



Author: A True Story

Helen Lester

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So begins the story of Helen Lester, author of *Tacky the Penguin* and many other popular books for children. By sharing her struggles as a child and later as a successful author, she demonstrates that hurdles are part of the process. She even gives writing tips, such as keeping a "fizzle box." Helen Lester uses her unique ability to laugh at her mistakes to create both a guide for young writers and an amusing personal story of the disappointments and triumphs of a writer's life.

Author: A True Story Details

Date : Published August 26th 2002 by HMH Books for Young Readers (first published 1997)

ISBN : 9780618260102

Author : Helen Lester

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Biography, Language, Writing, Autobiography, Nonfiction



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From Reader Review Author: A True Story for online ebook

Cassie says

A great book for young writers (or to inspire adults too)! This story shows that it's possible to follow your dreams, even if you make some mistakes along the way.

Shannon Brasher says

This book is an autobiography that would be perfect to read to any class, any age. The author begins by discussing how she had to overcome a disability as a child because as she was learning to write, she would write backwards (mirror writing.) Once she overcame her disability, she then discusses how she would have a hard time with her writing, as many people do, not knowing where to start, what to write, etc. Finally she ends with her discussion on trying to get published and how many times she was rejected. What I love about this book is it shows writing is a hard process and it just takes perseverance to become a good writer.

wildct2003 says

Informative read.

Elisa Gutierrez says

This this giggle-worthy personal story of how this author became an author, Lester shares the ups and downs of her real life experience. With humor, honesty, and a healthy-dose of self-teasing, this book was a thoroughly enjoyable read. Lester not only makes kids (and teachers!) laugh along with her as she tells of her wonderful 3-year-old author self and later the frustration of rejection, but she also shares writing tips, like keeping a "Fizz Box" for the young reader-writers who are reading her book. She lets the reader into her writing process and into her experience in a wonderfully delightful, kid friendly way. The illustrations are also accessible to children in that they may inspire in their simplicity.

Lisa Overberg says

A wonderful book displaying the challenges faced by Helen Lester when becoming an author. It starts when she is a child learning to write and then moved into her writing her first children's book. She had to edit her story several times and submit it to many publishers before it was accepted! She then discusses how writing books can still be very challenging, and she gets ideas from many different things.

This would a great book to read to budding writers to show them that writing is hard work but can be very rewarding!

Interest Level: K-2

Grade Level Equivalent: 2.8

Lexile Measure: 570

DRA: Not Available

Guided Reading: J

Rachel says

This is a great book to help teach children the process of writing - it shows that it doesn't all come at once and that ideas can come from anywhere. I think this is a wonderful introduction to being an author.

Sarah Sammis says

Dyslexia? Left-handedness?

<http://pussreboots.com/blog/2017/comm...>

Holly Crepps says

I thought that this book was very humorous. Lester uses her own experiences to highlight the obstacles and triumphs an author encounters during the pursuit of this career path. It offers good advice on the Do's and Don't's of becoming an author, and life in general. I especially enjoyed the illustrations in this book. Lester's humorous approach to writing this book is highlighted by the funny illustrations throughout. I really enjoyed reading this book. It provides insight on what it takes to become an author, and how to deal with the various encounters from the perspective of an author. This book would be appropriate for 4th or 5th graders, when children begin to think about what they wanna be when they grow up. I think it'd be a fun book to have around for the students who really enjoy writing.

Shannon says

Too cute!

Summary: Children's author Helen Lester describes her life from age three to adulthood and discusses how she writes.

Amazon Book Description:

So begins the story of Helen Lester, author of *Tacky the Penguin* and many other popular books for children. By sharing her struggles as a child and later as a successful author, she demonstrates that hurdles are part of the process. She even gives writing tips, such as keeping a "fizzle box." Helen Lester uses her unique ability to laugh at her mistakes to create both a guide for young writers and an amusing personal story of the disappointments and triumphs of a writer's life.

Blair says

Genre: Autobiography

Summary: Helen Lester tells the true story of her childhood struggles with learning to write.

Critique: A. Motivational theme

B. This story had a wonderful motivational theme that persistence pays off and perfection is never a realistic goal to set.

C. For example, the author explains how she went to school to learn how to write and she wrote perfect straight lines and perfect round lines. Come to find out, she could write the letters but her writing was backwards and her teacher had to hold her paper up to a mirror to read what she had written.

Curriculum Connection: This story is a wonderful example to share with 1st-3rd grade students who are struggling with writing in the classroom. This book details real life struggles and challenges dealing with writing and going to school. However, the theme encourages the reader to never give up and to keep trying. I also appreciated the fact that Lester's mother is described as encouraging as well.

Samantha says

Very cute, relatable, encouraging story about a struggling but perseverant writer.

Vicki says

Author A true Story by Helen Lester is a wonderful book! This author has a wonderful sense of humor about life, which comes through in her much loved book, Tacky the Penguin. In this book she talks about how hard it is to write, to write at all. The front cover is of her in the shower writing on wet soggy paper because that is when she is inspired. During the story she goes through the process of submitting a book to publishers and being able to take rejection, again and again before she is accepted and even then when the publisher accepts her story she has to go through the humble process of introducing herself as an author compared to someone who is already established.

When I bring this book into a K-1 classroom I will first ask if anyone in the room enjoys writing and illustrating a story but sometimes has trouble coming up with ideas. Even the best struggle and Helen Lester makes us giggle over her struggles.

Susan Morris says

Good perspective for kids on an author's life, both as a child & adult. Pair with a video or book on publishing & printing. (Library)

Buffie says

This is great for young writers to see that everyone has blocks, mistakes, and doubts with their writing but can persevere.

Lisa Vegan says

I thoroughly enjoyed this autobiographical book. The author, who has written children's books, including *Tacky the Penguin*, talks straightforwardly about what the writing process is like, its joys and challenges. She started off "mirror writing" and overcame that learning disability and then did become a teacher then a writer. She writes about the difficulties of the writing process, getting published, etc. She's funny and poignant.

I wish I'd had this book as a kid. I think it's a terrific book for any child who writes or wants to be a writer, including simply writing required papers for school. It shows the toil and disappointment as well as the enjoyment that is part of the writing process.

It's a sweet, funny, and informative book.

The illustrations worked well for this book. I especially liked the two pages where the author shows her pig and then her illustrator's pig. Oh, and I actually loved her pig.

4 stars for how much I enjoyed it; 5 stars for what it can accomplish in reader children's lives = 4-1/2. I'm upping it to 5 because I've never read anything quite like it. It's a very simple book but it's powerful.
