

Before submitting your story to Doodle and Peck Publishing, please check to see if you've done everything to insure your manuscript is ready for consideration:

>My manuscript has been critiqued at least 3 times by another **writer** who knows and understands the writing business; not a friend or family member.

>My manuscript has been revised at least 10 times.

>Passive verbs (i.e. was, has, has been) have been replaced by more active verbs.

>Grammar and spelling has been checked by someone with in-depth experience.

>I have a firm grasp of my target audience's age and who will be reading my story. It fits industry parameters for that age group. (If you don't know what those parameters are, see attached article, "Nuts and Bolts".)

>I believe strongly there is a market for this story *outside of my family and friends*. I'm sure bookstores and libraries will be interested in buying my book.

Important note: If you read the above requirements, got a bit miffed and thought, "I don't need anyone to critique my work. I know how to write!", then we're probably not going to see eye to eye down the road. And trust me, the publishing road is long and arduous, with many potholes, roadblocks and detours. Neither of us wants to be stuck together on a journey doomed to end in misery! Let's part ways as friends. 😊

Doodle and Peck knows if you've done each of the above items, you understand writing is a craft requiring skill, time and effort, and *much* patience. We'll be happy to look at your work. Please send the full manuscript* for a picture book or the first three chapters* of a larger work, and a SASE to:

Doodle and Peck Publishing

413 Cedarburg Ct

Yukon, OK 73099

*Larger manuscripts will not be returned. You will receive a letter letting you know if D&P is interested in your work. For your peace of mind, if D&P doesn't wish to pursue your project, the manuscript will be destroyed.

Nuts and Bolts

*Subject matter, word counts and age range can and will change from publisher to publisher but this is a general guideline:

Concept/board book

For babies and toddlers

Highly visual, few words (no more than 100 total)

Picture Book

Written for ages 0-7

Meant to be read aloud to child

Word count: <300-1,000

Beginning Reader

Ages 5-8 (children learning to read on their own)

Short sentences; limited vocabulary; word repetition

Vocabulary words, word count and sentence structure are very important at this level. Check publisher requirements.

Chapter books

Ages 7-9 (children becoming fluent readers)

Word count: 4,000-12,000, depending on publisher

Main character's age—8 or 9

Middle Grade novels

Ages 8-12

Word count: 20,000-40,000 words

Geared to characters and plot lines interesting to 10-12 year old kids

Upper Middle Grade Novels

An emerging category for ages 10-14

*more serious middle grade books that are not quite Young Adult

Young Adult Novels

Age 12 and up

Word count: 40,000-75,000

An In-depth look at each genre's requirements

1. Picture books—In a picture book, illustrations make up 50% of the book. Half of the story is told in illustrations. Traditionally, a picture book is 32 pages long. A word count of 500 words or less is the industry trend. PB's typically use the "Rule of Three" in some form or another. (Problem, problem, solve)
2. Easy to Read, or Easy Readers—Specifically for readers just beginning to read on their own. Illustrations on each page. Length can vary; everything from 200-2,000 words, depending on the publisher. Simply written with one idea per sentence. Word level is critical.
3. Chapter Books or Transition Books—for ages 6-9. These are between easy to read and middle grade books. Manuscripts are about 30 pages long and each chapter is about 2 to 3 pages. Usually have black and white drawing at the beginning of chapters.

For ages 7-10, the manuscript is a bit longer, 45-60 pages in length. Chapters are now 3 to 4 pages long and the sentences more complex. Chapter books are most likely to be made into series.
4. Middle Grade—Manuscripts are longer, usually 100-150 pages. The stories are more complex and have subplots.
5. Young Adult (YA)—written for ages 12 and up, manuscript length is about 130-200 pages. Plots are more complex, usually with several subplots.

***Great article about publishing by C. Hope Clark, editor of FundsForWriters and author of several books.**

I HAVE THIS STORY TO TELL. . .

Wherever I appear in person, invariably someone comes up to me and asks how they can get published. I open the dialogue with questions such as:

- 1) Have you finished writing the story?
- 2) Have you edited the story with a vengeance a zillion times?

- 3) Have you gotten feedback from non-friends, non-family, critique mentors who understand the genre?
- 4) Have you studied indie versus traditional and understand the details of both?

Maybe I ask a few more questions depending upon the nature and interests of the person. We might delve into platform and online presence. But half those writers interrupt or divert back into a long explanation about the story; why they are writing it; what it's about; why it needs to be told.

I gently pull them back to the original question about publishing, and learning the craft well enough to be worthy of publishing. Some come back with me. Then there are those who, like a rubber band, launch back into a dissertation about the story. Inevitably we part, with nothing accomplished other than the writer is happy they were able to talk about their story. We didn't really discuss much about writing well or publishing smart. While the person said they wanted to know those answers, they were too wrapped up in the story. They didn't want to hear the hard part of the journey. They're too busy enjoying the dream.

I understand that to a point. They are living the story in their head. It's a great one to know, to tell. But all they want to know about the business after the writing is PUBLISH. They want a short cut from GOOD STORY IDEA to PUBLISH, without the details. The vast chasm that is writing, editing, developing a voice, and learning the business is considered a minor obstacle in the quest to get from point A to point B, not understanding there's a long journey of canyons, mountains, and hell/fire and brimstone in between.

Keep in mind that writing is more about the craft than about the subject matter. A beautiful writer can write about anything. A mediocre writer with a good idea rarely makes it off the ground. The best advice I can give you is to learn how to write (take classes, join writers groups, hire an editor) then write about your subject. Everyone has a journey, but not everyone takes the time to learn how to write it well. Fewer still learn how to put it into print so that the GOOD STORY IDEA can reach readers.

Fall in love with your story, but fall in love with the other parts, too.

C. Hope Clark, editor of FundsForWriters , June 19, 2015