

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
A Not-so-Secret Formula for Success: Deliberate Practice and Becoming a Masterful Writer	Rhonda DeChambeau	By examining the science behind top performers, we will discuss the concept of “deliberate practice” and what I’ve identified as five elements that comprise it: Maintaining Focus, Using Feedback, Stretching Beyond our Comfort Zone, Setting Goals, and Staying Motivated. We’ll then explore how the power of deliberate practice can be harnessed to move us toward mastery in the art of writing. Participants will come away with practical tips, suggestions, and exercises for ways to “practice” writing.	PD	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
All About Social Media and Author Platforms	Sylvia Liu	Building a platform and becoming familiar with social media is an important part of an author’s career. Kidlit411 co-founders Elaine Kiely Kearns and Sylvia Liu will cover: (1) what is an author platform and do you need one anyway? (2) online components of a platform: website, newsletter, blogs, and social media presence; (3) main social media sites useful to authors, with a special focus on Facebook and Twitter, and (4) ten signs of a successful platform. You will also learn the key thing to know about social media and how authors should decide where to focus one’s energy.	PD	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
All the Reasons Why (and Why Not) to Pursue an MFA	Rhonda DeChambeau	Deciding to pursue an MFA can be a soul-searching, often soul-wrenching decision. There are so many considerations: Time, Space, Money. This lecture explores all the pros and cons of pursuing this terminal degree. We’ll explore the value of working with an advisor, building a community, practicing our art deliberately, all while tempering aspirations with realistic expectations. The MFA is not a quick path to publication. But for writers looking to strengthen their craft, this step may just align with their goals. The lecture will begin and end with a reflective exercise to guide participants on what is right for them.	PD	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Before the Sensitivity Reader: Creating a Culture of Accountability	Taryn Haas, Anna Watson	Whether we work alone, are in a critique group, or lead workshops, topics of diversity are sure to make an appearance. Embracing them as a craft issue and becoming more adept at noticing and responding to their shifting and often elusive nature will have positive results for our writing. In this workshop, we invite our fellow authors and, in particular, our fellow White authors, to join us in discussing ways to meet the challenge of improving how we address diversity issues in our reading and writing.	MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Beginnings and Endings	Anna Staniszewski	Writers often struggle with finding the best place to start a story and coming up with an ending that feels right. In this hands-on workshop, we’ll work through a series of prompts and exercises designed to solidify our story beginnings and endings, and examine how to connect the two in a concrete and satisfying way.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Co-Authoring with Cory McCarthy and A.R. Carpetta	Cory McCarthy, A.R. Carpetta	While writing is most often a solitary experience, publishing is an inherently collaborative art form. Our workshop will unpack the methods of working with agents and editors, as well as discuss how to find the right person to co-write with and how to survive the experience with your friendship intact.		Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

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Creating Authentic Characters that Trigger Empathy ~ 10 Strategies to Writing Beyond Tropes	Elly Swartz	What happens when a character pops into your head? How do you write their authentic story? One that your readers will root for. One that will imprint on their hearts. In this interactive workshop, I'll share 10 strategies to writing beyond the tropes. Strategies that will help you reach higher, deeper, and further to embrace your unique voice. We'll explore how using your senses and the emotion in your life can guide your writing, how writing letters and using emojis can crystalize voice, and how consulting experts and mining YouTube can help you stretch beyond stereotypes and create empathetic, real characters. Only you can write your story. So, the next time that character comes into your world and whispers in your ear, you'll be ready to listen. And to write.	MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Developing Good Writing Habits	Anna Staniszewski	How can we make the most of our limited writing time and be creative even when we don't feel like writing? In this hands-on session, we'll break down some concrete habits and strategies designed to help with focus, motivation, and productivity, and we'll pinpoint how to apply them to our own creative process.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
DisPOV: Writing Lived Experience in Disabled Bodies	Amelia Loken	Amelia will highlight many fine examples of disability rep in KidLit, focusing on lived experience. We will discuss how to avoid "outsiders POV." Amelia will discuss her experience writing Deaf/HH characters as a Hard-of-Hearing author. She will employ the concept of Deaf Gain, and strengths individuals gain through disability experiences, while avoiding toxic positivity and "inspiration porn." If time, attendees will have 10 mins of writing to employ skills/techniques shared.	GN, MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Effective Storytelling Through Character Motivations	George Jreije	Today's stories, across all mediums, are heavily character driven. This workshop will equip you with the tools you need to uncover your character's inner and outer needs. Learn what you need for effective dialogue, worldbuilding, plotting, and writing a story with an emotional core that will have your audience wanting to know more.	GN, MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Engines of Conflict: Crafting Compelling Antagonists In Middle Grade Fiction	Lisa Stringfellow	The villain, nemesis, bad guy...there are myriad ways antagonists can reveal themselves and work to disrupt a protagonist's goals in a story. How does a successful antagonist capture the attention of readers and avoid existing as a flat, cardboard cut-out? We'll examine examples of compelling antagonists from a variety of middle grade genres and search for those commonalities that make them such complex and satisfying characters. Through presentation, discussion, and writing exercises, we explore the role of the antagonist and how to create conflict-generating characters that are multidimensional and nuanced.	MG	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Finding Your Nature Nonfiction Voice	Heidi E.Y. Stemple	Trying to find your voice in Nature Nonfiction? What if your nature nonfiction suddenly wants to be fiction? Where can I find mentor texts for my nature nonfiction? And, what's the difference between expository and narrative nonfiction anyway??	Nonfiction, PB	Standard (50 minutes)	Beginner	Saturday

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
From Start to Finish: How to Build (or Rebuild) a Book!	Jo Knowles	Jo will guide participants in how to structure a strong first page, shore up the “murky middle,” and design “the end.” She’ll share tools she’s collected over 15 years of publishing to help build a strong story: memorable characters, effective dialogue, worldbuilding that works for any genre, revision necessities, and more. She’ll cover what to do when you get “stuck” as well as how to know when you’re ready to submit. Participants should be prepared to STRETCH those writing muscles! We’ll write, draw (yes, even if you’re not an illustrator), try a visualization technique, and most importantly, have fun!	GN, MG, PB, YA	Intensive (1:45 minutes)	General	Saturday
Go Short or Go Home: Using Flash Fiction to Inspire and Expand Your Writing Practice	Erin Dionne	Flash fiction, or “micro” fiction, are ultra-short stories typically less than 300 words in length. This workshop will introduce the concept of flash fiction, and show you how you can use these stories to develop your craft, jumpstart your creativity, and expand your creative possibilities. Break writers’ block, explore your characters, or get a taste of a different genre by using micro stories. Participants will leave with 2 drafts of flash fiction pieces, prompts and exercises to incorporate into their practice at home, and a new enthusiasm for super-short work.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
How to Get Unstuck ~ 5 Tips for Reaching Beyond Your Comfort Zone (w/ Sarah Aronson)	Elly Swartz, Sarah Aronson	No matter how hard we try, no matter how thoughtful we are, all of us at some point in our journey, have found ourselves staring at the screen. So what do we do? In this interactive workshop, authors Elly Swartz and Sarah Aronson will give you 5 tips to get you unstuck and writing. We will explore play, story boarding, dancing, emojis, and mine those old photos so that you can finish your draft and share your story. Together let’s get unstuck. Advocate for your imagination. Trust us, this will be fun!	PD	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
How To How To: Engaging Readers with Activity Writing	Dana Rau	How-to writing, otherwise known as procedural writing, is a useful tool to make nonfiction texts interactive. Whether you’re writing cookbooks, craft books, science experiments, magazine articles, teacher guides or want to include a procedure in backmatter or sidebars, knowing how to write clear, concise and engaging instructions is a valuable way to connect with readers. Through a series of exercises and examples, we’ll discuss the benefits of having procedural writing skills in your toolbox.	MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Learn About the Sydney Taylor Book Awards (The Jewish Caldecott, Newbery, Printz, and Legacy Awards)	Martha Simpson	As writers and illustrators of books for youth, you probably know about the Caldecott, Newbery, Printz, and Legacy Awards that are given by the American Library Association’s ALSC and YALSA committees. But did you know that the Association of Jewish Libraries also recognizes outstanding books for children and teens that authentically portray the Jewish experience? The current Sydney Taylor Book Award Chair, Martha Simpson, will discuss the qualifications of the award and some recent books that were named Winner, Honor, and Notable books in the Picture Book, Middle Grade, and Young Adult categories, as well as the Body-of-Work recipients.	GN, Illustration, MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
Lights, Camera, Action!: How a documentary filmmaker's approach can elevate your picture book biography	Anika Aldamuy Denise	Successful documentaries and successful picture book biographies incorporate many of the same elements: a compelling subject that inspires us to look at the world in new ways, unforgettable characters, a satisfying story arc, and a visually engaging backdrop. From pre-production to scripting to framing your scenes in a compelling way, learn how to approach your project like a film director and help your book stand out to agents, editors, and readers.	PB	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Meditating As You Move Through The Writing Life	Padma Venkatraman	An interactive, literally hands-on workshop, in which we will do 3 short guided meditations (one to help us overcome some common kinds of negativity that writers often feel and a second that will serve as a writing prompt to get to know our characters and then a final one to help us move with positivity through the conference).	Illustration, MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Nature as Metaphor in the Novel in verse	Rebekah Lowell	The novel in verse is a powerful format to create a narrative—it often uses metaphor, simile, and visual imagery to push the story into a place full of deep meaning and connection. The natural world offers many parallels with our own human experience and in this workshop, we will explore how to incorporate natural elements as a powerful vehicle to express your ideas and concepts with emotional impact and resonance for the reader. How can you expand your curiosity in nature and find ways to breathe new life into your work?	MG	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Navigating a Galaxy of Information	Meg Thacher	Who fought the Battle of Saratoga? What are beetle shells made of? How many exoplanets are there (and what's an exoplanet)? More importantly, where can you go to find out? In this workshop, nonfiction and fiction writers will learn where to find free, authoritative, comprehensible resources online and in print; the best way to take notes, organize them, and keep track of sources; and when to climb out of that research rabbit hole and start writing. We'll delve into details, like how to find and interview experts and how to read scholarly articles. You can become a star researcher!	MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
No Time to Stretch: Publishing a Time-Sensitive Picture Book from the Perspective of Author, Illustrator, Editor and Designer	Julie Bliven, Jamie Hogan, Kristen Nobles, Alexandra Hinrichs	Hear from the all-female group (author, designer, editor, and designer) who also all live in Maine and worked on THE LOBSTER LADY—a nonfiction picture book publishing May 2023 from Charlesbridge. At 102 years old, Virginia Oliver is the oldest person lobstering in Maine—and maybe even the world! Her remarkable story prompted interviews between the steadfast New Englander and the author, Alexandra Hinrichs, as well as the illustrator, Jamie Hogan. What made the process unique, challenging, and rewarding? How did editor, Julie Bliven, and designer, Kristen Nobles, work to uphold everyone's vision? And why did everyone agree to publish as soon as possible?	PB	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
Panel discussion: "Putting Poetry on Your Radar"	Heidi Stemple, Jane Yolen, Padma Venkatraman, Valerie Bolling, Matt Forrest Esenwine	This panel discussion, moderated by Heidi Stemple, will feature Jane Yolen, Padma Venkatraman, Valerie Bolling, and me and focus on children's poetry: how we approach the craft, avenues for publishing/teaching it, and why it's an important genre for children to read and write. Learning to write poetry teaches creativity, vocabulary, parts of speech, and choosing optimum word choices - and the more a child reads it, the more adept they become writing it. We would also take questions from the audience to enlighten attendees about children's poetry and help them understand how it can help improve their own writing.	MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Pencil to pixel- Procreate tips (Intensive)	Courtney Pippin-Mathur	Want to learn how to illustrate a book with Procreate? Join this hands on workshop where Courtney will walk you through basic tips, and fun extras for creating a picture book completely in procreate, from sketches to page layouts, layers to brushes and getting it ready for print! Bring your iPad to create together!	Illustration, PB	Intensive (1:45 minutes)	General	Saturday
Pitch Perfect: How to Craft a Spectacular NF Book Proposal	Sarah Albee	Do you have an idea for a nonfiction book? Time to start thinking about that proposal. Or maybe you've got a finished NF manuscript all ready to submit? Did you know you still need to submit a proposal? (Answer: Yes!) Nonfiction author Sarah Albee will guide you through the steps for putting together a proposal that will grab the attention of agents and editors. Sarah has published more than two dozen nonfiction books ranging from picture books to upper middle grade, and has years of experience pitching new projects to agents and editors. As a bonus, she'll share insights from agents and editors about dazzling proposals that have caught their eye.	MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Point of View and Voice	Lisa Papademetriou	Many writers dive into a work without considering options for their point of view and/or narrative voice. But these are tactical decisions that determine the way readers understand events. They can also be opportunities for humor or pathos. This fun interactive workshop will help writers understand which kinds of stories work best with first person and which are better told in third person. We'll also explore how to create a narrator whose voice leaps off the page.	MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Stretch Your Writing to Another Genre/Another Age Group!	Rajani LaRocca	As a writer who has published in multiple genres and age groups—middle grade and picture books, nonfiction and fiction, in prose and poetry—Rajani knows all about stretching and diversifying her writing. But how does one stretch into another age group/genre? Rajani will discuss her tips for doing so.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Stretching Our Vision On and Off the Page: Insights Into an Editor and Author's Working Relationship	Alexandra Hinrichs, Julie Bliven	In this workshop, Julie Bliven and Alexandra Hinrichs reveal how broadening their vision for one manuscript that began as a casual conference critique turned into working on two picture books together simultaneously and the many challenges--and celebrations!-- along the way. They'll also discuss how they have stretched themselves personally and professionally through dual industry roles (Julie as editor/author and Alex as author/librarian).	PB	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
Stretching the Reach of Your Book Marketing: an insider's look at libraries and indie bookstores	Alexandra Hinrichs, Casey Robinson	Ever wonder how bookstores and libraries decide what to put face out? How they put events together? What they see fly off the shelves and what they can't find to put on the shelf? Join indie bookstore event manager Casey Robinson and librarian Alexandra Hinrichs for a discussion that will help your book find the right shelf-- and the right reader!	GN, MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Stretching the Truth: How to Incorporate Real Life Into Your Stories with Flexibility	Christy Yaros	We all have things from our lives that we want to write about. But what happens when you find yourself saying "but that really happened" or "that's really how they are". Real life doesn't always make good stories. Learn how to take elements from your experiences and still create a compelling story that engages your readers.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Stretching Your Cast Beyond the Usual Suspects: Setting as Character	Nancy Tandon	From book cover to first page, young readers often connect to story through setting. However, as authors we often let main characters, their dialogue and action, steal the show. What makes a setting come to life? In this workshop, we will explore dynamic settings from children's literature that leap off the page. In addition, hands-on exercises will stretch creatives beyond simply relying on the five senses. Attendees will leave with practical tools to turn their settings into memorable, multilayered characters.	GN, MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Tarot for Writers	Lisa Papademetriou	Modern tarot decks are based on cards descended from a Mid-15th Century Italian card game. Each card is highly illustrated and holds layers of meaning that can help guide us toward personal insight in relationships with others, our careers, and even ourselves. Tarot for Writers is an introduction to the Major and Minor arcana and ways to read the cards that can be used for writing personal journal reflections, developing character backstories, and even spotting plot points.	MG, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	Beginner	Saturday
Tension: The Straw That Stirs the Scene	Cameron Rosenblum	This workshop will examine and build appreciation for the role of narrative tension across genres: picture books, MG, and YA, from humor to contemporary fiction to high fantasy. Narrative tension is what keeps readers turning the pages. There is the tension at the heart of a story's arc (ie- the stakes), and there is also the tension in certain details and gestures within a short scene or exchange of dialog. Participants will engage in writing prompts and exercises to try out techniques, with the end goal of heightening reader engagement.	MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	Beginner	Saturday
The Method in the Magic	MarcyKate Connolly	Most fantasy novels have a unique magic system, ranging anywhere from simple and direct to highly complex. In this workshop, author MarcyKate Connolly will talk about tips and tricks to build one's own fantasy world. The presentation will take a look at examples of magic systems and how they work, and registrants will participate in an interactive worldbuilding activity.	GN, MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

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Think Like An Author! Think Like An Illustrator!	Pat Zietlow Miller, Lita Judge	Successful picture books are a perfect blend of text and art. But, when you're creating one, you always have to be thinking about the other. Award-winning picture book creators Lita Judge and Pat Zietlow Miller will share their approaches to picture book creation and how they work to ensure the text and art look like they were always meant to be together.	Illustration, PB	Standard (50 minutes)	Beginner	Saturday
Traditional vs. Self-publishing: Who Will Win?	Katie L. Carroll	Set up your scorecard and get ready for the publishing battle of the century! Rate the pros and cons of traditional publishing versus self-publishing to figure out which path is the right one for you. Stretch your knowledge of these two distinct ways of pursuing publication. Only you can determine the winner!	MG, PB, PD, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Weaving Folklore into Modern Fiction	Sam Taylor	Folktales are a rich source of inspiration and imagination. Learn how to weave your favorite folktales into fiction that will enthrall and engage today's young readers--in both fantasy and contemporary stories.	MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Work-for-Hire: Stretch Your Skills by Exploring a New Segment of the Publishing Market	Rebecca J. Allen, Meg Thacher	Work-for-hire is a little-known sector of the publishing industry that accounts for hundreds of titles each year. The concept for these books and series is developed by a publishing house, and an author is hired to write the book to their specifications. The work-for-hire market--a concept we both learned about at NESCBWI conferences--helped us move forward on our publishing journeys! Work-for-hire boosted our confidence, stretched our writing skills, and increased our understanding of the children's book market. This workshop will cover how and where to apply and what to expect when you're hired to write a work-for-hire book.	MG, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
Worldbuilding 101: Essentials for All Genres	Jo Knowles	We develop empathy for characters by understanding their unique world and what it's like to try to survive in it. Whether writing fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction or historical, it is essential to convey the rules and power structures within that world. This workshop will explore how worldbuilding works in all genres and for all age groups. Participants should come prepared to stretch their understanding of what worldbuilding means and apply techniques to their own work in some fun exercises to help deepen their stories and make their characters more complex and relatable.	GN, MG, PB, YA	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday
You Can Talk to a Rocket Scientist: The Secrets of a Successful Interview	Kathryn Hulick	Primary sources bring life to your writing, and they're essential if you're a journalist or nonfiction writer. But why are they so important? How do they differ from regular old research? For my new book for teens, WELCOME TO THE FUTURE, I spoke with 55 experts! Using some of these interviews as examples, Hulick will walk you through the reasons for doing interviews as well as how to conduct one. You'll learn how to prepare, what types of questions to ask, and why it's important to ask a question even when you think you already know the answer. Get advice on technology that can assist with note-taking and transcribing. Come ready to practice your interview skills with other attendees in this hands-on workshop. Although this presentation is geared towards nonfiction authors, fiction writers may also find it useful to conduct interviews.	Nonfiction	Standard (50 minutes)	General	Saturday

Name	Presenter(s)	Description	Audience	Length	Level	Day
Your Art in Perspective – tips and tricks for drawing in perspective	Jennifer E Morris	I've heard many aspiring illustrators say they don't like thinking about perspective, or that it's just too complicated. But by understanding some basic the rules of perspective, you will take your art to the next level. Learn tips and tricks to create believable environments that let the viewer feel like they have stepped into the worlds you have create for them.	Illustration	Standard (50 minutes)	Beginner	Saturday