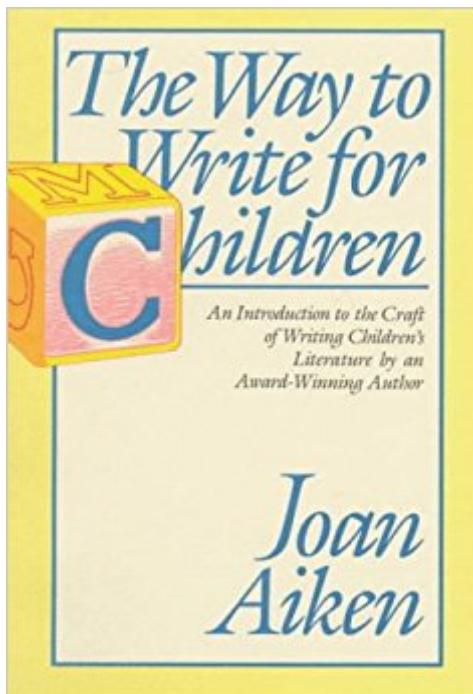


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# The Way To Write For Children



## Synopsis

Revised and updated, this essential and practical guide by an award-winning children's author explains how to write books for children, from where to look to inspiration to practical advice on how to create characters and structure a plot.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nearly everyone who has curled up with a child and a book has had the thought that he or she, too, could write a children's book. Joan Aiken, in a revised and updated version of her *Way to Write for Children*, cautions that it's not so easy. While books for the youngest readers may be simple, the best ones are far from simplistic. In this slender volume, Aiken alights on topics relevant to the writing of books for tots, 'tweens, and teens. And, as Jiminy Cricket is for Pinocchio, she acts as a conscience for children's book authors. "Since each child," she intones, "reads only about six hundred books in the course of childhood, each book should nourish them in some way." And if you're writing for teens? They are under enough pressure as it is to partake in adult activities, says Aiken. "Let not the fiction they are offered add to the pressure." Aiken is adamant about what children's books shouldn't do (they cannot be boring, they must not condescend, and they shouldn't include bridge passages or flashbacks) but not prescriptive about how they should be written. Just keep in mind, she says, that reading, for children, is serious business, and "it is the writer's duty to demonstrate to children that the world is not a simple place." As for subject matter, says Aiken, there are enough alphabet books and animal stories to go around. Instead, she recommends, try to

observe small children and their interests with the same intense concentration that they employ. "Stairs, cupboards, blankets, sinks, ovens, soap, shoes, clocks, knitting, paper-bags--all these can be full of mystery, excitement, and beauty." --Jane Steinberg --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢ "Hopeful authors exploring 'the way to write for children' could ask for no finer guide than Joan Aiken."Ã¢ "Joan Aiken has a very clear and unique voice which she brings to the Matter of Children's Books. Any writer who wants to learn the business--of writing--can learn much here."Ã¢ "Jane Yolen, Caldecott Medal and Skylark winner"Ã¢ "The Way to Write for Children is unquestionably bound to become the definitive practical guide for anyone wanting to enter a genre that looks so easy and turns out to be such a mine field for the unwary. But what I cherish in the book is Joan Aiken's passion . . . Whether or not you hope to write for children, this is a book for the permanent shelf of every thoughtful writer."Ã¢ "Peter S. Beagle, author of The Last Unicorn and The Innkeeper's Song" --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I bought the original (not this reprint edition). I do not intend to write a children's book, but since I have children and a large and still growing number of children's books, I found this book "The way to write for Children" by Joan Aiken very interesting. It did bring many aspects to my attention which I have never thought about before, but now recognize. The advice sounded all very reasonable, although I assume that the market changed a bit in the thirty years since the book was written.

An insightful book by one of my favorite children's authors! Aiken has useful information on writing for different age groups, how to establish a writing routine, and imagining your reader. The chapter on voice was especially helpful. It also has a useful section on assembling your story, which I used with my first novel to good effect.

sorta my bible.

This book has useful info. Although it was written in the 90's the information is still relevant today 2010.

gee, I bought this book to help me learn to write for children, not to be talked down to by the

author...which is what happened. A shoddy, simplistic, overly "this is how I believe it to be" approach that lacks the the clarity and educational value I was looking for when I purchased it. Dated examples and poor type face and formatting doesn't help. I'd avoid this one.

A decent basic book on key pointers for writing for children. Short and sweet with no fluff.

A friendly warning to readers: Even though "The Way to Write for Children" is very precise about what SHOULD NOT be in children's books, it is quite the opposite about what SHOULD be in them. On the very first page of the text, Joan Aiken bluntly informs readers that "there is no \_one\_ way in which to write for children." In another chapter, she explains the futility of dividing child readers into age groups and trying to target a single age. Throughout the book, she gives examples of what she considers poor children's literature--and not without good reason. Aiken is not a writing teacher who says, "Do this and this and this, but not that." She is more like a mentor whose gut instinct about these matters is so finely developed that she can tell what will work and what will not, even though she may not be able to explain why. Yet she does try! Those who like their writing manuals well organized into clean-cut sections and subsections will not appreciate her attempts, but those who understand that she is truly sincere may dig deeper and find unexpected treasure. You'll enjoy this book more if you have read as much children's literature as Aiken has and are familiar with the authors and titles that she liberally "name drops" throughout the text. I bought my copy three years ago and understood about 10% of it. Then I started studying some of the books she used as examples: "Daddy-Long-Legs", "Poems of Childhood", "The Chronicles of Narnia", "The Hobbit", "I Am the Cheese", etc. With that, her words took on new life for me. I can compare reading "The Way to Write for Children" to listening to a wise and remarkable friend speak--but not lecture--about children's literature. It is definitely not writing school, but the education I receive is superior.

Some how-to books are of marginal value, but a few, such as this, are of negative worth. The brief, rambling stream-of-consciousness is worse than useless for a beginning writer. She makes statements such as (Writer's Block) "There is nothing much you can do about it." and "The teenage novel is here to stay, you can't turn back history." The first is unhelpful and untrue, and the second has no foundation, except a weak truism. (And I was picking two statements, skimming casually.) Then she says you can't write a teenage novel unless you are a teen, or in "constant daily contact" with them. Huh? I was going to give this to the library sale, but I just now decided to throw it away.

Why would I foist it on someone else?

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