

# **How To Kit**



**Writing and  
Publishing  
Children's Books!**



## Celebrate literacy in the NWT

# Other *How to Kits* & Literacy Activities

This *How to Kit* was developed to help organizations celebrate NWT Literacy Week. We would like to thank to Gayla Meredith for her contributions to this kit. This is one in a series of *How to Kits* available to download on the NWT Literacy Council website at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca).

### **How to Kits developed to date:**

- 1-2-3 Rhyme With Me
- Book Making
- Books in the Home
- Community Book Swap
- Culture and Traditions
- Election
- Environmental Print Games
- Facilitating a Workshop
- Family Literacy Activities Night
- Family Reading Party
- Games Night
- “Get Caught Reading” and other literacy promotion ideas
- Involving Families in Children’s Learning
- Literacy Activities for Holidays – Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, Birthdays
- Literacy Games for Adults
- Literacy Treasure Hunt
- Puppet Making
- Pyjamas and Book Party
- Readers Theatre
- Reading Circles and Story Extenders
- Scattergories
- Storytime on the Radio
- Talking Books
- Writing Contest
- Love You Forever
- Picture and Word Bingos
- Literacy Games
- Read for 15 Community Activities
- Writing and Publishing Children’s Books

### **Other activities**

- Literacy Bingos
  - Reading Bingo
  - Introduction Bingo
  - Picture Bingo
  - Word Bingo
  - Plain Language Bingo
- Memory Game
- Learning Activities Cards
- Baby Book Project
- My Family Booklet
- On the Right Track

Please feel free to photocopy and use these activities in your programs and adapt them to meet your needs.

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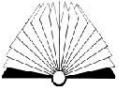
# **Writing and Publishing Children's Books!**

Interested in a new and exciting way to encourage story writing and bookmaking in the classroom or in your community? In this kit, you will find:

- Tips to get you started.
  - Helpful Writing Techniques.
  - Trafford On-demand Publishing Information.
  - Information about the NWT Literacy Council's **WRITE ON!**™ bursary program for class or group book projects.
  - An example book – *Diamond Fever* (for elementary schools only). You can order *Diamond Fever* from the Yellowknife Book Cellar or through the Yellowknife Education District No. 1.



Student created  
books. Photo  
courtesy of Gayla  
Meredith



## Tips to Get You Started

Imagine being a published author! Writing a book is a big project. It is more fun when a group of people get together to write a book. You can do this project with your students, adult learners, family literacy group, parents, etc. And you can write in any language!

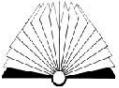
### **Why write a book with your students or adult learners?**

- Writing a book is an excellent activity for team building and unifying the class. It encourages students to work together towards a common goal.
- It develops cooperative group skills.
- Students develop self-confidence in their abilities and come to see themselves as writers.
- Writing stories helps teach the writing process.
- All contributions are valued and help to develop the finished product.
- Participating in this activity will produce a book everyone will be proud of.

### **How can you use this in your program?**

- Integrate story writing into content areas and/or thematic units.
- Use new concepts learned in Math, Social Studies, Science, etc. to enhance story development.





### How you can use this idea with other people in your community?

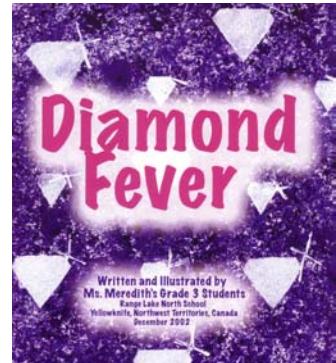
Writing a book is not limited to students or adult learners. You can write a book with Elders or a family literacy group. All you need is the desire to write a book and someone to guide you through the process. You can get your book published through an on-line publishing company for reasonable fees. This is a wonderful opportunity to create Aboriginal language books for your community!

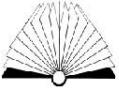
#### Example of book project: *Diamond Fever*

Trafford Publishing published *Diamond Fever* in June 2005. Ms. Meredith's grade 3 students from Range Lake School in Yellowknife wrote and illustrated the book.

The class worked hard to complete this book during the 2002-03 school year. *Diamond Fever* was the combined effort of all students in the class. With Ms. Meredith's guidance the students wrote and illustrated a wonderful book about a young boy, Dylan, and his search for diamonds in the north.

This book was published 'on-demand' in cooperation with Trafford Publishing. On-demand publishing is a unique service that makes a book available for sale to the public. On-demand publishing means the publishing company only publishes the amount that you need. More information is





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attached about Trafford Publishing and on-demand publishing.

Range Lake North School receives the royalties from the books that are sold. The money is used to support other whole class book-making projects.

### **Publishing *Diamond Fever***

It only took several months to write and illustrate the book, *Diamond Fever*. However, it took much longer for Ms. Meredith to find a publishing company that would publish their book.

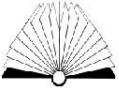
Ms. Meredith researched Trafford Publishing products and services and found it to be a credible and professional organization that met its obligations and produced quality products.

She secured funding and signed a contract with Trafford Publishing.

### **Steps to get your book published with Trafford Publishing**

**Step One:** You must complete a final edit of the book, ('mock-up' copy of book, original illustrations). Trafford requires that a 'mock-up' of the book be provided for their graphic designers to follow. Digital copies of the illustrations can be provided, but are not necessary. They will scan your originals and prepare them as needed.





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**Note:** Trafford has a list of questions that they ask you to complete. This provides details of your book, the authors and wording for promotional packages and the website. They will ask you for exact wording. It is important to edit your work carefully before submitting it, as Trafford does not edit for spelling, grammar or punctuation. Whatever you submit will be used ‘as is’.

**Step Two:** Trafford sends a proof to you for review. They will make any changes you want.

**Step Three:** Trafford will make any changes you need and then send a second proof for you to review and sign off.

**Step Four:** Trafford sends the books and promotional material to you within a few weeks.

The whole process takes only six to eight weeks.

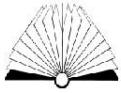
### Promotion of *Diamond Fever*

You can promote your book in a variety of ways. Here are some ways that Ms. Meredith’s Grade 3 class promoted *Diamond Fever*.

- **Awareness Campaign:**

- The class put an order form for the book in the school’s monthly newsletter.
- They set up a table to show their book and take orders at a local picnic.
- They put up a display of the original work at the NWT Chamber of Mines office.





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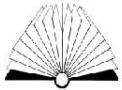
- They put up posters, wrote a press release, and put an ad on the local TV Guide channel.
- **Authors' Pre-Launch Pizza Party and Book Signing:**  
Students from the class were brought together to sign books and prepare for the book launch.
- **Book Launch:** Students read the book and were presented with a complimentary copy of their book, certificates and a 'goodie bag' of items from the School District.
- **Book Signing:** The students signed books at the Yellowknife Book Cellar.

**Note:** The book generated a great deal of interest for a number of reasons. It had an interesting storyline and beautiful illustrations. The story was focused on the north, based on a topic of local and national interest. The entire project was unique -it was created as a class project and royalties would end up supporting literacy projects at the school.

### Other Useful Tips

- Have parents/guardians or participants sign copyright forms before starting the project. Keep these in a safe place.
- Find funding to help with the project from local groups and organizations.
- Be sure to give yourself enough time so you do not have the pressure and added stress of meeting 'deadlines'.
- Set your launch date for NWT Literacy Week or Family Literacy Day.
- Start your project early in the school year so you will have time to follow it through.

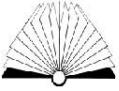




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- If you complete the project earlier than anticipated, you can use the rest of the year for Advance Sales. This will give you time to raise funds and purchase special gifts for your authors for presentation at the book launch.





## Helpful Writing Techniques



### Titles

- Keep your titles short and snappy. A good general rule is to keep your titles from one to three words, no more than five.
- A good title gives the reader a hint of what the story is about.
- The title is your first chance to grab the attention of a reader.
- Has your title been used? Check with Books in Print (at your library), or do a search on [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)

### Word Choice

Be specific. Choose colorful, detailed words that paint pictures. Instead of using a general word like "flower", be specific.

Which type of flower? A rose? A daffodil? A petunia? For example, which sentence do you like better?

Cute, bright,  
lovable, silly,  
fun, heroic,  
hilarious, spunky

1. "Some rabbits lived with their relative under a tree,"
2. "Once upon a time there were four little rabbits and their names were- Flopsy, Mopsy, Cottontail, and Peter. They lived with their mother underneath a very big fir-tree."





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### Description

- Use the five senses.
- Avoid wordiness. Keep your sentences short.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- And keep your writing active by using lots of verbs

### The Hook



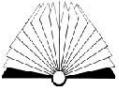
- Jump right in. You need to grab your reader's attention from the very beginning, or he/she may not keep reading.
- Introduce your main character, a setting, and a problem, and then keep your story moving.
- Use dialogue. Young readers like lots of dialogue, so get your characters talking

### Characters



- Use active characters.
- Good main characters are likable but not perfect.
- Show your character's personality by repeating gestures and mannerisms or speech or dress.
- Pick character names with care. A reader can tell a lot about a character just by his name. Nicknames are





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especially good. To help your readers keep your characters straight don't use names that are too similar in spelling or sound. Some good sources for names: baby books, phone books for last names.

Harold, Lucy,  
Jo-Jo, Moon,  
Little Tree,  
Kindred

### Plotting Plots

To outline or not to outline, that is the question. Some writers outline their stories before they begin. Other writers start writing with no idea how it will end until they get to the ending. There is no "right" way.

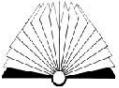
Have a strong plot. The more tension there is in a story, the stronger the story. Give your character a problem right from the start, add some complications along the way, get him to solve the problem, and you have a plot.



### Endings

Endings need to wrap everything up. Endings should leave the reader feeling satisfied. A good way to learn what makes an ending work is to take a big stack of books and read only the endings. Just read the last lines or the last paragraphs. After awhile you will get a feel for how a story should end.





### Point Of View

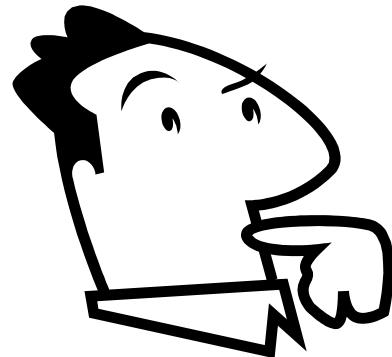
Generally younger children's books are written with a single point of view. This means that the story is told through the eyes and thoughts of the main character.

Most books for young readers are written in the third person (he said, she said.) A few are written in the first person. (I said.) This is hard when the main character is a child.

### Revision

Here are some things to ask yourself while you are revising:

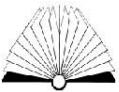
- Have you chosen each word carefully?
- Is your title catchy?
- Does your beginning hook the reader?
- Is there a problem or goal in the beginning of your story?
- Are your characters well-developed?
- Is there plenty of dialogue?
- Does your main character solve the problem?
- Is the solution believable?
- Is the ending satisfying



(adapted from *Bethany Roberts' Writing for Children Workshop: Writing Tips on Writing for Children*

[http://www.bethanyroberts.com/writing\\_for\\_children\\_tips.htm#titles](http://www.bethanyroberts.com/writing_for_children_tips.htm#titles) )





## Trafford Publishing [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)

### Why Consider a Print-On-Demand Publisher?

Trafford Publishing provides a cost effective and time efficient option for teachers or other people interested in publishing a book. Trafford Publishing provides a multitude of services, which save time and money. They also provide support and expertise to ensure that your book meets industry standards.

Make sure you carefully read all the details related to your publishing package and Trafford's services. Trafford provides detailed information about their Print-On-Demand publishing services online @ [www.trafford.com](http://www.trafford.com)

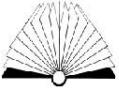
### What does Trafford Publishing Provide?

- Promotion material like bookmarks, postcards and posters
- Promotion of the book through the company announcements to the book industry and a webpage
- Royalties to your school or organization. The company issues royalty cheques quarterly based on books sold at the retail price.
- You can buy additional books at the 'print cost' price for fundraising purposes.

### Other benefits:

- Authors control the book design, appearance and retail price.
- You keep your copyright, and all other marketing rights.





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- Trafford handles publishing's administrative and legal requirements.
- Choose between six publishing packages.-

### Trafford's Support Personnel

- Trafford assigns a support person to work with you throughout the project.
- A Toll Free number is available.

### Proofs and Sign Off

- You receive a 'proof copy' of the book for final approval. Review your book at this time to ensure everything is exactly as you want it. .
- When you are satisfied with the book complete a 'Sign Off' form and send it to Trafford.
- They will print your complimentary books with any additional purchases you might wish to make. In addition, Trafford will prepare your promotional material and webpage.
- The books, postcards, posters and bookmarks arrive about three weeks after the 'Sign Off.'
- The *Diamond Fever* webpage was up and running about four weeks after 'Sign Off'.

*The details and timelines provided here are based on the publication of Diamond Fever.*

### Costs

- The publishing packages run between \$799.00 for





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the most basic service and \$2549.00 for more advanced services. Depending on the package, you will receive between 10 and 40 books. If you need more copies, you can order any quantity at any time, and pay the print cost and a discount based on how many you buy.

- Ms. Meredith's class paid \$1500 to have their book published.

### **Additional Costs for Consideration**

The Publishing Package cost covers all your publishing expenses. You may need other funds for:

- Special paint, tools and/or paper for illustrations (not required)
- Purchase of additional books
- Purchase of additional promotional material
- Postage for your additional purchases
- Purchase of additional advertising packages
- Promotional items and expenses for your book launch activities





## **WRITE ON!™ Bursary Program**

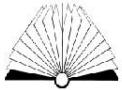


The NWT Literacy Council in partnership with Gayla Meredith is sponsoring the **WRITE ON!™** bursary program. We have two bursaries of \$1500 to give to book projects. The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2006. Groups must follow the guidelines to be considered for a bursary.

### **Guidelines to Applying for the Bursary**

- The project must be completed as a whole class or group project. Small groups of students can work on different parts of the books. The teacher or facilitator guides the writing and illustrating processes, however students or participants must complete the work themselves.
- The story must have Northern content.
- Do not use brand names, business and corporate names, and references to trademarked items.
- The book is to be a creative story. The story can include both English and another language.
- Page size is limited to a maximum of 8" wide x 10" high. (no landscape layouts)
- The maximum length of the book is 20 pages.
- You must provide us with a mock up of the book with both text and illustrations. Please include the title, dedication, summary and a note about the authors.
- You must provide us with a brief description of your book project. Why did you decide to write a book? Who are the authors? How did you decide the topic of your book? Who





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did the illustrations? How long did it take you to write and illustrate the book?

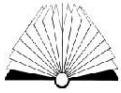
### Illustration Guidelines:

- Illustrations may fill all or part of the page.
- Work must be original and student created.
- You are not allowed to use computer generated graphics or templates.
- Make the illustrations large, to ensure clear reproduction.
- Do not use
  - large areas of dark colours and/or black
  - neon or metallic colours
  - sparkles or plasticine
  - flaps or pop-ups.
- You will need to separate text and original art work.
- Do not write on original artwork.

### Selection

- We will review entries that clearly meet all guidelines.
- Only two submissions will receive funding.
- Creativity, illustration, layout, design and quality of content will be the basis for bursary selection.
- If you are selected for a bursary you will be responsible for getting your book published with Trafford Publishing.
- The NWT Literacy Council would like 5 copies of your book and the option to buy more at the print cost.





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### Promotion

The NWT Literacy Council will promote your book through the NWT Literacy Council's newsletter and website.

You must enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want your submission returned.

### **Submit Entries to:**

**WRITE ON!™** Bursary Program

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