

Developmental Editing: Tales from a Children's Book Editor

Handout 1: Children's Book Markets

Trade books

- Sold primarily to bookstores, distributors, online outlets, schools, and libraries. Considered more “literary.”
- More expensive and more widely reviewed.
- Typically released first as high-quality jacketed hardcovers, then as high-quality paperbacks.
- Many trade books do come out in paperback only.
- Ebook editions and book apps now common.

Mass-market books

- Sold everywhere: bookstores, superstores, members'-only discount stores, overstock stores, supermarkets, drug stores, online outlets.
- Found in schools and libraries.
- Less expensive to produce and buy.
- Original releases usually designed as rack-friendly small paperbacks or jacketless hardcovers (think Golden Books).
- Ebook editions and book apps common.

Books for the school-and-library/educational market

Produced specifically to meet K–12 educational needs. Schools and libraries need books that supplement the curriculum in every imaginable way, including

- Books written to exacting age and reading levels.
- Guaranteed-“safe” (i.e., clean and inoffensive) novels and graphic novels.
- Series that start at one reading level and progress to a higher level.
- Novels, straight nonfiction, and biographies that help teachers meet their own school, district, or state assessment standards.
- Books that—when purchased as a set with accompanying teacher guides—make up a comprehensive reading program.
- Books covering social or health issues (usually made available in a school's library or a counselor's/nurse's office).
- Trade and other books produced with RLBs and, rarely, extra content.

Novelty-market books

- Scratch-and-sniff and pop-up books, for example.
- Books with ancillaries like stuffed animals, dolls, games, and CDs.
- Books with a distinct regional/landmark/institutional focus (e.g., an ABC book about Maryland, a Hallmark something, a zoo's picture book about their baby panda, and so on). You'll find these in gift shops and select local spots, as well as online.
- Stand-alone storybook apps (both a genre unto itself and its own novelty market).