

Who next...?: A guide to children's authors. 2nd ed.

Norah Irvin (Ed.)

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Parents, teachers and public librarians all strive to promote reading. They want children to enjoy reading and to widen their horizons in the ongoing search for new and exciting authors. Often this is difficult, because children claim to have read everything of interest (Reviewer's comment: "I can recall doing this myself"), and the "promoters" recommendations are limited by their own reading experiences, and the knowledge of authors a particular child might like. Their only alternative is then to rely on recommendations by other parents, librarians and teachers. *Who next...?*, however, aptly solves this problem by offering a ready reference work on children's fiction and authoritative

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recommendations on authors who write alike. What better way than a colourful, glossy publication to stimulate a child's reading interests and to widen his/her reading experiences?

Who next...? intends to guide young children to new authors they may find interesting by recommending authors who write in a similar style. The book also offers advice on authors writing in a particular genre. However, the editor admits that no two authors will write in exactly the same style. Children may not agree with Norah Irvin's recommendations but, as has been proven by the first edition and the accompanying publication for adults (*Who else writes like...?* which is now in its fourth edition), the recommendations are often extremely useful and on target. Norah Irvin is a qualified librarian, with many years of experience of working with children and young people. To create the author entries, Norah Irvin also draws on the accumulated professional expertise of a team of expert advisers with first-hand knowledge of children's books and readers.

The 2nd edition of *Who next...?* lists 436 writers of children's fiction. With each name, other authors who write in a similar style are suggested. The idea is that one can look up a favourite author and then be guided to other authors. If one likes a particular author, it is possible to follow up their entries, which might lead to further authors of interest. For example, if the work of JK Rowlings (author of the Harry Potter series) is of interest, works by the following authors may also be of tried: Stephen Elboz, Diana Hendry, Diana Wynne Jones, Theresa Breslin, Annie Dalton, and Catherine Fisher. Each author entry includes the following: a few of the author's most important titles, the genre or type of book the author writes, such as adventure or humour, the age group(s) for which the author writes, and a list of authors who write in a similar style.

Who next...? is arranged according to three main age groups, namely 5-7, 8-11 and 12-14 years.

The structure of the book is as follows: acknowledgements, an introduction, guidelines on how to use the book, an author list for ages 5-7, 8-11 and 12-14 years respectively, a section on picture books for older readers, a section on different genres, a section on children's fiction series, current children's book prizes, a bibliography and an index. The following genres are covered: adventure; animals; ballet, computers, detective mystery; diaries, environment, family; fantasy; friends, ghost/supernatural; historical; horror, humour; letters, magic; mythology, other cultures, other lands; pony/horse, romance, school; science fiction; social issues, space; sport, stage, thrillers; traditional, war. Some of the groupings seem a bit odd, but the reviewer assumes that the editor has done this for a purpose. A number of useful website addresses and an author index are also included. The index includes an alphabetical list of authors, the age ranges for which they write and the page numbers for the author entries.

Who next...? is highly recommended as a 'must have' publication for all public librarians, English language and media teachers. It is an essential companion for parents visiting the local library or bookstore... and how about dropping a hint to grandparents... who always seem to have more time to promote "reading"? The reviewer looks forward to the next edition of *Who next...?*, and hopes that it will still be going from strength to strength by the time she is a grandparent!

Who next...? has been prepared under the auspices of the Library and Information Statistics Unit at Loughborough University. It can be ordered from the Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU), Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK.

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Further information and review copies are available, on request to Mary Ashworth or Sharon Fletcher.

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