

## Writing picture books

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**Start date** 8 May 2021

**End date** 9 May 2021

**Venue** Virtual Classroom

*(taught via live and interactive Zoom sessions in British Summer Time)*

**Tutor** Pippa Goodhart

**Course code** 2021NDR239

**Director of Academic Centres**

Dr Corinne Boz

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**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Pippa is the author of more than a hundred books for children ranging from picture books, through early reader books, to novels. Best known amongst her picture books are the prize-winning, million-copy selling, *You Choose* books illustrated by Nick Sharratt. She writes picture books for a number of big publishers such as Penguin Random House, Bloomsbury, and Egmont, but also for small independent publishers such as Tiny Owl, Flying Eye, and Little Door.

Pippa began her career in books with a Saturday job at Heffers Bookshop in Cambridge, later becoming manager of the Children's Bookshop. She began writing books when at home with young children. Pippa has enjoyed teaching writing for children for twenty-five years. As well as teaching at ICE, she has taught at De Montfort and Nottingham Trent Universities, for SCBWI (the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators), and via Jericho Writers. De Montfort University awarded her an honorary doctorate.

The challenges posed in writing minimal read aloud texts to work with pictures and the big book format for a very young audience and a difficult market makes picture book writing a very particular skill.

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## Course programme

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### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**10.00 – 11.00 BST\***      **Session 1:** Thinking about the young child audience for picture books. Can we remember that young child view of the world from our own childhoods? Considering the demands of the market, and therefore the attitudes of publishers and agents when they consider texts. Can we come up with a picture book idea which would have selling potential?

**11.30 – 12.30 BST\***      **Session 2:** What is a story? How to achieve a strong simple story suited to a very young audience. How to shape a story using plot and character.

### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May

**10.00 – 11.00 BST\***      **Session 3:** Considering the book format, and the restrictions and opportunities it offers the writer. Your writing 'voice'. Rework your story to perform as well as possible through a book. Are there opportunities to "up" the drama and humour, or emphasise emotion through different treatments?

**11.30 – 12.30 BST\***      **Session 4:** Approaching agents and publishers. What opportunities are there for publication? What opportunities for developing your picture book writing skills further? The chance to workshop your stories.

\* *British Summer Time*

## **Course syllabus**

### **Aims:**

1. To explore the range of picture books, and to consider how those books suit their young audience.
2. To shape and write a potential picture book story, considering illustration and design as well as text.
3. To develop an understanding of the market, and how to pursue publication.

### **Content:**

We will look at a range of modern picture books, and consider what story topics and treatments best suit the market and audience for those books, and why. We will look at how best to work pictures and text together (even though we are not producing any pictures ourselves) to bring a story to life through the page turns of a book which is to be read out loud. We will write and workshop stories, and then consider how best to achieve publication.

### **Presentation of the course:**

With four online zoom sessions over two days, the tutor will present material and ideas, and then facilitate discussion. We will work together on one story idea, and then participants will work on either that story or their own individual story. For those who want to, those stories will be read out loud and workshopped together.

### **As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Appreciate how picture books work text and pictures together, combining different disciplines to work towards one end product.
- Develop an understanding of how the publishing world works, specifically in regard to the picture book market.
- Respond to the needs and tastes of young children.
- Respond to team work challenges, and apply skills in critiquing and receiving criticism in constructive ways.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course.

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
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### Books about writing and picture books

Pollard, Clare	<i>Fierce Bad Rabbits: The Tales Behind Children's Picture Books</i>	Fig Tree
Whitford Paul, Ann	<i>Writing Picture Books</i>	Writer's Digest
Alexander, Jenny	<i>When A Writer Isn't Writing; How to Beat Your Blocks, Be Published and Find Your Flow</i>	Five Lanes

### Some of the many picture books you might like to look at

Antony, Steve	<i>Green Lizards vs Red Rectangles</i>	Hodder
Barroux	<i>Welcome</i>	Egmont
Brown, Peter	<i>Mr Tiger Goes Wild</i>	Macmillan
Browne, Eileen	<i>Handa's Surprise</i>	Walker
Charman, Katrina, Nick Sharratt	<i>Car, Car, Truck, Jeep</i>	Bloomsbury
Donaldson, Julia, Alex Sheffler	<i>The Gruffalo</i>	Macmillan
Donnio, Sylviane, Dorothee de Monfreid	<i>I Really Want To Eat A Child</i>	Hodder
Empson, Jo	<i>Rabbityness</i>	Child's Play
Gray, Kes Jim Field	<i>Oi Frog!</i>	Hodder
Jeffers, Oliver Drew Daywalt	<i>The Day The Crayons Quit</i>	HarperCollins
Jeffers, Oliver	<i>Stuck</i>	HarperCollins

Klassen, Jon	<i>This Is Not My Hat</i>	Walker
Merino, Gemma	<i>The Crocodile Who Didn't Like Water</i>	Macmillan
Vere, Ed	<i>How To Be A Lion</i>	Puffin

## Other resources

### Picture Book Den blog

A weekly blog about picture books written by a group of current British picture book authors and illustrators <http://picturebookden.blogspot.com>

### Picture Book Makers

A blog by an international array of top picture book illustrators telling, and showing, how they work on their books <https://blog.picturebookmakers.com/about>

### Pippa's website

[www.pippagoodhart.co.uk](http://www.pippagoodhart.co.uk)

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## Additional information

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### What you will need

The course is open to anyone, however it is taught via a virtual classroom. You will be able to see, hear and interact with your classmates and the tutor. In order to participate you will need to have a laptop, computer, tablet or other device equipped with a camera (webcam), speakers and a microphone.

Full instructions and support on the use of the software will be given on request.

### Venue

This course takes place online using the teleconferencing software ZOOM.

If you have any queries about the software or accessing the course, please contact us by e-mailing [creativewriting@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:creativewriting@ice.cam.ac.uk).

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 11 March 2021