



Top 10 Takeaways from Picture Book Summit 2015

#1: “If you're not having fun with your project, your reader probably won't either.”

Peter Brown - Author/Illustrator

These are picture books, after all!

Action: Consider your motivation for writing. Are you more concerned with a salable manuscript, or are you writing for the joy and satisfaction of doing so?

#2: “True stories of real people are just as exciting as imaginary characters.”

Andrea Davis Pinkney - Author

"Non-fiction" sounds like yucky spinach ... we equate the word "non" with non-fun, or non-interesting - but that's simply "non" true! Real-life characters can be just as compelling, and their adventures just as exciting, as fictional ones.

Action: Substitute the words "true story" for "non-fiction" in your mind. Keep all the elements of narrative storytelling front and center: character journey, conflict, world-building, etc.

#3: “A picture book is made up of 13 page turns. “

Mac Barnett - Author

Each one is an opportunity to surprise, change scenes or advance the narrative. Literally anything can happen in the exciting space between pages!

Action: Evaluate each page turns to determine what is happening (or anticipated) from one page to the next. Make a "dummy" to see if every page turn is doing the heavy lifting it should.

Picture Book Summit 2016 is coming October 1st. Find out more at www.picturebooksummit.com

#4: “Put every word on trial for its life.”

Emma Walton Hamilton - Author/Editor

The industry standard for today's picture book is less than 500 words. This means no repetitive information, sloppy sentence structure or "empty calorie" words.

Action: Scrutinize every word in your manuscript relative to those around it. Ferret out unnecessary modifiers, or information that can be conveyed in the artwork.

#5: “Set an appointment with yourself to write.”

Katie Davis - Author/Illustrator

If you don't make time for your writing, something will always get in the way. Schedule regular time in front of your computer to write and edit, without feeling guilty for doing so.

Action: Look at your calendar. How much time have you scheduled for your writing this week? Next week? The week after? Add a reminder that nudges you. Otherwise you might let something else take its place!

#6: “Don't write to trends.”

Adriana Dominguez - Agent

If you have a great story and a wonderful voice, you may be the one that changes - or even starts - a trend.

Action: Have a meaningful conversation with yourself about your project. Are you writing the story you're burning to tell, or are you trying to fit in?

#7: “We are in a Golden Age of picture books.”

Stephen Fraser – Agent

Today's picture books address a wide of topics.

Action: How many newly published picture books have you read this week? How many classics? Make sure you're reading both! You have to know the conversation in order to contribute to it.

#8: “Authors have more power in today's world.”

Julie Hedlund - Author

Today, you can decide if you want to go the traditional route, self-publish - or both! You can develop multiple income streams from your writing and create your own opportunities.

Action: The publishing industry is changing minute-to-minute. Set aside an hour or two a month to stay current with what's happening in the traditional, digital and self-publishing landscape. You never know when a great opportunity may present itself!

#9: “Celebrate the timeless truths of childhood.”

Laura Backes Bard - Author/Editor

The shortest picture books that stand the test of time always have an emotional core.

Action: Distill the emotional core of your story to a single paragraph - or even sentence. If you can't identify it, you don't have one.

#10: “Don't get bogged down by word count.”

Liza Baker - Editor

Be more concerned about the story flow, and what your story accomplishes. Just write a great story.

Action: When you're generating a first draft, don't worry about word count. Give yourself permission to write down everything in your head - you can tighten it later!

Praise for Picture Book Summit!

"What a fantastic day! There are not enough words in the thesaurus for "inspiring" to describe how wonderful the 1st Picture Book Summit was."

-- Scott Brill

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I had hit a patch of discouragement. I feel rejuvenated, inspired, and even during the session had ideas for revising some manuscripts. I have been applying what I learned since the summit's close. Thanks to all of you for making this happen."

-- Julie Burchstead

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