

The Secrets To Children's and Young Adult Publishing Success

So you have written THE manuscript that you think is just right. Now you want to know the secrets to getting it published. The secrets to publishing success are that it takes a lot of hard work, a lot of persistence and knowledge of the publishing market. Then there needs to be some good luck that the publishing house will love your manuscript and that it fits into their publishing list.

Some essential points towards successful publication include:-

The Craft

- know the basics of writing including grammar and language
- take writing classes and learn how to edit, polish, and craft your story
- read read read
- do not PAD your story
- show don't tell
- Give your characters a unique voice
- edit
- know your audience and write for it
- Look at the websites of other authors and illustrators that you admire., to find craft guidance.
- education curriculum links

The Format

- write a one page **synopsis** of your manuscript if it is a novel
- prepare a **proposal** before you write the book
- submit your manuscript in the appropriate format detailed on the publisher's website and usually includes,

Submission

- find out what publishers and magazines are looking for through checking their websites, submission guidelines and the imprint page of their books
- enter competitions listed on the e-zines of the writing organisations including the Writers Centres, Fellowship of Australian Writers FAW, The Society of Women Writers, Partners in Crime, Australian Society of Authors, the Storytellers Guild
- Watch out for publishing scams. Consider these warning signs:
 - * The sponsor or publisher asks for money.
 - * There is no payment in either cash or publication copies.
 - * The offer is a form letter that looks hand generated.
- Join supporting organisations the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators SCBWI where members have a support and advisory network.

Award winning and successfully published SCBWI Australian children's authors and illustrators reveal some of their secrets to publication on the rocky and winding road to publication.

[Deb Abela](http://www.deborahabela.com) (www.deborahabela.com)

Join a writing group. If there isn't one in your area think of starting one up or asking your local writers' centre or library.

Listen to other authors talk about their craft. There are loads of sites and videos online but always keep an eye out for local author events or the larger writing festivals if you can get there.

[Christopher Cheng](http://www.chrischeng.com) (www.chrischeng.com)

Have fun with your writing. Once you start the writing journey you need to treat it as a business but when you are starting out – make sure that whatever you do with the writing is FUN! Once on the journey make sure you are persistent and chase up those contacts, rework your manuscript – and then rework it again as once is never enough. Remember that what is **IN** today will probably, most definitely, be so last year when your manuscript is ready to send to the publishers. So be original. That's what publishers are always looking for – a new voice, a new idea!!

[Hazel Edwards](http://www.hazeledwards.com) (www.hazeledwards.com)

Read twice, once as a reader and next as a writer to observe the technicalities of characterisation, humour, etc. How does that writer get their ideas across? See the great article [*Hints for Young \(and not-so-young\) Writers on Getting Published*](#) that is available at the SCBWI website.

[Susanne Gervay](http://www.sgervay.com) (www.sgervay.com)

Publication depends on a number of key items.

The first is the willingness to work on your craft to ensure that your piece is as good as it can be. This means having an open mind, so that you can accept critiques and take from those comments what you believe in. Without the courage to look at your writing honestly, it is unlikely you will ever be published. It means having a critique group, going to workshops, assessing your manuscript, looking for opportunities where you can develop your writing, joining groups and study writing through university and writing courses. The added benefit is that once you begin the submission process, you have a support group for disappointments and successes.

When beginning the journey of submission of your manuscript to a publisher, it makes it easier if you have credentials, such as publication in magazines and newspapers, or winning competitions.

Once your work is good enough, make sure you send it to the right publisher. Research the publishers. Find out what is happening in the marketplace. How do you do this? Join key organisations such as SCBWI and the Writers Centres, and network at Writers Festivals.

[Jeni Mawter](http://www.jenimawter.com) (www.jenimawter.com)

'I view myself as a 12th year apprentice. Come to think of it, I'm still earning an apprentice's wage.' Writing is a business so treat it as such. Have a workspace; get business cards; have realistic expectations a professional attitude and approach to your

manuscript; network, network, network; and very importantly learn to deal with the question 'When are you going to get a real job?' Also, accept rejection as part of an author's life.

- Research current trends, market needs, bookshops and libraries
- Establish a peer support with writer's groups, grow a tough skin so that bad or no reviews just bounce off.
- Ethics and censorship are part of youth writing
- Marketing and Self –Promotion and get your brand out there through your website, blog and being proactive.

Felicity Pulman (www.felicitypulman.com.au)

Two words spring to mind if you want to be a published author: resilience and persistence. Keep writing, keep learning.

Try different genres such as poetry, fantasy, non-fiction. If you're just starting out, how do you know what you'll love to write and be good at? Having said that, it's a good idea to write the sorts of things you like to read as you'll already have absorbed some of the conventions of that genre.

It's also a good idea, if you're just starting out, to maybe target a series to write for, one to which different authors contribute. My first break came when I wrote a teen romance for the Dolly fiction label. It's easier for a publisher to market your novel as part of a series than for them to promote you as a new writer. Girlfriend fiction for teens, and Aussie Bites for primary age, are examples. A published novel gives you gravitas!

Subscribe to newsletters such as Buzz Words and Pass It On. Join organisations and look out for writing opportunities.

by Christopher Cheng with input from Felicity Pulman, Deborah Abela, Moya Simons, Hazel Edwards, Susanne Gervay

www.chrischeng.com