



Author Guidelines

Creating "easy to read, hard to put down" books



The storyshares library is home to a unique collection of easy to read, hard to put down books specifically created to engage teens & adults who struggle with reading.

Here are some tips & guidelines for creating these "just right" stories.

The goal is to generate content for teen and young adult readers, but written at a 1st - 5th grade **reading level** (RL). Clear language, but mature content.

FORMAT & READABILITY:

- Stories could range anywhere from 1,000 to 15,000 words. Write short and well-spaced chapters and avoid long, unbroken paragraphs.
- Use familiar words and repetitive vocabulary. Help readers deduce the meaning of complex words by providing context clues or subtle definitions within sentences. For example: "the soup tasted horrid. I wanted to spit it out"
- Write sentences that are concise, concrete, and straightforward. Simple sentences are better. Divide longer sentences into shorter ones. Remove multiple clauses. Replace commas with periods.
- Avoid idioms or misleading phrases. Replace expressions & clichés with direct language. For example: "She decided to bite the bullet and she picked up the phone" >> "She took a deep breath. She picked up the phone."
- To track the readability of your books as you write, you can use our new text analyzer. View the reading level stats through the button on the left, and select "show analyzer" to watch your readability chart as you input new text.

CONTENT:

- **Reader Audience:** Decide who you are writing for: a middle school student? A high school student? A 19-year-old? An adult? An English Language Learner? A student with dyslexia? Write with your reader in mind: create characters that are the same age, and develop themes and situations that would be relevant and intriguing for that reader.
- **Characters:** Feature an authentic main character who is relatable to a diverse reader audience. Make sure they are at least as old as your intended reader. Characters should encounter situations that are familiar and easy to relate to for teens and young adults, and for those who are underrepresented in modern literature, including but not limited to LGBTQIA, people with disabilities, and ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious minorities.

Intriguing characters are developed through their actions, choices, and words. Create characters who make decisions that develop the plot. Give readers someone to root for. Distinguish your characters with something unique and memorable.

- **Plot:** Create challenges and themes that are complex, authentic, and relevant to your readers. While the format and language of your book should be more basic, the intrigue and plot should be compelling enough to hook teen and adult readers.

To Summarize...

Just remember to create stories that are relatable, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant for teens and young adults. Incorporate memorable characters and intriguing plots. Use sophisticated themes and complex ideas, but easy-to-grasp language and format. Happy writing!

Questions? Send us a note: support@storyshares.org