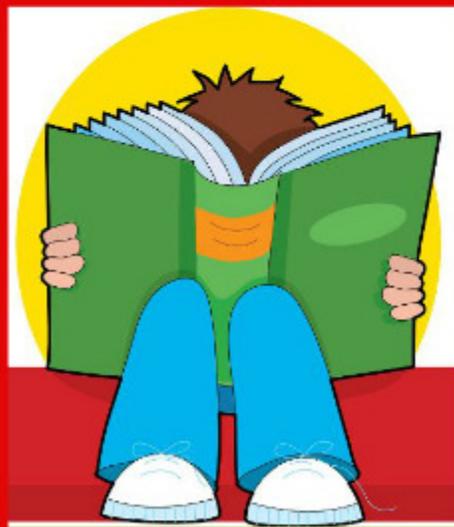


**WORKING
WITH A
CHILDREN'S
GHOSTWRITER**



Karen Cioffi, Children's Writer

Working with a Children's Ghostwriter - The Process

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Working with a Children's Ghostwriter

The Process

It's easy to understand that the idea of having a children's book ghostwritten can be a somewhat nerve-wrecking. You'll no doubt have a number of questions:

- Does the ghostwriter know what she's doing?
- Is she qualified? Is she a skilled writer?
- Does she know the genre you want a book in?
- Is she reasonably priced?
- How long will it take?
- Will she listen to my input?
- Will it be my story?
- And, so on and so on

So, the first thing in the client/ghostwriter process is for you to do your homework. Research ghostwriters who write in the genre you're interested in.

Check out her website, including the Testimonials Page.

Other important aspects to pay attention to: Is the site active? Is there helpful information on it? Is the writer's contact information easy to find?

You should even check the copyright date at the bottom of the site.

Next, if you find someone you're interested in, ask for a phone consult. Or, if you prefer, ask for an email consult. Then ask for writing samples.

Once you get a feel for the writer and you think she's the real deal, and you've agreed upon the fee, and you're ready to work with her, ask what the next step is. It's usually a freelance writing agreement.

The Freelance Writing Agreement.

Interestingly, some clients prefer an agreement, while others could care less. The freelance writing agreement will detail all that's involved in the process. It'll list the price, the payment schedule, the timeline, and other items.

Note: If a freelance agreement isn't used, I make sure all the details are listed in an email. It's essential that the client knows what to expect.

So, once all the agreement details are completed, what's it actually like to work with a children's ghostwriter?

As I can only speak for my own business, I'll explain how my process works.

The first thing is to discuss all the details of the story.

I'll ask for any ideas, notes, outlines, drafts, or other content the client may have. We'll also discuss what type of story is wanted: funny, a mystery, an adventure, a fantasy, or other. We'll discuss the targeted audience age and whether it's to be a picture book, a chapter book, or a middle grade.

Some clients are very particular about the character names, so that may also be discussed.

It's important the writer knows exactly what the client wants.

The publishing method.

Another important aspect to be discussed is the publishing method to be used.

If a client is going the traditional route (submitting to publishers and agents), the word count and other aspects of the story must adhere to current publishing standards.

If a client is going the self-publishing route, there's more flexibility. This does not mean you can produce a substandard product. It means for example, if you want a picture book of around 1500 words, it's your prerogative.

I've had a client who said he was self-publishing, but after the story was complete, decided to submit it to publishers.

The problem is the word count was too long for a picture book and too short for a chapter book. These are the types of hiccups that can arise when the client isn't sure what he wants.

The beginning of the story.

Once the initial payment to begin is received, I start writing the story based on the information I have.

I keep the client in the loop by sending her drafts of the story as I go along. As I send the story, I wait for the client's input. If it's good to go, I move forward. If changes are requested, I make the changes.

When the client requests changes, if they are completely inappropriate for the genre, age group, or other, I'll bring it to his attention and suggest the changes be re-thought.

An example of this: In one story, the client wanted the young protagonist and her friend to play in the street. For the age group, this was completely inappropriate. You cannot suggest dangerous behavior in a young children's story.

The middle.

As the story progresses, the client becomes more familiar with my writing style and the tone of the story. At this point she knows whether it's the story she's envisioned. And, the process continues. I write and then submit what I've done for approval or suggestions.

I revise as we go along.

The end.

Once the full manuscript is completed, the client will decide if any changes are needed. Once revisions are made, if needed, it's on to editing and proofing.

Then I submit a final manuscript to the client.

Extras.

When I first started ghostwriting children's books, the end was the end of it.

But, as time passed, more and more clients requested additional services, such as: back cover copy, author bio content, formatting the manuscript for submissions, cover letters, query letters, and even basic marketing help.

I've even done manuscript to illustrations coordination for a couple of clients. This process includes checking the illustrations for errors.

So, my services also includes these elements to help clients achieve their dream of being an author.

That's about it.

Keep in mind that every writer may have her own process and particulars, but this should give you a general idea of what to expect when working with a children's ghostwriter.

If you're thinking of hiring a children's ghostwriter and have questions or would like to schedule a free 15 minute consultation to discuss your project, give me a call at **347-834-6700**.

Or, shoot me an email at: kcioffiventrice@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you.

