

## Children's Literature Categories\*

**Picture Books:** ages 0-7; 0-1,300 words, sweet spot: 300-550 words; literary AND artistic appeal; appeals to children AND adults; selected and read out loud by adults; sub categories - board books, story books, concept books, color/activity books, novelty books, BABB books (Big Ass Barney Books); examples: *King Bidgood's In The Bathrub* by Audrey and Don Wood; *Library Mouse* by Daniel Kirk, and *Skippyjon Jones* by Judy Schachner.

**Early (or leveled) Readers:** ages 4-7 (readers developing their reading skills); 100-2,500 words, sweet spot depends on level; carefully controlled vocabulary; often very specific publisher guidelines; color or B&W illustrations; often feature human characters and rarely rhyme; contain a story that has kid-appeal, often in a school setting ; selected and read by child; *Amelia Bedelia* by Peggy Parish; *Frog and Toad* by Arnold Lobel.

**Chapter Books:** ages 7-10; 4,000-13,000 words, sweet spot: 6,000-10,000; few illustrations, usually black and white, usually scattered randomly; care taken with vocabulary and simple sentence structure; actions readers can visualize; selected and read by child; *Amber Brown* by Paula Danziger and *The Magic Treehouse* books by Mary Pope Osborne.

**Middle Grade Books:** ages 9-12; realistic - 25,000-60,000 words, sweet spot: 30,000-45,000; fantasy - 35,000-75,000 words, sweet spot: 45,000-65,000; no constraints on vocabulary and sentence structure; focus on a single main character who is the same age or slightly older than the intended reader; series books extremely popular; limited adult characters with small roles; heavy on action and dialogue; low on description; complex plots and subplots with themes and figurative language; selected and read by child; *Harry Potter* by JK Rowling, *Holes* by Louis Sachar, and *Wimpy Kid* books by Jeff Kinney.

**Young Adult:** ages 12 and up; realistic - 35,000-75,000 words, sweet spot: 45,000-70,000 , fantasy YA - 50,000 words to 150,000 words, sweet spot: 65,000-85,000 words; protagonist is a teenager; stories don't always have HEA; adults often absent or the source of conflict; sub categories - adventure, alternate history, apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic, bildungsroman, cyberpunk/biopunk, dystopian, fantasy/sci-fi, graphic novels/manga, historical fiction, humor, inspirational, mystery/suspense, paranormal romance, realistic, steampunk, urban fantasy. Examples: *Shine* by Lauren Myracle, *Dead Tossed Waves* by Carrie Ryan, *Matched* by Ally Condie, *Perfect Chemistry* by Simone Elkeles, and *What Happened to Goodbye* by Sarah Dessen.

\*Compiled August, 2011 by [YA Author Shelley Coriell \(www.shelleycoriell.com\)](http://www.shelleycoriell.com) using fantabulous resources from [Children's Book Insider](#) and [Agent Jennifer Laughran](#)