



EZRA JACK KEATS BOOKMAKING

Writing a Children's Book: *Teaching Artist, [Katie Yamasaki](#)**

[Tutorial 1 of 3](#) - approx. 23 minutes

Finding Your Story: Writing What you know

1. (00:42) - Exploring Genre
2. (01:00) - Nonfiction, History/Family Events
3. (3:15) - Nonfiction, Biography
4. (4:40) - Nonfiction, Science
5. (6:10) - Fiction /Fantasy
6. (7:05) - Fiction /Poetry
7. (8:20) - Fiction/Nonfiction Concept
8. (10:07) - Choosing a Topic
9. (10:50) - The Story in Your Own Life
10. (13:11) - Idea Generating Exercise (*See pg. 2 below*)
11. (19:21) - Writer's Journal
12. (21:38) - Testing the Text - Reading Aloud

* Katie Yamasaki is a muralist and children's book artist. She has painted over 80 murals with diverse communities around the world, exploring issues of social justice. Her children's books focus on similar themes of social justice and underrepresented communities. Her books *When the Cousins Came* and *Fish for Jimmy* recount personal family stories about the internment camps of WWII and growing up in a multi-racial family. Katie's most current book, *Dad Bakes* will be released in Sept., 2021 and have starred reviews from Kirkus and Publishers Weekly. Katie worked as a public school Spanish and Art teacher in both the Detroit and NYC public schools for 14 years.

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Idea Generating Exercises

These prompts will help your students find the stories they care about and would like to tell. There are more prompts included here than you'll need to get the ball rolling. **Choose one or two of the questions to start and move on to another prompt as needed.** You can also let older students look through the prompts to find the one that speaks to them.

It's important for each student to care about their story and write from a place of comfort and familiarity. Often, the simplest experiences of everyday life, family, friendship, nature, imagination, etc., are the makings of the best children's books. **This exercise will encourage your students to see their everyday lives, daydreams and stories as interesting and important enough to use in their book.**

Prompts:

1. What are the most memorable experiences you've had, alone, with your family or friends? Try to remember . . .

- A secret someone told you or you held on to . . .
- Something that happened one day at school that was unusual for you. . .
- A special trip or journey . . .
- Something you were really excited about that turned out differently than you had imagined . . .
- A lie you told or were told and what happened then. . .
- Something that happened to your pet/brother/mother/best friend
- Confronting or avoiding a fear . . .
- Consider something that caused a conflict perhaps within yourself, or with your environment, friends or family.

2. What is something you care about, or that you're interested in, that you'd like to share with your reader?

- Something social, environmental, historical, developmental, educational, scientific, etc.
- Do you collect stamps, rocks or
- Do you love ice skating or computer games

3. What is something you saw that moved you? Perhaps it was someone's (possibly your own) act of kindness, anger, generosity, fear, tenderness

4. Did something happen to you recently or when you were younger that you still feel bad or good about?

Mean teacher, best friend, sitting still, fight with a friend, fear of something specific, bad kids, bullying, immigration, racism, divorce, something that thrilled you, favorite toy, something or someone you loved.

5. Where does your imagination take you? Where do you wish your imagination could have taken you? Where did your imagination used to take you?

NOTE: Spend time with these prompts as starting points. Once an idea takes hold it's possible to create the story's outline - the introduction, the problem, the solution, the end. Remember, it's the character(s) who will best tell the story.