



# WRITING FOR CHILDREN

BY JOHN MASON AND STAFF OF ACS DISTANCE EDUCATION

# CONTENTS

---

<b>CREDITS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF WRITING AND PUBLISHING FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Evolution of children's reading.....	6
Scope of children's writing and publishing.....	7
Understanding what gets a publication sold.....	9
Writing for specific age groups.....	10
Children's genres.....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING THE READERS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Reasons why children read.....	14
How parents and adults can encourage children to read.....	15
How writers can tap into a child's reasons for reading.....	18
<b>CHAPTER 3 CONTENT AND LANGUAGE</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Effects of violence.....	20
Do you pitch to the lowest common denominator, or the mean?.....	21
What are the options for content? .....	23
What are the options for language?.....	25
<b>CHAPTER 4 APPROPRIATE STYLING</b> .....	<b>28</b>
Styles of Writing.....	28
Style for Fiction.....	29
Other Considerations.....	29
Layout Style.....	31

<b>CHAPTER 5 WRITING IT</b>	<b>33</b>
Preparing to write	33
Fictional short story	39
The novel	40
Poetry/rhymes and rhyming stories for younger children	42
Picture book stories	45
<b>CHAPTER 6 THE PUBLISHING PROCESS</b>	<b>47</b>
Publishing a printed book	47
Editing	48
Presentation requirements	50
The production process	51
The layout	52
Protecting intellectual property	54
Publishing an ebook	56
Publishing a blog	58
Publishing your web site	59
Publishing on social media sites	60
<b>CHAPTER 7 MARKETING THE PUBLICATION</b>	<b>61</b>
Marketing	61
The elements of marketing	67
Targeting strategies	68
Projecting the future	70
Marketing for self published and published books	71
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>72</b>
Distance learning and online courses	72
E-books by John Mason and ACS Staff	73
Printed books by John Mason	74
Useful contacts	75
ACS global partners	75
Social media	75

# CREDITS

---

© **Copyright:** John Mason

**Written by**

John Mason and staff of ACS Distance Education

**Photos**

John Mason  
Leonie Mason  
Stephen Mason

**Layout**

Stephen Mason

**Contributors**

Tracey Jones  
Adriana Fraser  
Gavin Cole

**Published by**

ACS Distance Education

P.O. Box 2092, Nerang MDC,  
Queensland, Australia, 4211  
admin@acs.edu.au  
www.acsbookshop.com

P O Box 4171, Stourbridge, DY8 2WZ,  
United Kingdom  
admin@acsedu.co.uk  
www.acsebooks.com

**ISBN: 978-0-9925878-4-0**

The information in this book is derived from a broad cross section of resources (research, reference materials and personal experience) from the authors and editorial assistants in the academic department of ACS Distance Education. It is, to the best of our knowledge, composed as an accurate representation of what is accepted and appropriate information about the subject, at the time of publication.

The authors fully recognise that knowledge is continually changing, and awareness in all areas of study is constantly evolving. As such, we encourage the reader to recognise that nothing they read should ever be considered to be set in stone. They should always strive to broaden their perspective and deepen their understanding of a subject, and before acting upon any information or advice, should always seek to confirm the currency of that information, and the appropriateness to the situation in which they find themselves.

As such, the publisher and author do not accept any liability for actions taken by the reader based upon their reading of this book.

# PREFACE

---

Children need to learn reading skills to survive and flourish in adulthood.

Some children embrace reading as a joy; and for others it is a chore. When it is a joy though, it becomes easier to learn, becoming something they want to do rather than something they are obliged to do.

Children who are passionate about reading will want to read more.

Children's writers who are able to engender a passion for reading in their young readers will have far more success because they will have readers who want to read what they write.

The scope of children's writing is immense; from the things children are required to read at school, to the things they choose to read on computer screens and in printed publications at home.

This book is intended to expand how children's writers think about their job; helping them to see not only how to write more effectively, but also places where they might write, and things they might write about that they may not have given much prior thought to.

# CHAPTER 1 THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF WRITING AND PUBLISHING FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Children's publications have evolved over time, just like those aimed at adults. Printed publications dominated children's writing until relatively recently; but today most children in developed countries spend more of their reading time browsing the internet on computers or hand held media devices. Even reading at school has increasingly moved from print to electronic media. It is not just the format that has changed though. The nature of children's reading has moved on from the heyday of comics in the 1950's to 70's.



## EVOLUTION OF CHILDREN'S READING

Children today are, in the main, computer literate. They read more than ever before, but where they read and what they read may be very different to that of the generations before them.

In the past, children read comics, books and magazines. They may also have read parts of newspapers. Many newspapers would have special children's pages and comics inserted in them. There were significant numbers of children's books which specifically targeted this young audience and a broad range of comics for sale – some geared towards boys, and some towards girls. These comics, newspapers and books were all available in printed formats and could be found in high street bookstores and newsagents. As well as school libraries, many children would also frequent local council libraries to source reading material.

*“I visited a major international publisher in the 1980’s and was told that over 50% of the printed books which they sold, were for children.”* John Mason, author, publisher, educator.

Fast forward to the 21st century and the world has changed considerably. Fewer titles are published in print today;

and the overall profitability of writing and publishing in print has diminished. Nevertheless, children and adolescents still read. But it is what and how they read that has changed. For instance, many of the comics from the 1930s to 1970s would not be considered politically correct in this day and age, but would be deemed as sexist or even racist.



## SCOPE OF CHILDREN’S WRITING AND PUBLISHING

The scope of writing and publishing has been constantly changing and expanding - and is only limited by imagination and technology. To be successful, a writer or publisher needs to, at the very least, be acutely aware of changes that are occurring in the industry, and continually adapting the direction of their work. The most successful writers and publishers are those who do even more - they are part of the change.

Change can be scary and disruptive for many - but it is a reality and an opportunity for great creativity for those who embrace it.

*“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”* George Bernard Shaw.

Writing might find its way to an audience in any of four ways:

- **Printed publishing** – printed publishing still exists. We still have printed books for children, magazines and even newspapers aimed solely at children.