

Stephanie Baudet – Talks About Writing Picture Books

Many people dream of writing a picture book. Are they easy to write?

- The stories may seem deceptively short and simple but they require a lot of skill.
- You need to choose your words very carefully.
- Publishers are selective because production costs are high.

Can writers illustrate their own picture books?

- Publishers prefer to choose their own illustrators.
- A good illustrator can help sell more of your book.
- An experienced illustrator will add elements that are not in the text.

Should rhyme be used in picture books?

- Rhyme is difficult to do well!
- It does not translate easily.
- Because publishers collaborate with foreign publishers to help with high production costs this can be a stumbling block.

How should the text be laid out?

- Use normal layout or paginate (32 pages/24 pages of text).
- Think in pictures even if you're not providing the illustrations.
- You need something different to illustrate on each page.

What should the story contain?

- A theme which young children can understand.
- Strong characters.
- A proper story with problems, obstacles and resolution.
- A little surprise or twist at end.
- Repetition.
- Something to keep the adult reader interested.

What are your tips to potential writers of picture books?

- Read as many picture books as possible – especially those which have recently been published.
- Study the market.
- Choose every word with care.
- Read your work aloud to find glitches.
- Revise and polish.