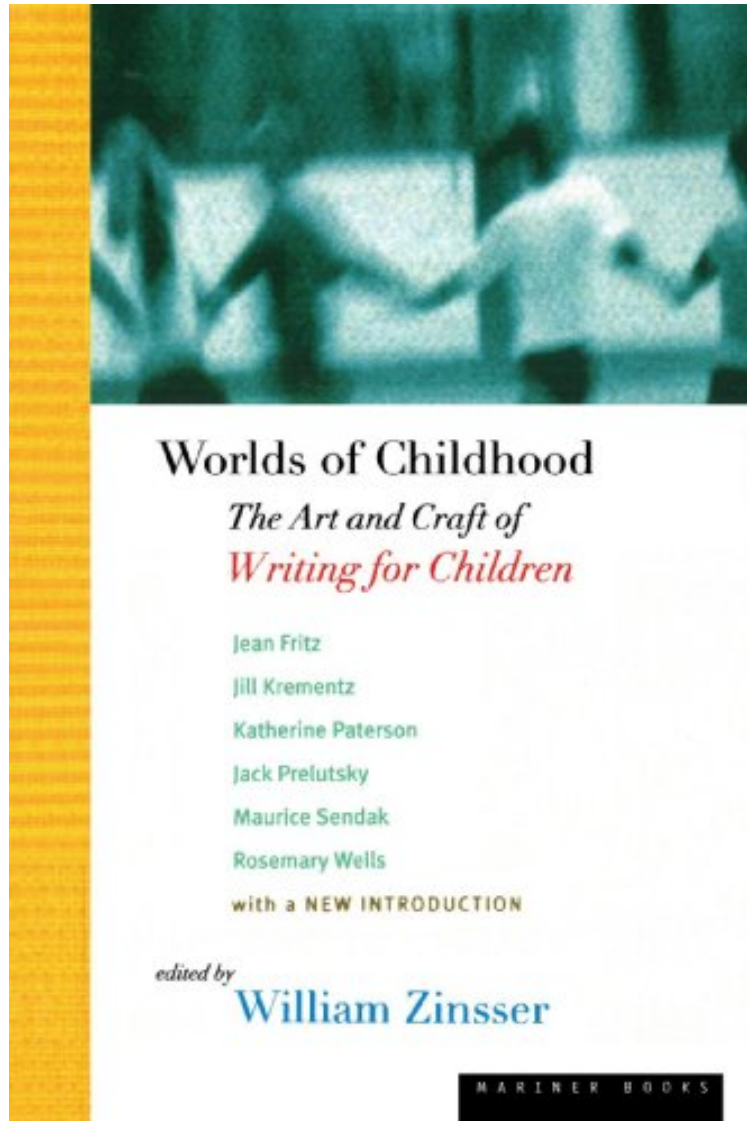


Worlds of Childhood: The Art and Craft of Writing for Children

From Zinsser

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Six prominent children's authors, including Maurice Sendak, Rosemary Wells, and Jack Prelutsky, agree that to enter the worlds that children inhabit, you must possess the magic word - honesty.

.com "No kind of writing lodges itself so deeply in our memory," writes William Zinsser in his introduction to *Worlds of Childhood*, "as the books that we met in our childhood." Reproduced here are essays by six celebrated children's book authors that came into being as a series of talks at the New York Public Library in 1989. Children's book writing is often deceptively simple, and perhaps the one overriding theme here is the seriousness with which these writers approach their work. "Writing for very young children is the most difficult discipline I know," says Rosemary Wells, whose *Max and Ruby* books were the first board books. (Does Wells find it so difficult in part because, as she says, "all really good picture books are written to be read five hundred times"?) Poet Jack Prelutsky, inventor of the "gloopy gloppers" and the "addle-pated paddlepuss," says he never condescends when he write for children. And Maurice Sendak, best known for his fantastically fuzzy wild things, says he's "never spent less than two years on the text of one of my picture books, even though each of them is approximately 380 words long. Only when the text is finished ... do I begin the pictures." --Jane Steinberg "anyone who has ever read and loved a children's book" *Christian Science Monitor* "A collection to treasure." *Library Journal*