

Summer 2023

Highlighter

SCBWI Mid-Atlantic Journal



Language

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Summer 2023 // Language

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For more information on our region, see <https://www.scbwi.org/regions/midatlantic>

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Are you interested in contributing an article, illustration, or other content to *Highlighter*? Please send your ideas and/or portfolio link to Denise Taranov at MidAtlanticHighlighter@gmail.com

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The Language of Summer

The first week of August hangs at the very top of summer, the top of the live-long year, like the highest seat of a Ferris wheel when it pauses in its turning. The weeks that come before are only a climb from spring, and those that follow a drop to the chill of autumn . . .

- Natalie Babbitt, TUCK EVERLASTING

Even though Natalie Babbitt says it's August, for us July is the tip-top of summer. It's a time of family vacations, going to the beach (or a kiddie pool in the backyard), umbrella drinks, matinees, air conditioning—and books. Reading, writing, illustrating, translating. We may be taking it easy, but craft is never far from our minds, whether we're lying in a hammock or sitting at our desks.

This issue of *Highlighter* explores the craft of language and translation. Good translation must do more than translate words into another language—it must capture the essence of the original meaning and yet stand on its own in the new language. **Gabriella Aldeman** asks "7 Key Questions for Translating Children's Books." **Lula Delacre** discusses "The Spanish-English Tapestry: Two Versions, Bilingual—or Just a Sprinkling?" **Neera K. Badhwar** plumbs her poetic language. And **Jennifer Shand** offers "5 Literary Devices for Your Language Toolbox." Whether you're enjoying the beach, mountain, or your own backyard, take time to delve into this edition.

We're happy to announce that member **Laura K. Zimmerman** won the Crystal Kite for the entire Atlantic



region for her book MUSHROOM RAIN, illustrated by Jamie Green. Congratulations, Laura!

Adapting to the new SCBWI website has been challenging, and we ask for your patience as we try to upload content and add registrations for upcoming events. It's not too late to register for First Pages with Kat Brzozowski, Senior Editor with Feiwel & Friends, on July 11. The Summer Critique Fest is July 26. Author Lisa Rogers will speak on "Starting with Heart: Centering Your Writing on an Emotional Response." On September 5, Ann McCallum Staats will speak on "Vivacious and Fun: Upping Your Game with Virtual Visits." On September 12, Disney Hyperion Executive Editor Sylvie Frank presents "Plot, Page-Turns, and Pith: All About Picture Book Pacing." You may sign up for upcoming Mid-Atlantic events here: <https://www.scbwi.org/regions/midatlantic/events>.

Please stay tuned to announcements about events for the fall. In the meantime, enjoy summer wherever it takes you.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin".

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Val".

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Gabriella Aldeman



How I Got My Agent

by Gabriella Aldeman

Before I was agented, I devoured every single "How I Got My Agent" article. They had the makings of a classic love story: A protagonist yearning to find the right partner to have and to hold in this publishing life from this call forward, for better or worse, for multibook deals or dry writing spells (and rejections and rejections) 'til death do them part. I read from the other side of the screen, celebrated their wins, and learned. Now it's my turn to tell the story, and I hope to do it justice. This is how *I* got my agent.

False Start

The first picture book I ever wrote was straight from the heart. It was a lived experience that poured out onto the page. And because it was so close to me, it was incredibly hard to revise. But I thought it was good enough to pitch in a Twitter event. And guess what? It was—kind of. My pitch got a like from an agent and a like from an editor. Match made in heaven, right? Wrong. It was a false start. My story was not even close to ready. Neither was I.

The agent that liked the pitch asked for an R&R, but I had no idea what that meant. She also asked for five other manuscripts. I did have that many, but they were early drafts. I learned my lesson. I needed to be ready before pursuing an opportunity. Next time, I vowed, my manuscripts would be extensively revised and I'd learn the publishing terms.

Casting a Wide Net

Once I joined a critique group and had a handful of polished manuscripts to share, I tried again. I started by submitting my two favorite stories: PAULA'S PATCHES and SQUAWK OF SPANISH. I queried agents the traditional way and got rejection after rejection. In the meantime, I entered mentorship contests, manuscript contests, and participated in (more) Twitter pitch parties.

I first met my agent Delia Berrigan in June 2021 at a one-on-one virtual event hosted by an organization called Philadelphia Stories. We had fifteen minutes together. I took the first couple of minutes to pitch PAULA'S PATCHES and then we started talking. That's when we really connected—we talked about ourselves, raising bilingual children, and the kidlit industry in general. By the time it was over, she asked me to send her PAULA'S

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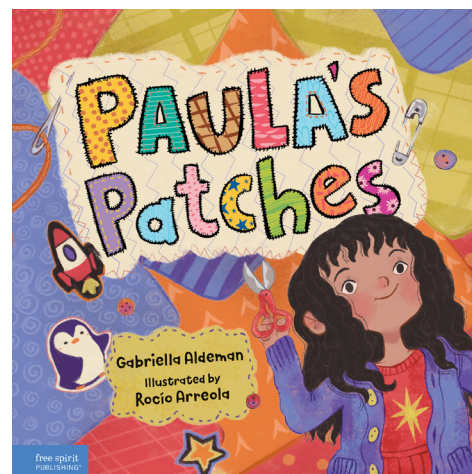
[@write_between](https://www.twitter.com/write_between)

gabriella@writebetween.com

Newsletter sign-up: <https://www.writebetween.com>

Favorite resources

- [Julie Hedlund's 12x12 Picture Book Challenge](#) for community and motivation
- [WRITING PICTURE BOOKS by Ann Whitford Paul](#) for all the basics
- [Las Musas Podcast](#) for insights
- [Literaticast Podcast](#) for wisdom
- [Tara Lazar's Storystorm Challenge](#) for book ideas
- [Imagination Soup Website](#) for comp titles



Meet a Writer

(continued)

Gabriella Aldeman



PATCHES and a few other manuscripts. Delia didn't offer representation right away. She asked for an R&R and, this time, I was ready to revise and resubmit.

While I was waiting for Delia to respond to my query, I participated in the Twitter pitch party #PBPitch with this pitch for PAULA'S PATCHES: "Paula's pants ripped at the knee. She tries everything to hide the tear from her classmates, only to find out that they, too, have leaky lunchboxes, spaghetti stains, and hand-me-down backpacks. Nothing some colorful patches can't fix! #PBPitch #PB #SEL #POC." That got two hearts from acquiring editors. One of them was Meg Bratsch at Free Spirit who eventually took PAULA'S PATCHES to acquisitions and offered me a contract. I used that offer to nudge Delia who offered me representation soon thereafter.

I can ask her anything and can expect a fast and straightforward answer.

What's to Come

The two stories I queried back in 2021 will soon be published. My debut picture book, PAULA'S PATCHES—a story about a girl whose pants rip on her way to school that highlights empathy and the power of mending and creative problem solving—comes out this summer from Free Spirit Publishing.

My second picture book, SQUAWK OF SPANISH/ UN GRAZNIDO EN ESPAÑOL, comes out next year in English and Spanish from Charlesbridge Publishing. I also have a couple more picture books in the works for publication in 2025 and 2026 (thanks in great part to my wonderful agent!).

Resources for Your Journey

Are you looking for an agent that represents children's books? Here are resources I found particularly useful.

- **Manuscript Wish List:** Search their agent database to learn what each agent is currently looking for and how to submit to them.
- **Twitter Pitch Parties:** Participate and expand your network. The #kidlit #WritingCommunity remains strong on this social media platform.
- **Mentorships:** Apply to be mentored with programs like [PB Rising Stars](#), [The Word's Editor-Writer Mentorship](#), [Las Musas Hermanas Program](#), [We Need Diverse Books](#), and more.
- **Publisher's Weekly Children's Bookshelf:** Sign up for this free newsletter to read about the newest deals and the agents representing them.
- **SCBWI Contests:** If you're reading this, you're already a member. Make sure to apply for grants and award opportunities.
- **In-Person or Virtual Conferences:** Get to know your fellow writers. //H//



Sample pages from PAULA'S PATCHES written by Gabriella Aldeman and illustrated by Rocío Arreola (Free Spirit Publishing, 2023)

My Author-Agent Relationship

Delia has a clear vision of how my manuscripts fit within the industry. She negotiates expertly and is relentless and patient in dealing with publishers. She has a legal background and contract expertise that has (already) prevented me from signing a less-than-favorable contract. She's quick to let me know when a manuscript is not ready or doesn't have a strong enough hook to get acquired. The best thing is that

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MEET AN ILLUSTRATOR

Sarah Hand



Self-portrait



<https://www.sarah-hand.com>

[@sarah.hand_art.and.wonder](https://www.instagram.com/sarah.hand_art.and.wonder)

Favorite tool

I love working traditionally and my main squeezes are acrylic gouache and colored pencils. I can't *not* use them, even if I try!

What inspires me

I'm inspired by humor, color, and funny interactions. I also really love odd proportions!

Design influences

I'm influenced by Alice and Martin Provensen—their work has such a huge variety of styles and mixed media. I'm always seeing something new in their gorgeous illustrations. American folk art is a big one, too—the simple shapes, and the imperfect and sometimes awkward human figures and animals—there's so much to look at.

Favorite things to illustrate

I adore illustrating characters — anything with an expressive face. Making a tiny story with simple faces and body shapes absolutely delights me.

MEET AN ILLUSTRATOR

Sarah Hand



A peek into the process



What I'd like to explore in the coming year

I'm in the process of writing and illustrating a children's book. Writing has been a huge learning curve but I've started to enjoy the process and it's beginning to click. Now I have gobs of ideas zinging through my brain and I want to make more books! I'd also like to explore getting published!



The Spanish-English Tapestry: Two Versions, Bilingual—or Just a Sprinkling?

by Lulu Delacre

In the four decades since I started creating books that celebrate my Latino heritage and my native language, I've seen the use of Spanish in children's books published in the United States evolve from poor translations of children's classics to authentic versions written by native speakers. Today there is a choice that did not exist in the 1980s. I've also seen interest from both authors and publishers in embedding Spanish into English manuscripts with Latino characters or themes in what looks like an effort to broaden the spectrum of readers. But when is it effective to add Spanish words and phrases? And Spanish from what Spanish-speaking country? And if you are not a native speaker, does it make sense? Are there any pitfalls? Let's dive into the answers to these questions.

First, a little history. One of the reasons I made it a mission to provide Spanish-language versions of my books to readers was the lack of valid options for my own daughters born in the U.S. and growing up in a place where the English language and American culture were dominant. So it fell onto me as a mother, who happened to be in the children's book field, to provide the link to their roots. My own daughters were an example of a segment of readership in this country that was not being served. I began to fill this void.

Recently, I read a Publisher's Weekly article titled, "U.S. Booksellers Embrace Books in Spanish." It cites booksellers noticing "today's pent-up demand for Spanish-language books" in Phoenix, Dallas, Austin, Seattle, Miami, and Milwaukee, among other major cities across the nation. Booksellers deem that the reason behind this demand is probably the rise of dual-language programs in schools and the growth of the Latino popula-

tion. If we consider that the Census Bureau estimated that more than 41 million people spoke Spanish at home in the United States in 2019, it makes sense that we have finally reached a point in which demand generates choice. It speaks of a long-awaited moment: American publishers are listening.

Still, the questions arise of when is it best to have two separate versions of your story, when to submit a bilingual manuscript, and when to enrich your English manuscript with well-thought-out Spanish phrases and words in just the right places to add color, meaning and context? I'll try to address these questions speaking from personal experience.



Excerpt from the bilingual picture book **VEO, VEO, I SEE YOU** by Lulu Delacre (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2023)

There are valid reasons for two separate versions of a manuscript. One of them is design. Perhaps the picture book you wrote can't be effectively told in two languages at once because of the book layout. Some writers of bilingual books will say that it takes three words in Spanish to convey the meaning of one English word. Often, Span-

The Spanish-English Tapestry

(continued)



Sample bilingual pages from **OLINGUITO DE LA A LA Z/OLINGUITO FROM A TO Z** written and illustrated by Lulu Delacre

ish translations of English words tend to have a higher letter count. So the Spanish version of your text is likely to require more space. Whether both versions fit in your page layout is a concern. When I wrote **OLINGUITO DE LA A LA Z, OLINGUITO FROM A TO Z**, I used the Spanish alphabet to give structure to the manuscript. The lyrical and short text allows space to show off the beauty of the cloud forest in the art.

The sentence in Spanish – **Pica, pica, picaflor del paraíso de las palmas de cera / y un quetzal que resplandece en un cedro queda quieto** – has many more words starting with the letters **p** and **q** than the English version of this sentence.

In my view the English version is as lyrical as the Spanish one without being literal: **A hummingbird sips nectar in this paradise of wax palms / as a gleaming quetzal quietly alights on a cedar.**

This example makes the case for both – that a Spanish version may take more room and that a nonliteral translation may be better suited for your purposes.

Design considerations made me write dual versions of **COOL GREEN: AMAZING, REMARKABLE TREES**. Even though the English text uses free verse to describe the trees, the text is longer

than that of **OLINGUITO**. Creating a bilingual version of the spread highlighting the baobab, for example, would have presented too many design challenges that are difficult to overcome. Thus, the simultaneous publishing of **VERDE FRESCO:**



English and Spanish language versions of COOL GREEN: AMAZING, REMARKABLE TREES by Lulu Delacre

ÁRBOLES ASOMBROSOS Y EXTRAORDINARIOS was the right choice.

Design is not the only reason to consider two separate versions. Sometimes educational considerations drive this choice. I write the **RAFI AND ROSI** beginner readers in two versions that are

The Spanish-English Tapestry

(continued)

published jointly. Notice that I do not call the Spanish version a translation from the English. I treat it as its own version, taking care that it tells the same story but in an authentic way suited to the language of its setting. Beginner readers need to focus on the language they are learning to read. There is a particular format one must follow to allow for easier reading. Larger font and leading, or space between lines, make for a better reading experience. And although it wouldn't be impossible to have two languages side by side if one had a larger page count, it would be counterproductive from an educational point of view.

In the scene from *RAFI AND ROSI MUSIC!* pictured below, you can tell three things. First, that the first three lines in both versions convey the same meaning, but the Spanish version is not the literal translation of the English. Second, that there are Spanish words embedded in the English version. These Spanish words and phras-

es describe a specific type of music played in Puerto Rico and include well-known lyrics from this genre. Third, you will notice that embedded Spanish words are italicized. This is a choice that allows beginner readers to know when they are confronted with words in Spanish that will not follow familiar English pronunciation rules. It also prompts the young reader to flip to the glossary and find out the definition of these new words and phrases.

Let's talk about when weaving Spanish language within a longer English text is the right choice. In the collection *US, IN PROGRESS: SHORT STORIES ABOUT YOUNG LATINOS*, I used language to convey the nuanced cultural differences between the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America, making my characters come through as authentic. "Saturday School" tells the story of Sandra, born in the U.S. to Puerto Rican parents. She is sent to Saturday school to brush off her Spanish. There, she is confronted with the reality of not under-

"Can I sing with you?" Rosi asked.
Rafi shrugged. "Okay," he said.
Rosi jumped onto a doorstep.
She held her tin like a *pandero*,
the short, handheld *plena* drum.
She tap-tapped as they sang,
"*Temporal, temporal,*
allá viene el temporal . . ."



—¿Puedo cantar contigo? —dijo Rosi
y brincó al escalón de entrada.
Rafi se encogió de hombros y asintió.
Rosi usó su lata como *pandero*,
el tambor chato de *plena*.
Y así dando golpecitos cantaron:
"*Temporal, temporal*
allá viene el temporal . . .".



English and Spanish language versions of *RAFI AND ROSI MUSIC!* by Lulu Delacre

The Spanish-English Tapestry

(continued)

“Ché, Maurício, encontrále un pupitre a la chica nueva, ¿querés?” Señora Peña asks a boy while gesturing toward me. I figure the teacher is asking him to find me a seat. *Encontrá*le, *querés* . . . I repeat these words to myself.

“¿Sos Sandra, no?” Señora Peña asks. *Encontrá*le, *querés, sos* . . . what is it about these words?

Excerpt from **US, IN PROGRESS: SHORT STORIES ABOUT YOUNG LATINOS** by Lulu Delacre

standing the way Argentineans from Buenos Aires speak and conjugate verbs. Had I not being born to Argentinean parents in Puerto Rico, this particular story might have been harder to write. This is to say that when sprinkling your manuscript with specific words or phrases in Spanish, you must do your homework so it sounds authentic. Consulting a native speaker from Argentina would have been my choice in this case if I did not hear my own mother's voice in my head.

In 2017, when this collection was published, it was still customary to have any language other than English italicized within the English manuscript. This has changed. Today, many publishers

would use italics to stress certain words but not to differentiate languages. It makes the task of an author even harder as one needs to be cognizant of not confusing the reader, who may apply the English pronunciation to a Spanish word and understand something different from what the author intended.

In my most recent picture book, *VEO, VEO, I SEE YOU*, I treat the English and Spanish in equal fashion. Yet through design choices I managed to separate the languages and give a young English speaker an accurate idea of what is been said in Spanish. In the story, Mami always speaks in Spanish and the children always in English. The reader who doesn't understand Spanish will still grasp the plot as it's a game that involves repetition. Besides, there are ample cues in the art to define Spanish language words within the narrative text.

In conclusion, the answer to the question—two versions, bilingual or just a sprinkling?—is as nuanced as the variations in the Spanish spoken throughout Latin America. It's for each author to list the goals for a manuscript and discover through research, consulting, and/or trial and error, the right answer for each manuscript. //H//



Excerpt from *VEO, VEO, I SEE YOU* by Lulu Delacre

5 Literary Devices for Your Language Toolbox

by Jennifer Shand

Hello, SCBWI readers! My name is Jennifer Shand. I am the author of eighteen books intended for the very young up to elementary-aged children. As a writer, I want to make my manuscripts as interesting, engaging, and appealing as they can possibly be (and I'm guessing you feel the same way). In my writing class—fiction, nonfiction, adult, children, journalism, and even speech writing—you'll learn certain techniques to enliven and improve your work in order to grab your readers' attention. These techniques are possibly more important in children's writing, as your readers have shorter attention spans and lots of energy to expend doing other things. In this article, I'm going to explore five (actually, six) literary devices to add to your language toolbox. They can make your writing more fun, lively, descriptive, educational, and memorable so that it not only grabs—but also keeps—little minds engaged.

1. Onomatopoeia

Literary device number one is probably my favorite: onomatopoeia. I often get confused looks when I tell people that one of my series of books mainly features onomatopoeia. When I try to give a precise definition—onomatopoeia is the formation of a word that phonetically imitates the sound that it describes—those looks get even more confused. So, to put it simply, onomatopoeia is a word that is also a sound.

**BUZZ,
CRACKLE,
POP,
SQUEAK,
ZOOM**

Buzz, crackle, pop, squeak, and zoom are all examples. Children love words that imitate sounds, and using them makes books more fun for them. There is also much consensus that onomatopoeia can help children learn to speak and read. Anyone who has been around a child learning to speak knows that animal sounds are among their first utterances. Sounds of any kind help children learn phonemes, and phonemes aid in children learning to read. In my SOUNDS FROM THE ... series, my hope is that people read the onomatopoeia and point to the word at the same time. As you can see in the image from my book TOOT, TOOT, HOOT, HOOT: SOUNDS FROM THE SYMPHONY, every other spread is just words (mostly onomatopoeia). I also hope the reader will really enunciate the sounds because doing these two things will accelerate a child's ability to speak and read. Onomatopoeia is obviously fun, lively, and descriptive, but this is how this literary device is also educational. The best way to add onomatopoeia to your manuscript is to use it in a descriptive manner. For example, if it's raining in your manuscript, try describing the sound. Add "drip, drip," "splash, splash," or "splat, splat" to make the writing more lively and fun. Onomatopoeia will make your manuscript stand out from the crowd.

2. Alliteration

Let's look a little at a literary and language device called alliteration. Alliteration is using the same letter or sound over and over again, especially at the beginning of each word. Using alliteration is a great way to grab the attention of the reader. The brain is wired to see patterns, and it picks up on them quickly. This makes a person lean in to your writing, and it is pleasing to the mind. Therefore, your reader will enjoy your writing more. When a string of words all start with the same letter, it can

5 Literary Devices for Your Language Toolbox

(continued)

also help to group them. This can be valuable if you're trying to convey a theme in your writing. For example, if you have a fruit theme, instead of listing apples, bananas, and oranges, try using pineapples, pears, peaches, and papayas.

pineapples,
pears,
peaches, &
papayas

I believe alliteration is especially beneficial in poetry and nursery rhyme because it is lulling and lyrical. The most beneficial reason to use alliteration for children is to teach them to read. Repeating a letter over and over makes the reader pay attention to that letter and, more importantly for a new reader, to the sound it makes. This helps them sound out letters and words and learn to read faster. I use alliteration, once again, in my SOUNDS FROM THE ... series. These books are based on sounds, and using alliteration gives the manuscripts rhythm. This is especially important for books for the very young because they're read aloud. I think and hope that the alliteration in my books creates a natural rhythm that improves flow and, therefore, makes them more enjoyable for both the reader and the listener.

3. Silliness

The third literary device is all about fun! I have never met a child who doesn't enjoy silliness. So why not add it to your writing? There are actually two devices for the price of one here: gibberish and hyperbole. Gibberish is speech or writing that doesn't have meaning or make sense. I worked as a nanny for three children and the oldest one loved to speak gibberish with me and simply make up words. We would sit together and have a "conversation," and she would just giggle. Many writers for children use gibberish or make up new words, including one of my favorites, A.A. Milne. Examples from his writing are "heffalump" and "woozle." Many of his made-up words and gibberish are now in our everyday language. I would say that Eeyore and Tigger were both gibberish. Now they're used to refer to a gloomy person or an upbeat and energetic person, respectively. Lewis Carroll actually cre-

ated the term "portmanteau word" to describe some of the made-up words from his stories, such as "frumious," which combines fuming and furious.

Hyperbole is also effective for adding silliness and humor to your writing. Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement or claim that is usually not taken seriously. I use hyperbole frequently in my WHY DO series, in which a question is asked and a silly answer that contains hyperbole is given before the real and serious answer. For example, in WHY DO TRACTORS HAVE SUCH BIG TIRES, for the title question, the first answer is, "Is it so they can crush the other machines on the farm?" This is answered with, "No, that's silly!" which is followed by the real answer. I have been told by many parents that their children love the silly answers so much that it keeps them listening for the real answers. Try using gibberish and hyperbole not just for fun but also to keep the reader or listener interested.

Frumious
(fuming + furious)

4. Repetition

The fourth literary device is literary device number four: repetition. Okay, maybe not repetition that is that obvious or redundant. But there's still something to be said for repeating things in writing for children. We have to remember that, as adults, we take it for granted that we've been exposed to things over and over again. For a child, however, everything is new, and they're discovering the world one experience at a time. To learn about the world around them, they look for clues in everything they do. Books and being read to are great allies for them in this journey of discovery, serving to expedite those clues for them. To help with expediting those clues even more, use repetition. There are so many examples of this. In looking to classics, think of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and *Little Red Riding Hood*. For every experience Goldilocks encounters, the

5 Literary Devices for Your Language Toolbox

(continued)

text repeats the beginning of each statement. Goldilocks says, "This porridge is too cold," then, "This porridge is too hot" and "This porridge is just right." This pattern repeats for everything she tries. Then when the bears return home, they repeat the same phrasing for each thing they discover, whether it be the porridge or the chair, etc., and then the baby bear adds a little to the line. One says, "Someone ate my porridge," and another says, "Someone ate my porridge," and then the baby bear says, "Someone ate my porridge, and it is all gone!" *Little Red Riding Hood* does something similar by repeating a phrase but with variations, such as, "The better to hear you with" or "The better to see you with." This brings us to another important point: Repetition doesn't have to involve repeating the exact phrase over and over again. Repetition can be used with little tweaks each time. The tweaks keep it interesting for the child, but the repetition reinforces a concept that they can learn and grow from while acquiring more clues needed to build their skills.

Someone ate my...
Someone ate my...
Someone ate my...

5. Rhyme

The fifth literary device can be bad or nice: rhyme. Rhyme is probably the most common literary device children's book writers utilize, and it can also be the most controversial. Whether to use it or not is highly debated. Most professionals and industry insiders will tell you to use it only if it adds something to the manuscript that you cannot achieve otherwise, and only if you are really good at it. To write in rhyme and do it well is extremely difficult. This is especially true if the whole book is in rhyme. It's not as difficult or controversial to use rhyme sparingly in your writing. I don't write entire books in rhyme, but I do sprinkle it into my manuscripts. I believe this provides interest and sparks creativity in a child's mind without potentially taking away from the manuscript with improper timing.

There are many benefits to writing in rhyme. First of all, children love it. Second, it aids in speech

and reading development like some of the other devices we've discussed. Third, if a book is written well in rhyme, it will grab the attention of an editor or agent and help you stand out from the dreaded slush pile. On the flip side of that, if you submit a manuscript in rhyme that's not done well, it will get rejected fast. Rhyme can also be seen as outdated or even clichéd.

This discussion so far though has been about books. If you're writing poetry for children, then I believe it is beneficial to use rhyme. Otherwise, it may be difficult to keep a little one's attention. If you write poetry or if you just really want to write a book in rhyme, I recommend studying rhyme that's well done in order to improve your own writing. In my opinion, some of the best examples of rhyme come from Shel Silverstein. I would encourage you to study his books and then challenge yourself with writing exercises to improve your rhyming ability.

Actually, writing exercises are great for learning all of these literary devices. In addition to practicing rhyming, try adding onomatopoeia to descriptive text or applying alliteration to series of things. I like to think up gibberish words and hyperbolic statements and see if I can fit them into my writing somewhere. Look through your manuscript for an interesting phrase that you could repeat with small differences. The best thing about these devices is that you can use one, all five (or six), or any combination of them in your writing. As mentioned before, my *SOUNDS FROM THE...* series uses onomatopoeia, alliteration, repetition and a little bit of rhyme all at once. There are no rules here. That's what makes it fun. And fun books are vital for children to help them make sense of the world they are newly discovering. The use of these techniques aids them in this discovery.

So if you would like to expand your manuscript, give these techniques a try. Not only will they enliven and improve your writing but they will also help it to capture and hold the attention of a young mind. //H//

rhyming:
friend or foe?

7 Key Questions for Translating Children’s Books

by Gabriella Aldeman

Translating children’s books is much more than changing the language of a story.

For a translation to succeed, it must capture the cadence, tone, rhythm, and emotions of a story. Furthermore, a translated edition of a children’s book needs to answer the same questions as the original did before it went to publication: Is the title catchy? Are the images enhancing the story? Does the content broach cultural subjects respectfully? And, most importantly, does it serve the reader?

Here’s a behind-the-scenes look at seven key questions that may impact the translation of a picture book or chapter book:



What is the book about and who is it for?

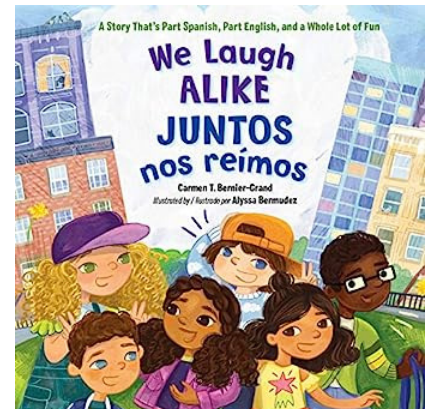
A translator needs to know the specific themes, hooks, objectives, and selling points of the story to make sure these are highlighted throughout the book. And it is essential for the translator to know who the ideal readers are. Is the book meant for children in other countries or children who go to school in the United States? This will dictate whether or not it’s necessary to explain cultural terms and traditions.



Should the title be translated literally or creatively?

Sometimes a literal, word-by-word translation of the title is important to establish a parallel vocabulary between the two languages, especially on a side-by-side bilingual picture book. Other times, changing the title may be the best choice to enhance the book’s marketability.

The bilingual picture book *WE LAUGH ALIKE/JUNTOS NOS REÍMOS* (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2021) provides a great example. The literal translation in Spanish of “we laugh alike” (*nos reímos parecido*) is not catchy and sounds more like saying “we laugh similarly.” While not a direct translation, the Spanish title *JUNTOS NOS REÍMOS*, which means “we laugh together,” is uplifting, catchy, and still remains true to the message of the book.



Cover of the bilingual picture book *WE LAUGH ALIKE/JUNTOS NOS REÍMOS*



Should the characters’ names be translated?

This decision will depend on the book’s objective and its intended audience. I recently translated a book in which the main character, Ellie, deals with her mother’s psychological trauma. We decided to translate her name to Elita for two reasons. 1) The name “Ellie” is hard to pronounce in Spanish, and 2) the purpose of the book is to help children in therapy, so we needed the reader to connect intimately with the main character. The Walt Disney Company had this in mind when they wanted readers to connect with their main comic strip character, Mickey Mouse, and translated his name into

7 Key Questions for Translating Children's Books

(continued)

many different languages. Nowadays, however, Hispanic children have no idea who El Ratón Miguelito is. Why? Disney stopped translating the name for publicity and marketing reasons. Mickey is no longer a character in a comic strip; he is now a world-famous brand, not unlike Pepsi or McDonald's.

With a translation, it's important to consider branding (marketing and publicity), authenticity (is your character representing a particular cultural background and thus should keep their name for reasons of authenticity?), ease of pronunciation, and the intended relationship between a book's characters and the readers.

4 Are any images lost in translation?

Picture books are special because their stories are told with text and images. That means the pictures also have to translate across cultures, so it's important for the translator to evaluate all images alongside the text. Are the images communicating the same thing in both languages?

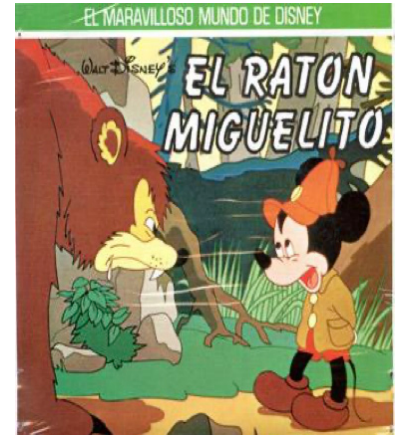
Furthermore, a translator should ensure that tags, banners, and other words found in the images are also translated. There is nothing more jarring than immersing yourself in a foreign-language picture book only to have a big banner read "Happy Birthday" or see a jar with the word "cookies" on it.

5 Are there any cultural sensitivities to consider?

It's important to identify any sensitive topics in the book, such as death, illness, divorce, relationships, customs, and family strife. The way these are experienced may differ from culture to culture. For example, the manner in which children in the United States address their elders or teachers may not be appropriate in another culture. And the way people in Latin America weave stories of monsters, ghosts, saints, and dead relatives into their daily lives could come across as scary to children in the United States.

A failure to consider cultural sensitivities can have dire consequences for a book.

Using an example from television, [a Peppa Pig episode](#) was banned in Australia as a result of different cultural sensitivities that went unaddressed. In one of the episodes, the beloved cartoon character, Peppa, befriends a spider and names him Mr. Skinnylegs. But spiders should not be considered cute or friendly in Australia, where there are many poisonous varieties, so that episode was cut from local stations.



EL RATÓN MIGUELITO (Walt Disney Pictures, all rights reserved)



LAS OLAS DE MAMÁ by Chandra Ghosh Ippen and Erick Ippen Jr. (Piplo Productions, 2022). Translated by Gabriella Aldeman and Luis Flores.

7 Key Questions for Translating Children's Books

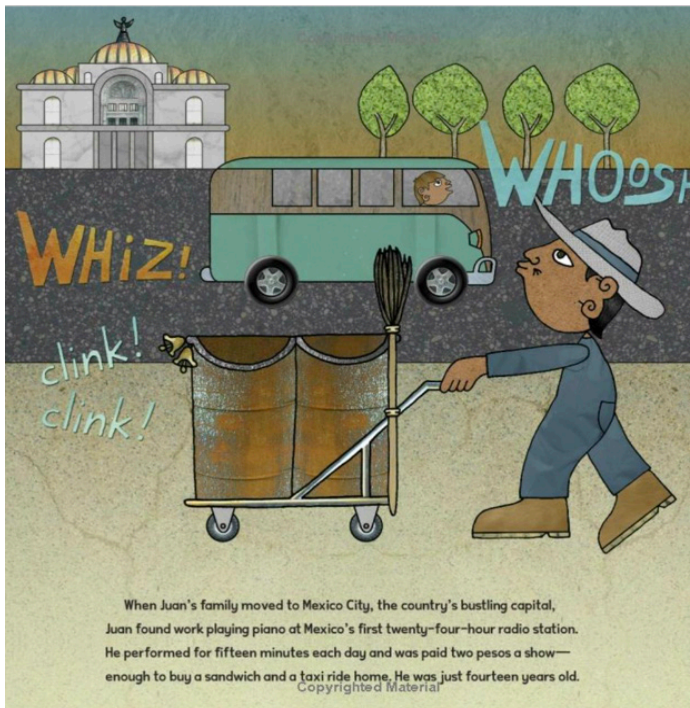
(continued)

6 Does the story need cultural padding?

As with sensitive topics, there are certain terms and traditions that may not translate from culture to culture. It's important to consider whether readers are multicultural or not regardless of the language they speak. There may be places in the text that need cultural padding, or a few extra words to explain terms that are not common in another culture. For example, a translator may need to describe the campfire treat known as s'mores or explain the concept of Share Day in school.

7 What to do about onomatopoeias, songs, jokes, regionalisms, slangs, puns, etc.?

Most of these tricky elements will lose their appeal if translated literally. These should be localized (replaced by something similar from the culture or language in translation) or transcreated (recreated for effect and similar readership experience).



ESQUIVEL! SPACE-AGE SOUND ARTIST written by Susan Wood and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2016). Translated by Carlos E. Calvo.

A translated book is reaching a new audience, and the new readers need to be considered every step of the way—from translation to marketing and publicity.

Translators can serve as cultural advisors and help translate promotional materials and communications. For a book in translation, the translator becomes another partner and collaborator in the telling of the story. //H//

Poems for Children and Thoughts on My Language

by Neera K. Badhwar

I dedicate these poems to my son, who was my muse when he was little. My poems capture what Tubby (as we called him then) was thinking—or what I thought he was thinking. For those who find parts of them obscure, I include some background below.

I occasionally violate the general rule that the words we use in children's stories and poems should be appropriate to the age of the children by using "big" words like "astronaut-land" ("Stars in the Sand") and "spate" ("An Aerial View"). This is because I think that, so long as a "big" word is easy to pronounce and easy to explain, it expands the child's vocabulary and gives her the thrill of mastering a new word. I still remember my thrill at learning the word "rescue" in the first story I read on my own, "Ted to the Rescue."

"But What Happens After That?"

When they reach the end of a story, children often ask, "And then what happens?" (Actually, even some of us adults ask that when we feel that some questions have been left unanswered!)

"An Aerial View"

The monsoons in India are a magical time, especially for kids. The heavy rains and strong winds create a fascinating spectacle as they

blow leaves, branches, and even clothes around (most people still dry their clothes on clotheslines outdoors and sometimes forget to bring them in on time). The monsoons also bring exciting displays of lightning and thunder. But what kids love most of all are the little streams and "lakes" created by the rain, in which they can sail their handmade paper boats.

"Does the Bear Know the Story?"

The story says that the bear jumps on the hare. But the book doesn't show the bear jumping. Is it because he doesn't know that he's supposed to jump?

"Stars in the Sand"

The kid imagines that stars are made up of the mica he sees in the sand and that it's the wind that blows the mica up to the skies. So when stars disappear under black clouds, the kid imagines that they are blown back to the beach and that he will be able to hold the stars (mica) in his hand.

Editor's note: On the following pages, Neera shares her poems, which four Mid-Atlantic illustrators have brought to life. Enjoy this collaboration between written and visual languages!

But What Happens After That?

Neera K. Badhwar

All the stories
We read or hear
Begin at the beginning
And reach the middle halfway.
But often the end
Which means so much more
Comes about the day before.
What I mean is:
The story says
The lion runs away
From the hunter's snare
Thanks to the mouse
Who nibbles the net
Mouse goes to her house,
Lion goes to his lair,
But what happens after that?
I'll take a bet
Nobody knows
Whether they become
Friends or foes.

An Aerial View

Neera K. Badhwar

Today the wind came
Bringing clouds
That turned into rain
On my window pane.
Afterwards
When I came out
And jumped a jump
And hopped about



I sat on the stump
Of my fav'rite tree,
Pressed the levers
(It's a plane, you see)
And flew into the sky
From where I could spy
Hundreds of rivers
Flowing on the ground,
Into an ocean
From miles around,
Lakes in motion,
And streams and falls,
Rivers in spate
About my gate.



And the rain had
Made them all.






Does the Bear Know the Story?

Neera K. Badhwar

This is a picture
Of a growly bear
Crouching in his lair.
On the facing page
You can see the rump
Of a round little hare.
Now the story says,
“The Bear Jumped on the Hare”
But I’ve been waiting,
And WAI -- TING
For the bear to jump.



I’ve been quiet as a mouse
In it’s little hole-house,
I’ve closed my eyes
Not once but twice,
I’ve held my breath,
I’ve held my nose,
But he just sits there
In the same old pose.
Do you suppose
This is because
He doesn’t know
How the story goes?

Stars in the Sand

Neera K. Badhwar

Every time the wind blows
It takes mica-filled sand
To astronaut-land,
And deposits in rows,
In piles and in heaps,
Its crystalline load,
'Cross the night-sky's sweep.
Every time it thunders
And some stars disappear
The sky's black cloak under,
I know they'll appear
On the morning beach
As mica in the sand,
Well within my reach,
And stars in my hand
I will hold.



Learn how picture books can build children's language skills

"5 Ways To Use Picture Books To Build Kids' Language Skills" by Rebecca Eisenberg

"While reading a book to your child, you can help facilitate specific language concepts such as expanding vocabulary, modeling appropriate social language, improving auditory comprehension, developing literacy concepts, and targeting sequencing." <https://www.readbrightly.com/how-to-use-picture-books-to-build-kids-language-skills/>

Find dual-language children's books

"10 Dual-language Children's Books to Bring Out Your Inner Kid" by Meredith Kreisa

"A lot of language students are learning a language by reading books, and children's books are one of the best options out there—more specifically, dual-language children's books. Here are our top 10 bilingual children's books to help you learn like a kid!" https://www.fluentu.com/blog/dual-language-childrens-books/#toc_4

Find multilingual books for kids

"Search collection" feature by Diverse BookFinder

Find dual- and multi-language books or books that include non-English words from Diverse BookFinder's summaries of 1,100+ books across languages and cultures. [https://diversebookfinder.org/books/?dbf-search=1&fq\[\]=-content%3A%22Bi%2Fmultilingual%22](https://diversebookfinder.org/books/?dbf-search=1&fq[]=-content%3A%22Bi%2Fmultilingual%22)

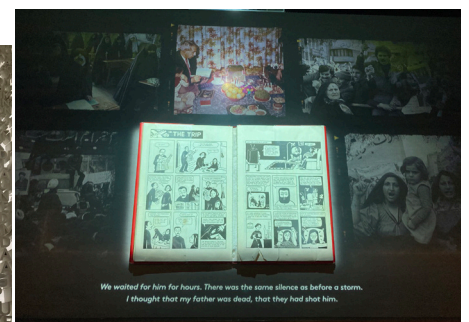
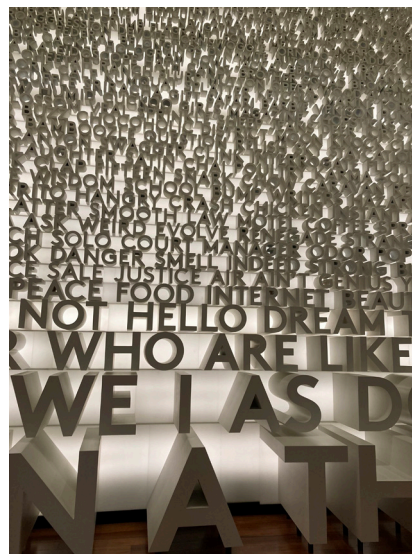
Read advice on writing a novel in verse

"The Two Pieces of Advice that Made Writing A Verse Novel Seem Possible" by Kate Hillyer

"Though I have written poetry in the past, novels in verse always seemed mysterious to me, almost as much so as the work of those sorcerer illustrators ... How do you even begin a novel in verse?" <https://thewingedpen.com/2018/11/27/advice-verse-novels/>

Visit a DC museum dedicated to words and language

"Planet Word is the only museum in the country dedicated to renewing and inspiring a love of words and language. Located in the historic Franklin School on the corner of 13th and K Streets in downtown D.C., Planet Word opened in 2020 as a new kind of interactive and self-guided museum. Using the museum's state-of-the-art technology, visitors determine their experience through their own words and choices. Planet Word is a bold and imaginative response to the life-long importance of literacy and to the challenge of growing a love of language." <https://planetwordmuseum.org/>



So Matilda's strong young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voices of all those authors who had sent their books out into the world like ships on the sea.

Fine-tune making word choices

"Word Choices: Writing Picture Books that Soar" by Leslie Helakoski and Darcy Pattison

"Choosing words carefully can do more than define. Is your story lulling a child to sleep? Or helping them zoom and zip? ... Word choice—even the sound of the words—can make the difference between a picture book manuscript that soars and one that stays grounded." <https://www.highlightsfoundation.org/2017/04/03/word-choices-writing-picture-books-that-soar/>

Learn poetic techniques to enhance your writing

Lyrical Language Lab by Renée M. LaTulippe

"Picture books are meant to be read aloud. Using poetic techniques in your prose will help you create read-aloud language that will transport children (and their parents) into a world of imagination – in as few words as possible." <https://www.reneelatulippe.com/lyrical-language-lab/>

Practice how to recite poetry and read picture books aloud to an audience

"Top 5 Tips for Poetry Performance: Doing Poetry Right" by Renee M. LaTulippe

Tips on how to perform poetry to an audience that also work for conveying rhythm when reading picture books aloud. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cca7SRzsbBw&ab_channel=NoWaterRiver

Learn how children's books can support speech language development

"100+ Children's Books for Speech-Language Development" by Kidmunicate

"The speech and language pathologists at Kidmunicate have compiled a growing list of 100+ children's books for speech language development. We arranged the list based on sounds. So if your pre-schooler or school age child is having a problem producing a particular sound, then choose a book from that sound category and emphasize the sound." <https://kidmunicate.com/100-childrens-books-for-speech-language-development/>

Find rhyming words

RhymeZone by Datamuse

"A language arts reference tool and comprehensive search engine for words. Includes the functions of a rhyming dictionary, thesaurus, and spelling checker." <https://www.rhymezone.com/>

Find words to fit different types of rhymes

Rhymer by WriteExpress LLC

"Rhymer is a wordsmith's dream come true for when just any word won't do. Find rhyming words with six types of rhymes: 1. End Rhymes (blue/shoe). 2. Last-Syllable Rhymes (timber/harbor). 3. Double Rhymes (conviction/prediction). 4. Triple Rhymes (transportation/dissertation). 5. Beginning Rhymes (physics/fizzle). 6. First-Syllable Rhymes (carrot/caring)." <https://rhymer.com/>

Learn kid-friendly definitions of words

Student Dictionary for Kids by Merriam-Webster

"Search an online dictionary written specifically for young students. Kid-friendly meanings from the reference experts at Merriam-Webster help students build and master vocabulary." <https://www.merriam-webster.com/kids>

ONGOING

Mid-Atlantic Craft Intensives (Call for Proposals)

Do you have an idea for a talk, intensive, webinar or panel? The Mid-Atlantic region is seeking ideas and speakers for three-hour craft intensives to be scheduled for the fall. The format is a deep dive into craft with time for attendees to do exercises, share their work, and receive feedback. For more information and to submit an idea, see the "Call for Proposals" form [here](#).

JULY

Arlington, VA First Local Author Fair (Call for Entries)

Deadline to submit an application: July 23, 2023. Book submission deadline: July 28, 2023. Notification of acceptance: September 5, 2023. Fair dates: November 4-5, 2023

Arlington, VA public libraries has put out a call for entries for their first Local Author Fair. Eligible authors are those living in the DC Metro service area who have an Arlington Public Library card. For more information, visit <https://library.arlingtonva.us/2023/06/02/local-author-fair-call-for-entries/>

Mid-Atlantic Summer Peer Critique Event

July 26, 2023, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (*free virtual event, register in advance*)

Participants submit either the first ten pages of a novel or a complete picture book manuscript in advance of the event. Writers and writer/illustrators are grouped by the genre of the work submitted. <https://www.scbwi.org/events/summer-peer-critique-event>

AUGUST

National Book Festival

August 12, 2023, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (*free in-person and virtual event*)

The 23rd annual Library of Congress National Book Festival will be held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, August 12, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (doors open at 8:30 a.m.). The event is free and open to the public. A selection of programs will be livestreamed online and videos of all programs will be available shortly after the festival. <https://www.loc.gov/events/2023-national-book-festival/about-this-event/>

Starting with Heart: Centering Your Writing on an Emotional Response

August 15, 2023, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (*paid virtual event, register in advance*)

Author Lisa Rogers will talk about starting with a deeply felt emotion and how to keep that emotion top of mind during the entire writing process. The event will be recorded and available to those who registered for 30 days after the live event. <https://www.scbwi.org/events/starting-with-heart-centering-your-writing-on-an-emotional-response>

SEPTEMBER

Plot, Page-Turns, and Pith: All About Picture Book Pacing

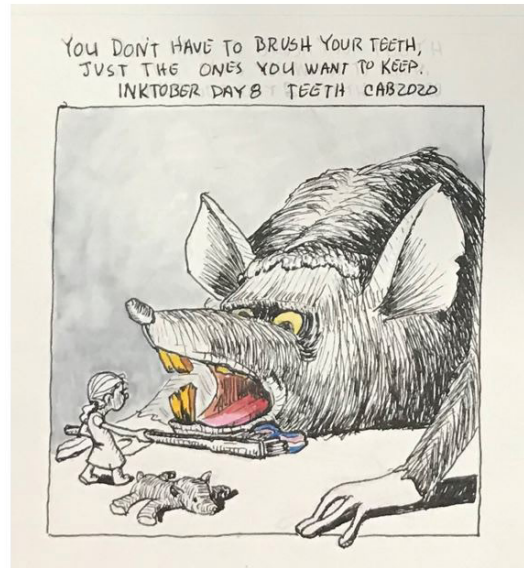
September 12, 2023, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (*paid virtual event; register in advance*)

Sylvie Frank, Executive Editor at Disney Hyperion and head of the picture book program, will take a deep dive into a mentor text to examine character, plot, design, and other elements that make up a well-paced book. <https://www.scbwi.org/events/plot-page-turns-and-pith-all-about-picture-book-pacing>

MOOD BOARD

Escondida y albergada *Hidden, huddled,*
 entre otras de su especie, *among others of its kind,*
 vista únicamente por muy pocos, *only a handful of humans*
 una secoya de la costa *have ever glimpsed it:*
 alta se yergue *a coast redwood towers*
 por sobre cada uno *above every single one of*
 de los tres millones *the three trillion living trees*
 de árboles vivientes *on planet Earth.*
 del planeta Tierra.

- Excerpts from VERDE FRESCO: ÁRBOLES ASOMBROSOS Y EXTRAORDINARIOS / COOL GREEN: AMAZING, REMARKABLE TREES by Lulu Delacre, Candlewick (2023)



CHARL ANNE BREW



HELEN DEASY

If librarians were honest,
 they wouldn't smile, or act
 welcoming. They would say,
You need to be careful. Here
be monsters. They would say,
These rooms house heathens
and heretics, murderers and
maniacs, the deluded, desperate,
and dissolute.

...

If librarians were honest,
 they would say, *No one*
spends time here without being
changed. Maybe you should
go home. While you still can.

JOE MILLS