

Picture Book Final Checklist

1. Have I read the story aloud, over and over, pen in hand, listening for anything that simply isn't quite right?
Have I revised again and again? In between revisions, have I put the manuscript away for a while so it can "grow cold?"
Have I polished the first page until it gleams like gold?
2. Even though there are no "new" stories, did I tell mine in a new, fresh, special way, one that's unique to me? Why will this story win awards?
3. Are the length, subject, and language of the story appropriate?
4. Have I deleted every word not required to tell the story?
5. Are my verbs strong and active? Are the nouns specific? Does every word carry its weight, and did I use each for maximum effect?
6. Did I eliminate all (or all but one, possibly,) exclamation points?
7. Did I eliminate all (or almost all) adjectives and adverbs? In dialogue, did I almost always use "said," without an adverb?
8. Have I eliminated "qualifiers?"
9. Have I shown each scene and the main character's feelings, rather than telling about them?
10. Does the manuscript text provide opportunity for the book's artist to create at least fifteen different and active illustrations?
11. Have I created a "dummy" or "storyboard" to help me make sure the story fits into a normal thirty-two page picture book?
12. Is the main character likeable—loveable even—but with at least one flaw?
13. Is there rhythm in both the language and structure of the story?
14. Does the story build steadily from the opening line, through page-turn after page-turn, to its climax, and then end—quickly,

and with something memorable?

15. Does my story work on three levels?

16. What about the story will make children beg, "Read it again?"
Since the vast majority of picture books are
"two-lappers," what about the story will make adult readers
(including editors) want to read it over and over?

Does the ending "circle back" to, reflect, the beginning? Is the
story's end "present in" the beginning?