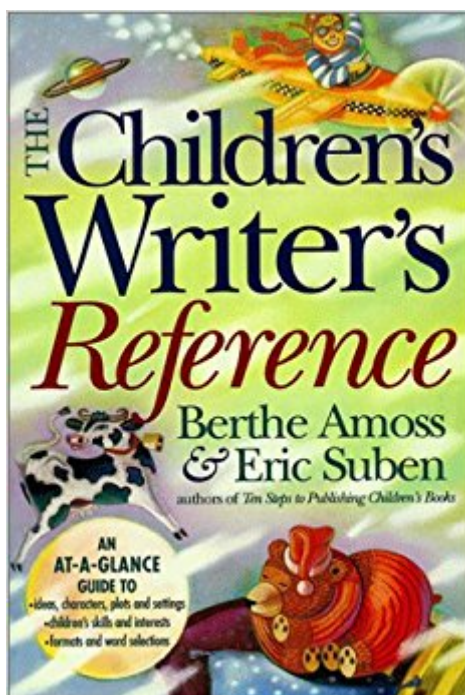


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# The Children's Writer's Reference



## Synopsis

What type of animals work best in picture books? What periods in history are most popular with kids? Which 'problem stories' are right for which ages? This guide gives children's writers all the answers they need to write and illustrate stories kids will love and publishers will buy. From pre-reader to young adult, children's writers of any age group and genre will find the special market information they need here. This guide breaks down children's writing into 8 easy-to-reference chapters, covering: Children and Books, Ideas, Age Groups and Format, Characters, Setting, Plot, Writing and Thinking Visually.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Children's Writer's Reference is a book of lists held together by strong connective tissue. Some of the lists, such as those explaining publishing terms or the various types of novelty children's books, provide a great service to a children's-book author. If you are writing a novelty book, you should know whether it's a flap book or a gatefold, a pull-the-tabs or a pop-up. Other lists, like the one of things you might find in a playground, are a bit off-putting; if you don't know that playgrounds generally feature swings and jungle gyms, you might be in the wrong line of work. And still others, like the one of "words that work well in titles of children's books" ("nice" and "runaway" are among the 22 included), will strike you as either totally crass or pleasantly helpful, depending on how eager you are to fit a commercial niche. Among this book's most helpful lists are those featuring classic children's books worth exploring--books that deal successfully with anthropomorphism, with fantasy,

with plot. While the lists provide a great starting place for one's own imaginative wanderings, it is the fiber holding them together that provides the greatest assistance to the reader. The authors are children's-book publishing veterans (Suben was editor in chief of Golden Books for 12 years; author-illustrator Amoss has taught children's literature at Tulane University) and they know whereof they speak. Most important, if you are writing picture books, "you should try to visualize every detail of your book, even if you are not the illustrator." Don't try to explore more than one or two aspects of character (picture books are too short). And "beware ... of the disguised sermon." Finally, as in life, so in children's books: "The two most difficult subjects to deal with are God and death." --Jane Steinberg

Berthe Amoss has written and illustrated numerous children's books, most recently *The Cajun Gingerbread Boy*. She has taught children's literature at Tulane University and speaks at children's writers' workshops throughout the country. She lives in New Orleans, Louisiana. Eric Suben was editor-in-chief of Golden Books for 12 years and is a former director for the Children's Book Council. He has published more than 25 children's books, most recently *The Secret of Pirate's Manor*. With Berthe Amoss he co-authored *Writing & Illustrating Children's Books for Publication* and *10 Steps to Publishing Children's Books*. He lives in New York City.

Borrowed this book from my local library, liked it so much I had to own it. Not only does it give clear guide lines about writing for the different age groups; it contains good advise on plot, character, visual thoughts, etc. The book includes some word lists to help get the writer started, and bamo, the word lists actually provide the writer with unexpected inspiration for your story.

I own several of their books on writing for children and this is the latest addition to my collection. These book are not only beautiful with excellent print and paper quality but packed with sound advice. This team of author/illustrators has put out top of the line books and they know their business. The information is well organized and you will find illustrations, bullets and a wide array of information for anyone wishing to write/draw for a child audience. Even if this was not your subject, the book is warm and inviting. It is easy to comprehend and the lay out is made fun and easy for the reader. Another excellent reference book on writing for children that is not put together like an average, oh so boring, reference book can be. Beautiful to page through and wonderful to read! As a published book author for children, I continue to find insight and information in these titles.

EXCELLENT!

The idea of the lists is a good one, and a few of the lists in the front of the book worked for me. (This is probably what sold the publisher on the idea of a reference book.) But as the book continues, the lists become more and more inane to the point of insulting the reader. Toward the end of the book, the format morphs into a paragraph or so on a subject followed by a page of lists of such hard-to-know things as the colors of children's eyes and hair. Also since each word in the list is a dot floating in a sea of whitespace, some pages in the book don't have a 100 words on them. If they removed the lists and reduced the size and price of the book by half, it would probably be worth buying. I really get the impression that the authors lost their way on this list concept.

I was very disappointed with this book because I was expecting something spectacular, with great advice and tips. In reality, this is merely a book of lists, such as what is on a playground, what clothing kids wear, etc. If I just open my eyes, I can see these things for myself, and save the money on this over-priced book. Writing is about creativity, and Suben and Amoss say taking elements from a list will make better writers.

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