

Name of Writer:

Title of Work:

Reviewer A

Checklist
for
Children's Writing



Fiction
Feedback

A. Standard of English

a) Spelling, grammar and punctuation

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

1 = A major weakness; needs addressing

2 = Needs work

3 = Needs improvement, at least in one area, but getting there

4 = Good, just the occasional blip

5 = Excellent

b) Sentence structure is conducive to understanding

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

1 = A major weakness; needs addressing

2 = Needs work

3 = Needs improvement, but getting there

4 = Good, just the occasional blip

5 = Excellent

B. Writing style

a) Does the author show rather than tell?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

1 = A major weakness; most of the story is told to the reader rather than shown

2 = Occasional passages show promise

3 = There is evidence of a storyteller at work, though some passages need addressing

- 4 = Good overall, the reader sees the story unfold
- 5 = Excellent; any instances of telling are brief and feel entirely natural

b) Does the writing generate narrative tension and keep the pages turning?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

- 1 = The style does not create narrative tension
- 2 = There are moments of narrative tension, but it is not sustained
- 3 = There is narrative tension, but it needs work
- 4 = Narrative tension is largely sustained, with only occasional lapses
- 5 = Excellent narrative tension keeps the pages turning throughout

c) Does the author have a confident and unique authorial voice?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

- 1 = The writing is stilted and does not have a noticeable authorial style
- 2 = The author is a confident writer, but does not have a noticeable authorial style
- 3 = The author is a confident writer, and there are elements of unique authorial voice
- 4 = The writer has a unique authorial voice, but it lapses in places
- 5 = Excellent – a strong and confident authorial voice with a unique style

d) Does the author successfully use stylistic elements suitable for children's writing such as repetition and refrain, humour and whimsy, rhyme and rhythm?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

- 1 = The author does not employ any stylistic elements
- 2 = There is an occasional stylistic flourish, but for the most part they are absent
- 3 = There is some attempt at using stylistic elements; encouraging but needs work
- 4 = Stylistic elements are successfully used for the most part
- 5 = The author uses stylistic elements very successfully; an appealing read

C. Plot

a) Is the idea original? Am I intrigued by the direction it might take?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

- 1 = I have read a lot of stories similar to this
- 2 = This is common subject matter, but had some original content
- 3 = Common subject matter, but proficiently done or with some innovative content
- 4 = Unusual subject matter, or done in a very innovative manner
- 5 = Excellent – original, innovative and intriguing

b) Can we tell who this is aimed at, eg independent readers, the picture book market, young adult, etc?

Yes __ No __ Unsure __ Changed my mind several times __

c) What would be the most suitable market for this story?

Picture book __ Young fiction 4-6 __ Young fiction 6-8 __

Young fiction 9-12 __ Young adult (younger) __ Young adult (older) __

d) Is the writing style appropriate for the age group? Will it catch children's imaginations?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

1 = Style is too old or too young throughout

2 = Style is too old or too young in places

3 = For the most part, the writing style is age-appropriate

4 = The writing style is age appropriate throughout

5 = The writing style is both age-appropriate and unusual/engaging

e) Is the length appropriate for the age group?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __

1 = The story is much too long or much too short for the age group

2 = The story is marginally too long or marginally too short for the age group

3 = The story is too long but could be divided into a number of separate stories

4 = The story is too short, but could work as part of a longer piece

5 = The story is an appropriate length for the age group

D. Story

Was the story interesting and engaging?

1. __ 2. __ 3. __ 4. __ 5. __ 6. __

1 = There was little real story

2 = The story was there, but needed a lot more structure

3 = There was a structured story, but it did not hold my attention, or was predictable

4 = The story structure was strong, or there were elements of the story that were interesting

5 = For the most part, the story was both well-plotted and interesting

6 = Compelling reading; strongly plotted and very engaging

E. Characterisation

Are we able to discern character, through actions, dialogue, thoughts and descriptions?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

1 = A major weakness; main characters are one-dimensional or inconsistent

2 = Needs work

3 = Needs improvement, but overall a positive

4 = I came to know the characters and feel involved in their story

5 = Strongly drawn characters that evoke interest and empathy

F. Description

Do the descriptions help the reader visualise a scene, an action or a character? If expressed by a protagonist, do they give insights into their thoughts or personality?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

1 = Descriptions are mainly hackneyed or bland, or they don't work, or are absent

2 = Descriptions are fair to average, or very occasional

3 = On the whole descriptions are good, or a few brilliant ones among others not so successful

4 = Descriptions are mainly evocative

5 = Descriptions are evocative and telling throughout

G. Dialogue

– achieves what feels like the right balance between dialogue and prose

Improvement needed *Average to good* *Excellent*

– is used to tell us about characters' personalities and concerns, a characterisation tool

Improvement needed *Average to good* *Excellent*

– is pithy and sparkling – something to look forward to in this writer's work

Improvement needed *Average to good* *Excellent*

H. Beginning

I never got into it at all and wouldn't want to read on

I didn't really feel I was into it much by the time the novel extract or short story finished

- It took a chapter or more, or quite a few pages of a short story, but I got there
- It took a few pages, or paragraphs of a short story, but soon I was hooked
- I was pulled in at first, but then let go again
- I was pulled straight into this

I. Ending

NB only applies to entire short stories, or where a novelist has submitted their final chapters

- The ending didn't make sense to me
- The ending was predictable or unsatisfying
- The ending wasn't brilliant but it had its merits
- I felt the ending really justified the investment I'd made in reading
- The ending was very satisfying and left me thinking: wow, or: yes that's right.

J. Do I think children of the relevant age group would like it?

- Sorry, I don't think it will hold their attention
- There are elements here and there which might appeal
- I think there is enough about this story to inspire interest, at least in part
- Some children will like this, although it might not have universal appeal
- Yes, I think most children will enjoy this; it's attention-grabbing and told in a strong way

K. Do I think it's publishable?

- I'm afraid not. I think it would need major re-writing
- It's a long way off, but might have promise
- It could be publishable, with work
- With a bit of polishing I think it is
- It's of similar standard to published work I've read
- It's great and a publisher or agent would be mad to ignore it

Thank you for submitting your work to Fiction Feedback. We hope you have found our review useful, and we wish you every success with your writing.

