dialogue & Expression**

- “Wow!”, “Oops!”, “Uh-oh!”, “Yay!”
- “Come on!”, “Look out!”, “Let’s go!”
- “Shhh...”, “No way!”, “I did it!” “Glad to do it!”

These words and concepts lend themselves to rich sentence variety, sound play, and visual storytelling—perfect for crafting engaging picture books that keep young readers hooked.

Christian Picture Book Concepts



- Write a book that parent will want to read to their kids.
- The child should be the central focus of the story.
- Parents, pastors, adults shown as responsible caring people.
- Family members should get along.
- Jesus should be a friend.
- Can be scary, but it can never touch a child's body.
- Children can be very literal
 - Eating "lunch on the Road" has a different meaning to them.
- Must resolve successfully – Child/good guy ends on top.

Children's Picture Book Process



Picture books - Ages 4—8, 600 - 1000 words — 32 pages/16 Illustrations

Author (YOU) — Creative Genius

Author Writes Story — Incorporate the steps on the following pages.

Author Decides Text Page Breaks

Author Writes Illustration Concepts

Author Creates Layout

Its YOUR book, everyone else is a supporter of your creative effort

Illustrator (You hire) — Artistic Genius

Comments on Layout and Illustration Concepts

Draws Rough Sketches — Author Pay \$

Draws Fine Lines — Author Pay \$

Inks Fine Lines — Author Pay \$

Delivered to Author as .JPG files

A Successful Children's Book



Strong Concept

- Write a real story
 - Main Character
 - Goal
 - Conflict
 - Resolution

Children are thinking people, just smaller than adults

A Successful Children's Book



Well Defined Structure That effectively conveys the Story

- Narrative arc
 - Opening
 - Conflict
 - Build to climax
 - Climax
 - Successful Resolution

A Successful Children's Book



Well-defined structure to effectively convey story

- Show, Don't Tell
 - Telling means explaining a factual statement.
 - Showing means describing action & emotion

Telling	Showing
She was hungry.	Her stomach rumbled.
She was tired.	She yawned.
They were happy.	They said, "Glad to do it!"

- Bury the message in the story - reader discovers the message for themselves
- Doesn't Preach — Kids know when a story is condescending.

A Successful Children's Book



Hooks the Reader

- Hook The Reader With The First Sentence
 - Start at a pivotal moment
 - Start with an uncommon situation.
 - Start with conflict.
 - Start with dialogue
- “The only unusual thing about Charlie is the Bright Purple Monster that lives on his shoulder.” Lauren A. Bertone – The Bright Purple Monster
- “Gertie Groundhog rushed around getting ready for school. Today was not the day to be late. Karen Nespoli – Gertie Saves the Day

A Successful Children's Book



Leaves Reader With A Smile

- The end of a children's book should feel satisfactory to the parent and child.
- End with some humor.
- End by bringing it full circle.
- No loose ends
- "Glad to do it!"

A Successful Children's Book



Lovable Characters

- You conceive them
- You make them interesting
- Your illustrator makes them loveable

A Successful Children's Book



Colorful and Engaging illustrations

- Text and Illustrations Compliment each other
 - A children's picture book is a combination of pictures and text.
 - There is no reason to tell the reader what is shown in the illustrations.

A Successful Children's Book



Verse vs Prose

- Either is fine
- Kids love order, predictability, and repetition in prose
- Kids love order and predictability of verse
- ****Warning ** Warning****
 - If you are going to write verse, do it right!
 - Keep Meter Consistent
 - Keep Rhyme Honest

Process - Author - Writes Story



Incorporate Steps 1-7 above!

“You didn’t finish your breakfast, Earl,” Ms. Sue said as she picked up his food tray.

Ms. Sue was a Registered Nurse at Hamilton Township General Hospital

“I’m not hungry,” Earl said in a tired voice.

“You need to eat so you will get better,” Ms. Sue said.

Earl didn’t answer. Ms. Sue left him there, lying in his hospital bed, not moving.

Process - Author - Decides Illustration Breaks

“You didn’t finish your breakfast, Earl,” Ms. Sue said as she picked up his food tray.

Ms. Sue was a Registered Nurse at Hamilton Township General Hospital

“I’m not hungry,” Earl said in a tired voice.

“You need to eat so you will get better,” Ms. Sue said.

Earl didn’t answer. Ms. Sue left him there, lying in his hospital bed, not moving.

(Illustration 1: Earl in bed, weak and pale, tray across the bed, food still on it, Ms. Sue looking at him.)

Process - Finding an Illustrator



Local Writers Club

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

Freelancer (www.Frelancer.com)

Upworks (www.Upworks.com)

Guru (www.Guru.com)

Fiverr (www.Fiverr.com)

Illustrators for Hire (www.illustratorsforhire.com)

- Go online
- Browse Portfolios
- Pick Illustrator - \$2000-3000 for a 32-page, 16 illustration book, including cover and fully formatted files for publication and printing.

Process - Illustrating a Picture Book



Picture books - Ages 4–8, 600-1000 words – 32 pages/16 Illustrations

Illustrator – Artistic Genius

- Comments on Layout and Illustration Concepts

- Draws Rough Sketches – Author Pay \$

- Draws Fine Lines – Author Pay \$

- Inks Fine Lines – Author Pay \$

- Delivered to Author as .JPG files

Book Designer - Creates Book Files (Usually Illustrator can do this)

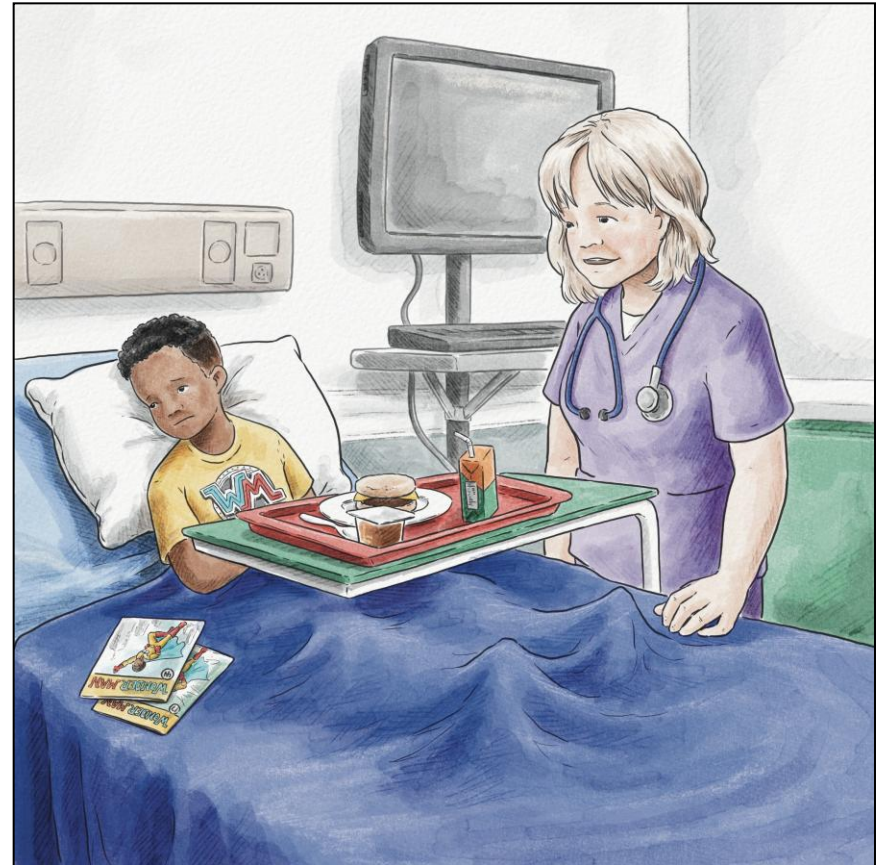
Process - Illustrator - Storyboard



Process - Illustrator - Fine Lines



Process - Illustrator - Inking



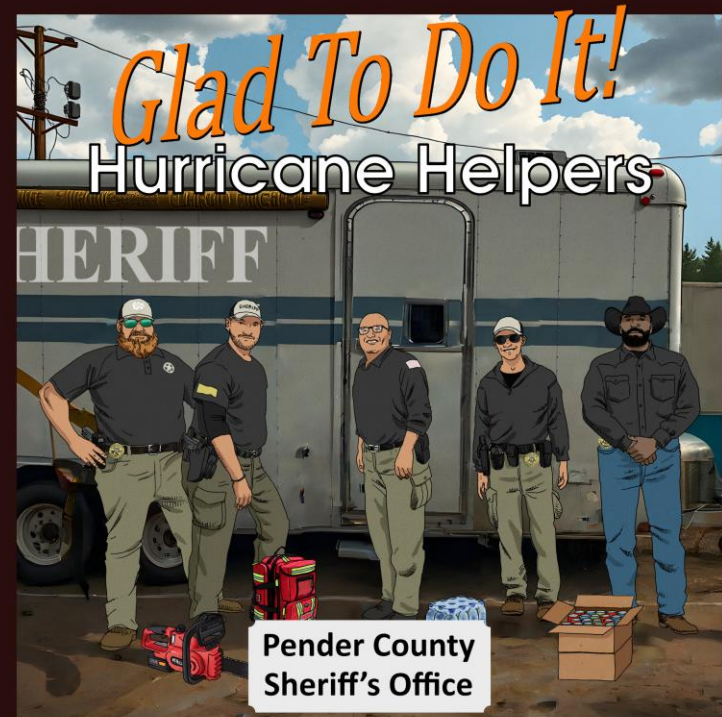
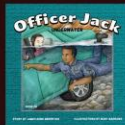
Process - Illustrator – Develops Cover

Hurricane Helene devastated communities in Western North Carolina. In response to a plea from the Mitchel County Sheriff's Office, Pender County sent five deputies to help with the recovery efforts. But, when Captain Henkins offers the team's assistance to a local church, the pastor turns them down. The team wondered, was this a wasted trip or would they be able to help?

Hurricane Helpers describes the response performed by sheriff's deputies from Pender County, North Carolina, who went to help Mitchell County recover from the damage caused by Hurricane Helene. Using Bradshaw Fire & Rescue as their operating base, the deputies, between October 12-17, 2024, helped the Green Mountain community and the congregation of the Upper Pigeon Roost Freewill Baptist Church recover from the devastation.

The Pender County deputies (Captain Naz Hankins, Detective Sergeant Matthew English, Detective Sergeant Mark Lobel, Detective Dylan Harnish, and Deputy Robert Pate) who assisted Mitchell County are drawn as the characters in the story.

Hurricane Helpers is part of the "Glad to do it!" series of children's picture books that thank and honor first responders and nurses for serving and protecting their community. To see the entire "Glad to do it!" series, visit www.GladToDoIt.net.



By James Burd Brewster

Illustrated by Sergio Drumond

Process - Illustrator – Delivers Files



What You Need from the Illustrator

- Each Individual Illustration - .jpg
- Fully Formatted Interior File – PDF – For KDP/printing book
- Full Cover - PDF and .jpg – For KDP/printing book
 - Front and Back Cover Thumbnails – PDF and .jpg – For marketing

Process - Working With Illustrators



Illustrators Make or Break Your Project

- Are creative geniuses in their own right
- Can make your deadline or delay your project.
- Can Be flexible or rigid in making changes.

Be gentle when pointing out errors or asking for revisions.

Fire the Bad ones.

Treat Good ones like royalty.

Resources



Join a Writers Organization:

- Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrator (www.Scbbwi.com)

Good Websites:

- Writing a Great Book - <https://writingagreatbook.com/category/home/>
- Redeemed Reader - <https://redeemedreader.com>
- The Measured Mom - <https://www.themeasuredmom.com>
- Writers Digest - <https://www.writersdigest.com/>

ISBNs — Bowker.com (buy), KDP.Amazon.com (free)

ISBN Bar Code

- www.creativindiecovers.com/free-online-isbn-barcode-generator

Writer Beware

- <https://writerbeware.blog>

“Your editor is your friend—their notes are not a personal attack, but rather you two have the same goal: **to make the book as good as possible.**”

Kate Myers



Hebert Smith Quote



J2B PUBLISHING

- “There is such a tacit assumption by most people,” said Hebert Smith, “that impossible things in life are accomplished by people other than themselves, as if there were a superior race on earth. The fact is that the important things are done by ordinary people. There is no use waiting for someone with "Superior Qualifications" to do a job. Just pitch in and do it. Ever since I found that out, it has given me a lot of courage.”