

WRITING FOR CHILDREN

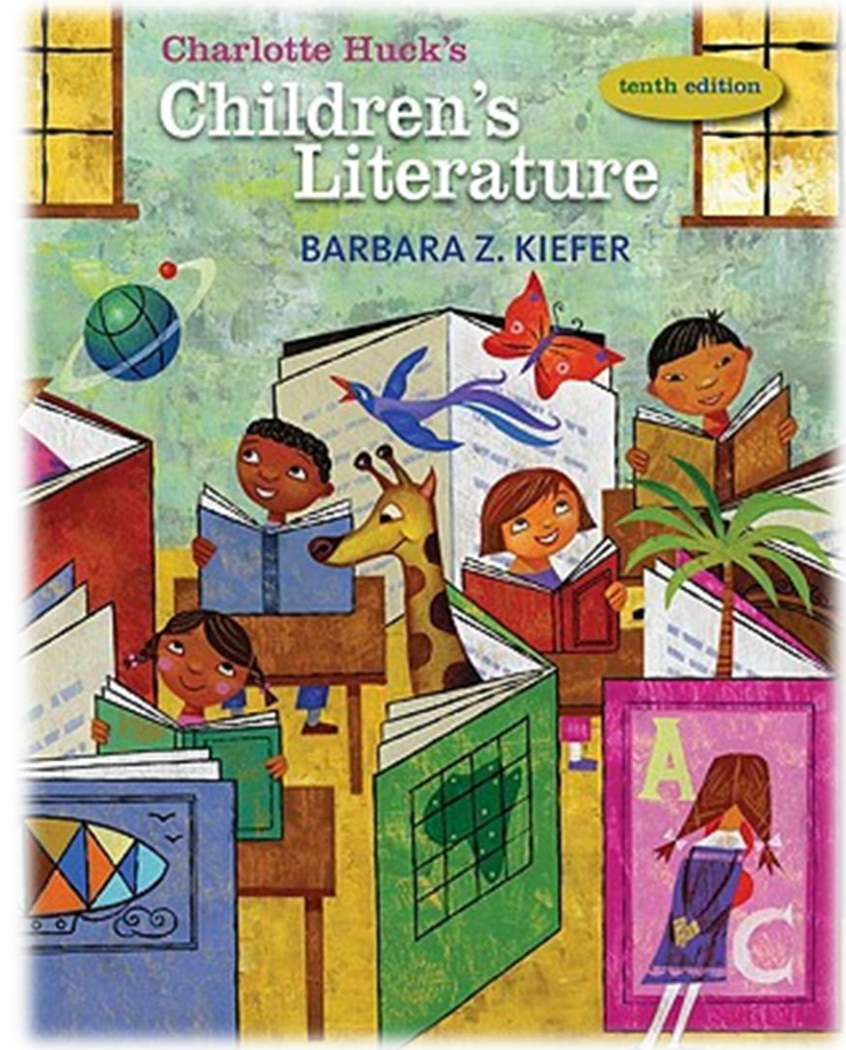
Unit 1

Writing for Children

No kind of writing lodge itself so deeply in our memory, echoing there for the rest of our lives, as the books that we met in our childhood... **To enter and hold the mind of a child or a young person is one of the hardest of all writers' tasks.**

E.B. White asserts:

- Any one who writes down to children is simply wasting his time.
You have to write up, not down...
- Some writers for children deliberately avoid using words they think a child doesn't know.
- **Children love words that give them a hard time**, provided they are in a context that absorbs their attention

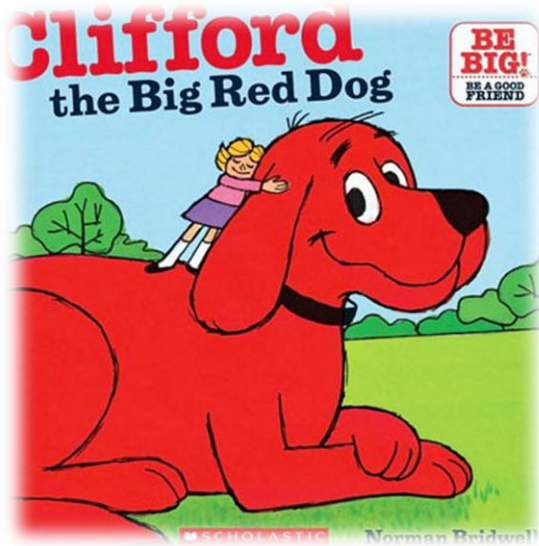


- **The uniqueness of children's literature, then, lies on the audience that it addresses.**
- Authors of children's books are circumscribed only by the experiences of childhood, but these are vast and complex.
- **Children think and feel; they wonder and they dream. Much is known, but little is explained.**



Criteria for writing children's book

content

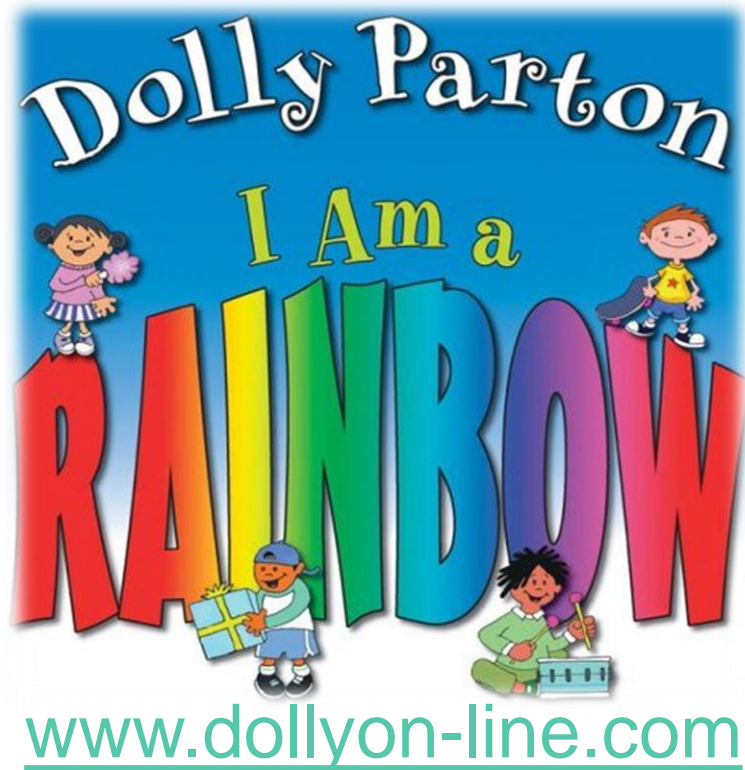


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- **Topic:** 1) experiences of childhood set in the past, present, or future (e.g., enjoying birthday parties, anticipating adulthood, getting a new pet, enduring siblings, and dealing with family situations); 2) things that are of interest to children

Criteria for writing children's book

manner



- **Manner:** 1) stories are told in a forthright, humorous, or suspenseful manner (stories that are told in **nostalgic or overly sentimental terms are inappropriate**); 2) stories should emphasize the hope for a better future rather than the

Criteria for writing children's book

quality



B) Quality

"The best children's books offer readers **enjoyment** as well as **memorable characters and situations** and **valuable insights into the human condition.**"

Quality of writing:

originality and importance of ideas

imaginative use of language

beauty of literary and artistic style

www.playingbythebook.net

Essentials: What is Children's Literature?

What is Childhood?

- The study of Children literature involves three elements – the literature, the children, and the adult critics
- **Definition:**
- "Children's literature is **good quality trade books** for children from **birth** to **adolescence**, covering **topics of relevance** and **interests** to children of those ages, through **prose** and **poetry, fiction** and **nonfiction**." (p. 3)
- A *trade book*, by design and content, is primarily for the purpose of entertainment and information. Trade books are often referred to as library books and story books. They are different from *textbooks*, which are for the purpose of instruction.

Values of Literature to Children

- **A) The Personal Value**

- enjoyment
- Imagination and inspiration
- vicarious experience
- understanding and empathy
- cultural heritage
- moral reasoning
- literary and artistic preferences

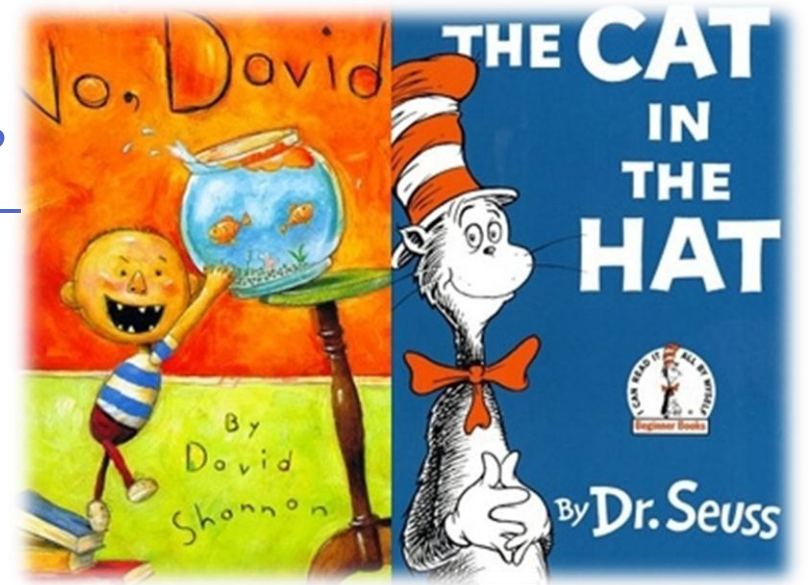
- **B) The Academic Value**

- improving reading skills
- developing writing voice and style
- learning content-area knowledge
- promoting art appreciation

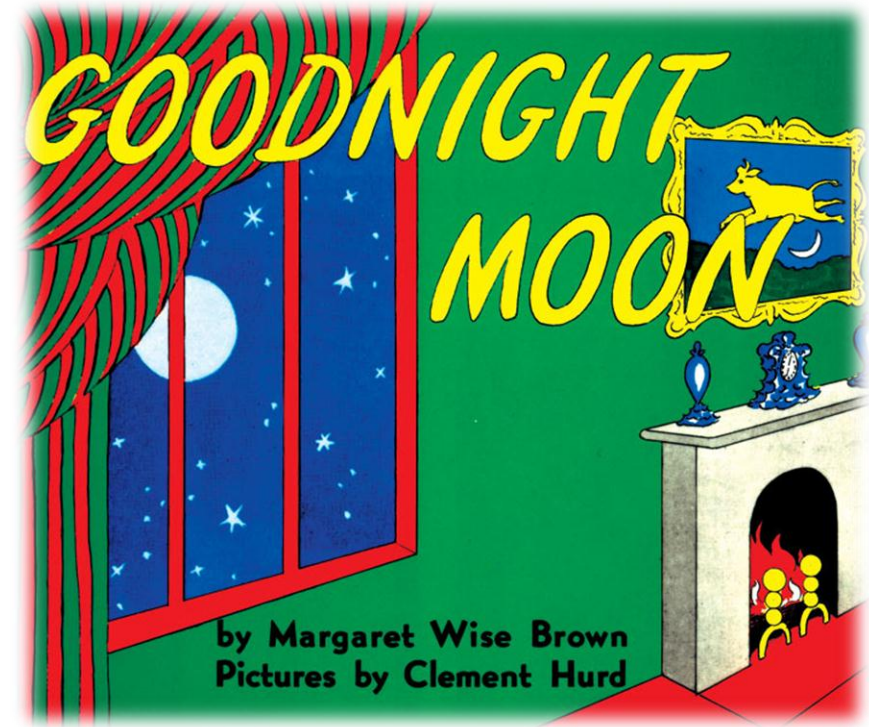


The critics define their children's literature

- “ ‘**Children's Literature** becomes defined as containing, both in form and content, the ‘need of children’ and, therefore, this is how ‘children's books’ – written, published, sold, and usually bought, by adults



- Writers have become aware that, for the child, a book is a source of satisfaction that derives from identification and participation, and an expansion of his own experience.
- They provide him with an opportunity for **catharsis**, self-knowledge, and broadening his psychic experience.



Brain storm your idea

- What is Children's Literature?
- What is Childhood?
- Is a children's book a book written by children, or for children?
- What does it mean to write a book 'for' children? If it is a book written 'for' children, it is then still a children's book if it is (only) read by adults?
- What of 'adult books read also by children – are children's literature?

Brain storm your idea

- Why do we need to have literature specifically written for children?
- What differences and similarities do you see between children's literature and adult literature?
- What kinds of literary experience did you enjoy as a child? What kinds of literary experience do you enjoy now as an adult?
- What are the purposes for children to read literature?
- What makes a good children's book?

