

## “Breaking into Publishing with Educational Materials”

Copyright 2010 Toni B. Rhodes

Presenter: Toni B. Rhodes

E-mail: ReadingRhino@comcast.net

Website: www.ReadingRhino.com

Blog: RhodeSoft.blogspot.com

- I. What is the “educational market”?** It is the school market (grades K-12), consisting of materials that are purchased by teachers, media specialists, school systems, parents, and increasingly home schoolers. (This is a HUGE market – close to \$60 million according to Barbara Gregorich, 1990, p. 2; see bibliography.)
- A. Materials in the educational market are very closely related to school curriculums and what teachers use in their classrooms.
  - B. Often you must include activities, discussion questions, and evaluation tools.
  - C. Examples of educational materials include: activity books, textbooks, teaching-related magazine articles, general reading books, educational computer software, educational films and videos, posters, flash cards, games and more.
  - D. Includes materials about teaching (how to teach a topic or skill).
- II. How does a writer/illustrator find educational publishers?** (Many of the publications listed below can be found in public, school, and university libraries.)
- A. In Writer’s Market Guides
    - 1. *Children’s Writer’s & Illustrator’s Market*
    - 2. *Writer’s Market*
  - B. In the *Literary Marketplace*
  - C. SCBWI’s market survey of educational publishers:  
<http://www.scbwi.org/Resources/Documents/22-EducationalPressMarketSurvey09.pdf>
  - D. Educational publishers’ catalogs and Web sites (Sometimes they have writer’s and illustrator’s guidelines.)
  - E. Teacher’s magazines, examples:
    - 1. *Instructor* ([teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/index.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/index.htm))
    - 2. *The Mailbox* ([www.theeducationcenter.com/tec/afc/home/go.do](http://www.theeducationcenter.com/tec/afc/home/go.do))
    - 3. *Home Education Magazine* ([www.homeedmag.com/write.html](http://www.homeedmag.com/write.html))
  - F. Children’s educational magazines, examples:
    - 1. *Creative Kids* (Prufrock Press Inc. - [www.prufrock.com/client/client\\_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm](http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm))
    - 2. Cricket Magazine Group: *Calliope*, *Cobblestone*, *Cricket*, *Dig*, *Faces*, *Footsteps*, *Muse*, *Odyssey* ([www.cricketmag.com](http://www.cricketmag.com))
  - G. *The Writer* magazine ([www.writermag.com](http://www.writermag.com))
  - H. *El-Hi Textbooks & Serials in Print* (A Bowker publication)
  - I. *Bowker’s Books in Print*

*Examples of educational publishers:*

- Carson-Dellosa Publishing  
(<http://www.carsondellosa.com/cd2/default.aspx?HolderName=Submissions>)

- The Center for Learning (<http://www.centerforlearning.org/t-faq.aspx>)
- Corwin Press (<http://www.corwin.com/publish.nav>)
- Creative Teaching Press ([www.creativeteaching.com/t-SubmitAnIdea.aspx](http://www.creativeteaching.com/t-SubmitAnIdea.aspx))
- Critical Thinking Books and Software  
([www.criticalthinking.com/customer\\_service/author\\_guidelines.jsp](http://www.criticalthinking.com/customer_service/author_guidelines.jsp))
- Enslow Publishers, Inc. ([www.enslow.com](http://www.enslow.com))
- Evan-Moor Educational Publishers ([www.evan-moor.com](http://www.evan-moor.com))
- Free Spirit Publishing ([www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com))
- Gryphon House (<http://www.gryphonhouse.com/authors/authorGuidelines.asp>)
- Hayes School Publishing Co., Inc. (<http://www.hayespub.com/contact.php>)
- Heinemann (<http://www.heinemann.com/aboutAuthorInfo.aspx>)
- Highsmith: Highsmith, Upstart, Upstart Books, LibrarySparks, Edupress  
([www.highsmith.com](http://www.highsmith.com); Edupress submissions page:  
[www.highsmith.com/edupress/pages/manuscript-submissions](http://www.highsmith.com/edupress/pages/manuscript-submissions))
- Incentive Publications ([www.incentivepublications.com/contact.asp](http://www.incentivepublications.com/contact.asp))
- Kaeden Books ([http://www.kaeden.com/pages/authors\\_illustrators](http://www.kaeden.com/pages/authors_illustrators))
- Mitchell Lane Publishers ([www.mitchelllane.com/ml/contact/auguide.php](http://www.mitchelllane.com/ml/contact/auguide.php))
- Prufrock Press ([www.prufrock.com/client/client\\_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm](http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/prufrockauthors.cfm))
- Scholastic ([www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/contact.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/contact.htm))
- Teacher Ideas Press ([www.teacherideaspress.com/contact\\_us.aspx](http://www.teacherideaspress.com/contact_us.aspx))
- Walch Education ([www.walch.com/Authors.html](http://www.walch.com/Authors.html))

**III. What skills/attitudes do you need to become a successful educational writer?** (A lot of this will apply to illustration also.)

- A. You should have a strong desire “to teach, to inform, to cause to change, to enlighten.” (Gregorich, p. 7).
- B. You need to know your subject. (If you don’t know your subject through teaching or other experience, you must be willing to do a lot of research.)
- C. You need to know how to organize the subject logically so the student understands how facts relate to each other.
- D. Your materials should be related to state or local school standards (what children should study in grades K-12).
  1. Standards are available from state board of education Websites. For instance, Georgia standards can be found at:  
[www.georgiastandards.org/standards/Pages/BrowseStandards/GPS\\_by\\_Grade\\_Level\\_K-8.aspx](http://www.georgiastandards.org/standards/Pages/BrowseStandards/GPS_by_Grade_Level_K-8.aspx)
- E. You should be able to look at the materials you are developing from the student’s point of view; for instance, if you’re writing for 6-year-olds, will they understand your meaning? (Resources like the *Children’s Writer’s Word Book* can help.)
- F. You must be able to write clearly.

**IV. Where do you get your ideas?**

- A. If you’re a teacher, you probably have many ideas based on your teaching experiences.
- B. If you’re not a teacher, start with your personal interests and skills.
- C. Teacher’s educational catalogs and magazines
- D. Magazines/newspapers are full of ideas—clip articles and store in a folder.

- E. Volunteer in a school, Sunday school, or recreation class. Listen to the children—what are their interests?
- F. Talk to teachers and librarians. What do they need? What are students asking for? (“Needed Subjects” is a column in SCBWI’s *Bulletin* that lists topics requested by teachers, students, parents, and librarians.)
- G. Educational television
- H. The Internet: Look at educational Websites, for example:
  1. [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)
  2. [www.smithsonian.com](http://www.smithsonian.com)
  3. [www.school.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.school.discoveryeducation.com)
  4. [www.carlos.emory.edu/ODYSSEY](http://www.carlos.emory.edu/ODYSSEY)
  5. [www.nationalgeographic.com/kids](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids)
- I. Teacher supply stores
- J. Educational conferences

**V. How does a writer/illustrator send a project idea to an educational publisher?**

- A. Writing proposals may include some or all of the following:
  1. A cover letter (How could your idea fit into publisher's current series?)
  2. Table of contents (or outline)
  3. Synopsis
  4. Chapter summaries
  5. Market analysis
  6. Sample chapter or several chapters
  7. Bibliography
  8. Résumé or C.V.
  9. SASE !!
- B. Illustration proposals may include some or all of the following:
  1. Query
  2. Samples (photocopies or other nonreturnable samples)
  3. C.V.
  4. SASE !!
- C. For work for hire, send:
  1. Cover letter
  1. Résumé
  2. Samples of work (photocopies or other non-returnable samples)

**VI. How are educational books and other materials advertised and sold?**

- A. Direct mail: Publishers in the educational market produce a catalog, which they distribute to teachers (also on-line).
- B. Distributors: They buy books from publishers and sell them in a separate catalog (Social Studies School Service for instance; [www.socialstudies.com](http://www.socialstudies.com))
- C. On-line bookstores (Amazon.com; Barnes & Noble – [bn.com](http://bn.com))
- D. Direct sales: Publishers and distributors make presentations at schools and educational conferences and sell their products to attendees.
- E. Teacher supply stores

## **VII. Books about educational and nonfiction writing and publishing and child development**

- A. Gutkind, Lee. *The Art of Creative Nonfiction*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997.
- B. Gregorich, Barbara. *Writing for the Educational Market*. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch, Publisher, 1990. New edition published in November, 2000, by iUniverse.com. (Good general introduction to the subject of educational publishing. Lots of examples.)
- C. Lyon, Elizabeth. *Nonfiction Book Proposals Anybody Can Write: How to Get a Contract and an Advance Before Writing Your Book*. Portland, Oregon: Blue Heron Publishing, 1995. (A tough, detailed, well-organized book about writing proposals.)
- D. Mogilner, Alijandra. *Children's Writer's Word Book*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1992. (Graded word lists – lists of words that children usually know in grades K-6)
- E. Shaw, Eva. *Writing the Nonfiction Book*. Loveland, CO: Rodgers & Nelson Publishing Co., 1999.
- F. Roberts, Ellen E.M. *Nonfiction for Children: How to Write It - How to Sell It*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1986. (A bit out of date but has some good general information.)
- G. Stangl, Jean. *How to Get Your Teaching Ideas Published: A Writer's Guide to Educational Publishing*. New York, NY: Walker and Company, 1994. (General introduction to the subject of educational publishing.)
- H. Wood, Chip. *Yardsticks: Children in the Classroom Ages 4 - 14*. Turners Falls, MA: Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2007. (Developmental guidelines for each age and curriculum needs and interests.)
- I. Zinsser, William. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006. (It really is a classic.)

