

AJL Newsletter Reviews

Guidelines for Children's and Teen Book Reviewers

1. All reviewers must be current AJL members. Membership information can be found on the AJL website at <https://jewishlibraries.org/join-us/>. If you are unsure if your membership is up-to-date, contact the AJL Membership Vice-President. If you choose not to maintain your membership, you will be removed from our list of reviewers.
2. Reviews of children's books in AJL Reviews are intended to help book selectors make informed choices about the materials they buy for library collections and recommend for children to read. High caliber professional reviews are the goal of the AJL Reviews, so reviewers are urged to take these guidelines seriously and to contact the editors by email (below) with any questions.
3. When you receive a book to review, it will have a due date on it – usually 4-6 weeks from the date it is mailed. If this is not enough time, please contact Ellen Drucker-Albert. Email your reviews, as a **Microsoft Word document**, to Ellen at edruckerajlreviews@gmail.com. Please submit your reviews as an **attachment** and not in the body of the e-mail.
4. The suggested length for AJL reviews is **350** words or less. Avoid using all caps, hard returns, right justification, special fonts, bold text or double spaces after periods, as these have to be redone by the editors. Please send **single space copy**. Reviewers are responsible for the accuracy of statements they make in their reviews. Reviews will be edited for grammar, style, and length. Avoid using the first person in your review.
5. Your review should be descriptive enough to be helpful to colleagues who will not see the book. A brief summary of what the author is trying to convey should be included along with a critical evaluation of the book's literary and artistic qualities and its appropriateness for its intended readers. Comparisons with other books of a similar nature or by the same author are encouraged.
6. For picture books, please consider content, illustrations, medium (if you recognize it or if it is stated somewhere in the book) and style of illustrations, and format in your evaluation. For fiction, consider the genre, plot, setting, characterization, theme, and style. For non-fiction, the accuracy, authenticity, content, perspective, style, organization, illustrations, and format should be evaluated.
7. It should be evident from your review whether the book is recommended or not recommended. **Stating "Recommended," "Highly recommended," and "Not Recommended" at the conclusion of a review should not be necessary and in most cases will be removed.**
8. Spelling will follow *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*. Other aspects of style (capitalization, punctuation, quotations, and bibliography) will follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Note: it is not necessary to make page references following quotations from the reviewed book. Please do not use footnotes.
9. **PLEASE FORMAT YOUR REVIEW AS FOLLOWS:** At the top of the review, state the author, title, illustrator, series, place of publication, publisher, copyright date, pages, price, ISBN. If the book has both an ISBN-13 and an ISBN-10, use the ISBN-13 only. **Do not leave dashes in the ISBN.** If the book

is a paperback, type PBK. after the ISBN. If it is an ARC (advance reading copy) state that in a sentence following the ISBN. Do not use bold or italics. Please include complete bibliographic information.

EXAMPLES:

Dublin, Anne. *The Orphan Rescue*. Illus. by Qin Leng. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2010. 128 pp. \$8.95. (9781897187814) PBK. Gr. 3–5.

Gehl, Laura. *Hare and Tortoise Race across Israel*. Illus. by Sarah Goodreau. Minneapolis: Kar-Ben, 2015. 32 pp. \$17.95 (9781467721998) Library Binding; \$7.95 (9781467738194) PBK.; \$8.99 Ebook. Preschool — Gr. 1.

*Note that we use **GRADE LEVELS** not ages on our reviews. Grade levels should be listed as Preschool-Gr. 2, Gr. K-3, Gr. 2-5, Gr. 10-Adult, etc. Please try to avoid “& up” and “all ages.” Publishers like to use this to sell more books but we all know that it is rare for a book to truly be appropriate for all ages.

Last, give your name, your place of employment, and the city where you live. *If you are retired or have some notable professional achievement that you'd like to have mentioned, please supply the correct information.*

Suggested Reading:

“What Is and What Is Not a Jewish Book” in the May/June 2007 issue of the *AJL Newsletter*

“Excellence in Jewish Children’s Literature: A Guide for Book Selectors, Reviewers, and Award Judges” available at:

<https://jewishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Excellence-in-Jewish-Childrens-Literature.pdf>

From Cover to Cover: Evaluating and Reviewing Children's Books by Kathleen T. Horning

THANK YOU!

Lisa Silverman & Ellen Drucker-Albert

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