

# Selection Guidance

World Book Day has created the following guidance to support decision making for all World Book Day submissions.

The aim of our selection process is to identify titles which children and young people will want to choose and read for themselves and families will want to share together with their children. We want the books to speak and be accessible to children and families who don't currently see themselves as readers. World Book Day's aim is for each of the books we use for our content to offer a gateway into reading.

This guidance for the selection has been created with the support of partners (The National Literacy Trust, The Open University and Centre for Literacy in Primary Education) as part of World Book Day's evidence-based approach.

This guidance will be developed over time. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to improve it.

## Working with World Book Day

Publishers and the selection panel should consider the **opportunities for engaging readers through World Book Day**:

- Content does not need to be about the joy of books and reading or refer to World Book Day.
- Are the proposed authors and illustrators experienced in public relations and events and able to act as an advocate for World Book Day and for reading for pleasure to a broad audience?
- Will it be possible for World Book Day to work with an author, illustrator, or other champion as part of the event and campaign?
- Can World Book Day work with them to produce accessible reading engagement content (such as interviews or activities)?

## General Guidance

Collectively, the books World Book Day chooses:

- Promote opportunities for children to develop their interest and enjoyment in reading.
- Provide a high quality and inspirational selection, appealing to a range of ages, reading abilities, backgrounds and interests, for children to choose from.
- Offer content, stories and illustrations that reflect the diverse make-up of society.
- Promote reading, through rich and powerful writing (either fiction or non-fiction).

Publishers and the selection panel should consider how titles (individual or as an overall list) might lead children and families to read for pleasure.

We understand that in the case of £1/€1.50 book submissions publishers are submitting proposals for potential, rather than existing, content.

- **Connecting with readers:** Will the premise, subject matter, themes, genre, characters, setting, structure, curiosity, mood have the potential to captivate readers throughout?

- **Identifiable or recognisable themes, authors/illustrators:** Will the title feel familiar or exciting to readers – is there some element of existing reputation or reach? Does it tie to existing and popular interests (examples might include gaming, sports, crafts). Do the proposed titles speak to young people's current socio-political priorities? Will it present readers, booksellers, teachers and librarians with routes to reading further books in the series, by the author or other authors/illustrators?
- **Inclusion and diversity:** Does the proposed title promote themes and/or champion global perspectives? Do the authors and illustrators represent or reflect the UK and Ireland's population?
- **Developing reading:** Will the title invite re-reading or have layers of meaning that allow new detail and understanding to be made? What opportunities are offered for reading together with younger children, to encourage thinking and conversations? Or for reading independently or as reading communities?
- **Engaging less confident or less keen readers:** Is there an opportunity for illustration to be used? Could the writing style engage dyslexic or other reluctant readers? For example, can it be concise and use short sections of text rather than continuous prose? Is there potential for 'dipping into' texts, both narrative and non-narrative? Are there ways that illustration can be used to support older readers that is age appropriate? i.e. graphic novels.
- **Accessible versions:** We work with the RNIB and Guide Dogs to produce braille, large print and audio versions of the £1/€1.50 books. Will it be possible for audio descriptions of pictures referenced but not described in the text to be provided? Is the text engaging for a child who cannot access the illustrations?

The selection panel will additionally consider:

- **The overall mix of genres:** Are a range of genres across the age ranges included? Are there any obvious omissions? Panel members will bring expertise and experience around what proves particularly popular in their settings.
- **Inclusion and diversity:** Does the list reflect the interests, backgrounds and specific cultural influences of contemporary children and young people growing up in the UK and Ireland? Across all our texts we will be looking for authentic depiction which children and young people can relate to. CLPE's toolkit for choosing texts from their 2020 Reflecting Realities Report<sup>1</sup> will be referred to in the selection process and is provided in summary here:

#### *Characterisation*

- Are the characters in the book thoughtfully developed, well fleshed out, multi-dimensional individuals with agency? OR Is the ethnic minority character a well drawn, well developed

<sup>1</sup> <https://clpe.org.uk/clpes-reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children%E2%80%99s-literature-published>

(See also: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/globalassets/resources/represents/booktrust-represents-diversity-childrens-authors-illustrators-report.pdf>)

[https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Diversity\\_and\\_children\\_and\\_young\\_peoples\\_reading\\_in\\_2020.pdf](https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/Diversity_and_children_and_young_peoples_reading_in_2020.pdf))

and well rounded individual whose ethnicity does not define them any more than a white protagonist is defined by theirs and/or does the book ensure positive casual inclusion of ethnic minority characters who are not solely defined by their ethnicity?

- Does the book challenge misconceptions and prejudices about an under-represented group or does it reinforce them?

### *Illustration*

- Has careful consideration of skin tones, facial features and hair texture been effectively made to ensure that a character's ethnicity is recognisable without being overstated?

- How do the props, background and other visual cues add layers to our understanding and appreciation of the character and their world?

### *Plot*

- Is the plot driven by the character's ethnicity? If yes, to what extent is this necessary and appropriate in furthering the narrative and is the portrayal sensitively depicted?

- If the book includes social justice themes, does it effectively explore and convey the complexity of the themes with sensitive due regard and reverence to the subject(s)?

## Specific genre guidance

### **Fiction**

- Does the concept for the book – development of the idea and resolution – provide potential for a complete and satisfying reading experience?
- Does the story offer an emotional connection; the chance for empathy and character development; the opportunity for immersion in the story?
- Are the backgrounds, interests and motivations of characters likely to resonate with target age readers?

### **Non-Fiction/Activity:**

- Does the book link into themes/brands already shown to be popular in the target age-group?
- Will the layout, design and illustrations encourage the reader to actively explore for information?
- Is the information accurate and engaging and are new terms clearly explained – perhaps being highlighted or defined in a glossary?
- Are the subjects showcasing a diverse spectrum of achievements without skimming over potentially contentious aspects of history or politics?

### **Poetry:**

- Is the poetry rooted in word games, wordplay, song and rhythm – reflecting the importance of it being heard as well as read?
- Does the poetry connect with personal feelings events, to help the reader reflect on experiences to recreate, shape and make sense of it?
- Does the poetry offer the chance for children to read poetry in a range of forms? Pattern and shapes are important. Rhyme isn't essential.

**Graphic novels and illustrated texts:**

- Will the choice of illustration, design and typeface make the book accessible and appealing to a wide range of readers? Note; uppercase lettering can contribute to issues around visual blurring.
- Will illustrations serve to support or ‘scaffold’ readers’ comprehension and understanding (will colour, layout and illustration style be used to help tell the story)?
- How well could illustrations and text relate to one another?

**Age-range categories**

Individual titles (and ultimately the overall selection) should offer maximum opportunities for a wide range of children and families to engage with and feel excited by books and reading.

Children less engaged in reading are likely to have a reading level lower than their chronological age.

Particular thought should be given to:

- Age appropriateness of subject, complexity of sentence structure, word usage.
- What hooks exist within the proposed book and how will these work to attract and engage existing readers and emergent readers?
- If it is possible to create texts for older children who might not be at their age expected reading level but are of high interest? Graphic novels, poetry and non-fiction are often ways in for these readers.

Reading Scale Stage <sup>2</sup>	Behaviours	Age approximation for children making expected progress
Beginning Reader	Not yet able to access print independently, most have favourites to share, join in with simple texts and know how to handle books.	Pre-School
Early Reader	Growing confidence and ability. Reflect and respond to reading. Interest in range of reading material e.g. information texts, poetry and picture books.	5+
Fluent Reader	Select books independently. Likely to be developing strong reading preferences and showing interest in new authors and genres.	8+
Independent reader	Self-motivated and confident. Willing to take on more extended and more challenging texts.	Teen

<sup>2</sup> Reading Scale stages and behaviours from CLPE ‘Reading Scales’ <https://clpe.org.uk/teaching-resources/reading-and-writing-scales>

## Evidence

In preparing submissions, publishers might find it useful to consider these points which are drawn from selection panel experience and evidence from the National Literacy Trust, CLPE and BookTrust:

- Including a range of genres  
‘We need pitching to happen across genres to appeal to the widest base of children.’
- Ensuring a spread of different character backgrounds and perspectives  
‘The books need to better reflect UK society, and we need more diverse range of authors and illustrators in the younger category – pictorially having diverse groups of characters is really important.’
- Inclusion of non-narrative forms  
‘Non-fiction can be a good way in for a lot of children, it can be a gateway into reading.’
- Inclusion of poetry and verse  
Less text can be inviting for readers that feel less confident.
- Inclusion of illustrated works  
‘Illustrated and graphic novel titles presented through all the categories would be really helpful.’
- Books which allow active or engaged readership- choose your own adventure, books with a puzzle or gaming element  
‘Activity books can be dismissed but they play an important role for reluctant readers as they aren’t intimidating and involve children.’
- Humour plays an important role in reading for pleasure  
‘Reading needs to be presented as enjoyable and fun!’
- Titles which tie to interests that children and young people might have, provide added interest appeal  
National Literacy Trust research shows 4 in 5 young people who play video games read materials relating to these once a month.
- Titles with characters that are familiar or are part of a series that children and families recognise  
‘A lot of our families are not readers so familiar characters can be a way of bridging uncertainty.’