



Planning a Children's Book

Story Elements to Consider

Title

- Does it reflect the central idea
- Will it appeal to kids
- Is it fun or does it invite curiosity
- Does it match the tone of the book

Premise: Does it reflect a child's real-world concerns even if it's not based in reality

Theme

- Universal truth
- Emotional focus
- Relevance to audience

Tone

- Point of view
- Overall feeling
- Does it shift throughout the story
- Is it age appropriate

Language Style

- Simple, rhythmic, lyrical, soothing, sharp, funny, etc.
- Word choice (playful, mysterious)
- Is it a read-aloud experience
- Is it an interactive experience?

Setting

- Where (place/environment)
- When (time/season)
- What feeling does it evoke (cozy, scary, mysterious, magical, imaginative)
- What sensory details are present
- How would a child experience the space from their perspective (huge chairs, glowing lights through keyholes, towering trees)
- How does the setting invite curiosity
- Does the setting shift during the story

Primary Characters

- Identity (name, age or developmental stage, background)
- Type (human, animal, robot, object)



- Physical Traits (appearance, exaggerated visual cues, signature item, quirks)
- Personality traits and behaviours (brave, shy, silly, how do they act under stress, do they have body language cues, habits or mannerisms)
- Strengths (natural abilities/gifts)
- Voice & speech patterns (funny sayings, adorable words like catsup instead of ketchup)
- Main Goal (does their goal change during the story)
- Motivation (what do they want, why, and what keeps them going)
- Main Challenge, problem (how do they try to achieve the goal and what stands in their way, does their goal conflict with the goal of another character)
- Obstacles/fears (impatience, afraid of the dark)
- Moral/lesson/growth journey

Secondary Characters

- Characteristics (name, age, physical appearance, voice & speech patterns, do they change or remain static, etc.)
- Relationships (how they relate to primary characters, role in group dynamics)
- Function within story (why are they in the story, how do they affect the protagonist's journey, or do they represent a theme like loyalty or freedom)

Plot (aka story structure)

- Beginning: set up the scene: inciting incident, introduce characters and dynamics
- Rising Action: problem, challenge or obstacle identified, tension builds, small wins and setbacks
 - escalation: more obstacles that become harder or problem becomes more urgent
- Climax: biggest or most intense moment
- Falling action: what happens next, tension drops
- Resolution/Ending:
 - show how main problem was resolved and how character has changed
 - give emotional closure, tie back to the theme, leave reader satisfied

Additional Elements to Engage the Reader

- Key moments (humour, unexpected twists)
- Key dialogue/interactions
- Illustrations (key pictures that add to the story, sensory hooks)
- Literary Techniques (sensory language, rhythmic text, interactive opportunities, patterns)