

Questions and Answers on How Picture Books Are Made

How many award-winning children's picture books has Mr. Sommer written?

Mr. Sommer has written 20 award-winning children's picture books.

What is Mr. Sommer's goal in writing children's books?

Mr. Sommer has a strong desire to help children become successful. With that as his objective, he tries to think of interesting stories that are fun to read and at the same time teach valuable lessons.

Mr. Sommer says, "One of the important lessons in life is to following the Golden Rule". What is the Golden Rule?

The Golden Rule states: "Do to others what you want them to do to you."

What is Mr. Sommer's aim in trying to teach children the important principle of the Golden Rule?

Mr. Sommer's aim is to come up with an interesting story showing the benefits of doing unto others as you would want them to do to you.

Mr. Sommer wrote the book, *Tied Up In Knots*, to teach the benefits of the Golden Rule. Where did he get his idea for this story?

Mr. Sommer got his idea from his extensive filing system. He had filed a wordless picture away in 1975 in case that someday he might use it. Many years later, this wordless picture became an award-winning story.

What is the main theme of *Tied Up In Knots*?

The main theme is: sharing brings happiness.

Some children and even adults are ashamed of who they are or the way they look, the color of their skin, their family, their background—they want to be different. What book did Mr. Sommer write to teach that we shouldn't be ashamed of who we are or the way we look?

*Mr. Sommer wrote the story of: *If Only I Were....* It's a story of Missy the mouse. Missy is a wee little mouse who is always wishing to be something else, for then she thinks all her troubles would be gone. When her wishes come true, she discovers that troubles follow her no matter what she is or does. She finally learns to be happy being just who she really is—a wee little mouse.*

What's one of the most important lessons for children to learn to become successful?

One of the most important lessons for children to learn to become successful is to learn to listen to their parents.

What story did Mr. Sommer write to show the importance of listening to parents?

*The book Mr. Sommer wrote is *Proud Rooster*.*

What happened in this story?

The only one Proud Rooster would listen to was himself, and it got him in lots of trouble.

What is pride?

There's good pride, and there's bad pride. Good pride is not being ashamed of who we are. Bad pride is when you don't listen to your parents, or teachers, or anyone except yourself.

What is one of the important lessons Mr. Sommer stresses concerning parents and teachers?

Learn to listen to your parents and teachers.

How can children avoid many problems in life?

Children can avoid many problems in life by listening to their parents. Children need to learn that no one loves them more than their parents.

Once Mr. Sommer gets an idea for a story, what does he do?

Once Mr. Sommer gets an idea, he either writes the story on a sheet of paper or types it into his computer.

What is Mr. Sommer's response when he is asked, "Is writing a book easy?"

Mr. Sommer says, "No! No! No!" That's just the beginning. I read and correct. Read and correct some more. I also have others read the manuscript and ask them to critique it very earnestly—I encourage them to correct without hesitation what I've written.

After Mr. Sommer is through with his corrections, what does he do?

Mr. Sommer sends his manuscript to a professional proofreader who charges him for her service.

Is Mr. Sommer frustrated because of corrections from a professional proofreader?

Definitely not. Mr. Sommer is very happy with the corrections.

Why do you think Mr. Sommer is so happy with receiving corrections?

Mr. Sommer is happy with these corrections because he wants his writing to be at its best. Notice that all his 20 children's books and read-alongs have won The Teacher's Choice AwardTM, Benjamin Franklin Award, ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award, and iParenting Media Award.

What does Mr. Sommer say that students should do if they want to become successful authors or good writers?

Mr. Sommer says students should welcome corrections and look at them so they can learn.

What does Mr. Sommer say students should do when teachers correct their papers?

Mr. Sommer says, "If you want to become a successful writer, the next time the teacher corrects your paper, you should thank the teacher."

What does Mr. Sommer say about English and grammar?

*Mr. Sommer says that an important issue to him is that the books **MUST** use proper English and grammar.*

After Mr. Sommer finds a prospective artist, what is one of the most important things he looks for?

Mr. Sommer wants the artist to be teachable.

How does Mr. Sommer work with the artist?

Mr. Sommer first finds a good artist. Then he tells the artist what kind of pictures he wants. After that the artist draws a rough sketch. The artist then shows the rough sketches and Mr. Sommer offers his suggestions. Then the artist draws accurate sketches. When the sketches are acceptable, the artist draws the full-color pictures.

What does Mr. Sommer say to those who may have a natural gift in drawing art?

Mr. Sommer says that's it's important to develop the gift by reading books on how to become a better artist. It's also important for those who have this natural gift of drawing art to learn, listen, and develop their craft.

How do they get the colored pictures into the computer?

The finished art is place into a scanner. The scanner then converts the colored picture into a digital image into the computer.

What are some of the things that can be done by the computer?

With the aid of the computer they can add color, reduce or enlarge images, add images, make corrections in the artwork, and do many other things.

After the book is completed on the computer, then how is the book sent to the printer?

A PDF (portable document format) file is made and sent to the printing company.

What are the primary colors the printers use to print colored pictures?

The primary colors are CMYK. C—cyan—blue, M—magenta—reddish pink, Y—yellow, and K—black.

What does the printer do with the PDF file?

The printer makes four plates, one for each of the four primary colors.

How does the printing press know how much color to print?

On the plate are large and small, even microscopic, dots. The size of the dots determines how much ink will be placed on the paper.

How many colors can be made with these four colors?

Every imaginable color can be made from these four colors.

What is a “signature” for a book?

A signature is a folded sheet that becomes one unit of a book.

What is a common page signature for picture books?

The common signature for picture books is 16 pages. One finds picture books usually have 32 or 48 pages.

After the sheets are folded into signatures, what is done with the signatures?

The signatures are bound together, and then a soft or hard cover is attached.

What was Mr. Sommer’s last bit of advice to becoming successful?

Mr. Sommer’s last bit of advice to becoming successful is, “Listen and work hard.”