QUEENSLAND WRITERS CENTRE

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QWC RESOURCE SHEET # 13

Writing for Children and Young Adults

What is Children's Literature?

Children's literature is made up of stories for children, ranging from books for babies through to books for children of up to the age of 12. These books are often illustrated, and the younger the audience, the more likely it is that mostly pictures are used to tell a story. The length of the book may vary from a few pages up to 150 pages.

What is Young Adult Literature?

Young Adult (or YA) literature is aimed at young people roughly of the age 12 and up. Some countries have a different sense of the target age for YA literature. For example, in Australia YA tends to be for middle and older teenagers. In the United States, YA fiction can encompass quite young readers.

Sometimes these stories are illustrated, but it is a less frequent occurrence in this genre. Young Adult books may range from 30,000 words to 100,000+ words. In recent years, YA novels have crept up in length, especially in the fantasy genre, and readers have shown an appetite for longer works. Themes dealt with can include: search for identity, coming of age, sexual awakening, tolerance, peer groups and belonging, first love, dealing with grief, family issues and finding one's independence.

Some books also fall into a cross-over category; books that appeal to both teenagers and adults alike and generate a wide readership. Examples include *Twilight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Obernewtyn Chronicles* series, *Catcher in the Rye*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Where can I find an Illustrator for my book?

If you are a writer in search of an illustrator, you should keep a couple of things in mind. Firstly, some publishers like to match writers with illustrators – i.e. if they like your story, they will organise for an

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illustrator to work with you. Secondly, if you are determined to find your own illustrator then the best place to start is the Style File at the ASA http://www.thestylefile.com/submissions.php (this list is vetted). You will also need to consider how much an illustrator is to be paid, and/or what percentage of royalties should go to the illustrator.

Where can I find a Publisher for my Children's/YA book?
QWC has a comprehensive resource sheet about finding and pitching to publishers – go to www.qwc.asn.au and download **Resource Sheet # 2 – Pitching to Publishers**. *The Australian Writer's Marketplace* (AWM) lists publishers as well as competitions and awards, magazines, newspapers, literary agents, manuscript appraisers, editors, literary events, writing courses, etc. AWM is available from QWC for $43.95 Members/$49.95 Non-members. An online subscription can be purchased at www.awmonline.com.au. It can also be accessed at most libraries.

Are there any good books on how to write for Children or Young Adults?
Writing Hannah and *Making Picture Books* by Libby Gleeson are good places to start for anyone interested in writing for children. *Writing for Young Adults* by Sherrry Garland is self-explanatory. For young writers looking for guidance on how to write, there is *Juicy Writing: Inspiration and Techniques for Young Writers* by Brigid Lowry and *Everything I Learned About Writing* by John Marsden.

Where can I find an Agent to represent me?
QWC has a comprehensive resource sheet about finding an agent – go to www.qwc.asn.au and download **Resource Sheet # 6 – Literary Agents**.

What other bodies can I contact about Children's/ YA Books?
The Children's Book Council of Australia
http://cbca.org.au/Default.aspx

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Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators
http://www.scbwi.org/

Illustrators Australia http://www.illustratorsaustralia.com/

Write4Kids.com http://www.write4kids.com/

Jacketflap http://www.jacketflap.com/

Books Illustrated (VIC) http://www.booksillustrated.com.au/

Australian Society of Authors
http://www.asauthors.org/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=ASP0016/ccms.r

Centre for Youth Literature at State Library of Victoria
http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about/centreforyouthliterature/youthlit.html

The Style File http://www.thestylefile.com/submissions.php