



## 50 Tips for Writing & Publishing with YALSA

### Getting Started – *Five tips on how to get started writing with YALSA:*

1. Talk to a member of the Publications Advisory Board! We are always looking for fresh ideas and can put you in touch with the right people, whether you want to write a book, submit an article, or become a writer for one of YALSA's official blogs.
2. Think big: are you an expert in an area of services for and with teens? Why not write a book about it?
3. Think small: if the idea of writing a whole book makes your stomach drop, consider contributing a chapter to an edited book, writing an article about YALSA's work for the I Love Libraries website or *American Libraries*, or writing an article for *YALS*. Or, for instant gratification, submit a guest post to the YALSAblog or The Hub.
4. There's no secret handshake or magic password when it comes to writing for YALSA—the only thing stopping you from getting started is, well, you! If you have an idea, you may be just who we are looking for.
5. If you decide not to publish with YALSA, please encourage your friends and colleagues who have relevant expertise to do so.

### Why? *Five reasons why you should write with YALSA:*

1. When you publish with YALSA, you get the full support and expertise of the YALSA office, including resources, contacts, opportunities to present at conferences and facilitate webinars, and the help of the Publications Advisory Board whenever you need it.
2. Give back to get back! Publishing with YALSA helps the Division reach its financial goals and fulfill its mission.
3. Writing for YALSA is an excellent way to establish a name for yourself in the field of teen services.
4. You have great ideas! You've had exciting experiences! You're on the cutting edge! Right? Maybe you've overcome an insurmountable problem or come up with a creative way to solve a long-standing conundrum. It could be something your peers would be interested in learning about.
5. We work in libraries, which means sharing information is one of our specialties! Publishing with YALSA is your chance to be a *creator*, rather than just a *consumer*.

### What We're Looking For – *Five tips for getting YALSA's attention:*

1. Write about a subject (or subjects) that is significant to library staff who serve teens—one on which you have a unique perspective or voice.
2. Think about building on a previous work—we're always looking for editors to put together updated editions.
3. If you serve on a YALSA committee, write about the work your group does. Writing and

publishing is frequently an important part of a committee charge.

4. Whatever you do, find a way to include new information, new insights, and new approaches, and try not to duplicate an existing work (from any publisher).
5. Think about your audience—the deeper and broader your audience, the more people you reach. Will your idea appeal to school librarians? Teen services specialists? Library generalists? Parents? Teachers? Out-of-school providers?

### **The Next Step – Three tips for contacting the right people so you can get writing:**

1. Use the Publications Advisory Board to find the perfect outlet for your idea. Ask us questions—it's what we're here for. The chair's contact information is online: [www.ala.org/yalsa/workingwithyalsa/committees/committeechair](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/workingwithyalsa/committees/committeechair).
2. If you're ready, fill out the [online form](#) found on YALSA's [Get Involved](#) web page to let us know which publishing opportunity you're interested in.
3. Depending on your specific interest, feel free to contact these individuals directly:
  - JRL YA Member Editor: [yalsaresearch@gmail.com](mailto:yalsaresearch@gmail.com)
  - The Hub blog Member Manager: [yalsahub@gmail.com](mailto:yalsahub@gmail.com)
  - YALSA's Communications Specialist, Anna Lam: [alam@ala.org](mailto:alam@ala.org) (for book length publications and the e-news)
  - YALSAblog Member Manager: [yalsablogmanager@gmail.com](mailto:yalsablogmanager@gmail.com)
  - YALS editor: [yalseditor@gmail.com](mailto:yalseditor@gmail.com)

### **The Book Proposal – Six tips for submitting a stunning book proposal:**

1. Send an informal proposal to the [Publications Advisory Board Chair](#)—a paragraph or two is all we need. We'll be happy to give feedback and help you complete a formal proposal when the time comes.
2. Make sure the subject or topic is clearly and adequately defined, and provide a rationale as to why this topic, and your approach to covering it, warrants a book-length work.
3. Clearly identify your audience for the publication.
4. Include the intended purpose of the manuscript in your proposal. Is it a major reference work? How-to guide? Survey of literature? Workbook? Bibliographic essay?
5. Make sure the content aligns closely with key YALSA documents, including the association's guidelines, core professional values, strategic plan, and "Future of Library Services for and with Teens" report.
6. Writing samples (whether it's a sample chapter or previously published material) are always welcome!

### **Book Publishing – Seven tips for writing a book with YALSA:**

1. Organize your work! Include an introduction, helpful breaks (chapters, subsections, paragraphs), and a conclusion.
2. Provide a clear, logical, convincing, and interesting text.
3. Write for the audience—the level or formality will vary based on who you are trying to reach.
4. Appropriately adapt manuscripts that were originally prepared for another purpose (e.g., speeches, research proposal, grant report, or dissertation).
5. Use standard English and avoid acronyms and jargon, and follow *The Chicago Manual of*

*Style* for spelling, punctuation, and note citation style.

6. Provide effective documentation: footnotes, bibliography, references, statistics, etc.
7. Explain and interpret tables, graphs, formulas, and illustrations.

**Shorter Writing – *Twelve tips for writing an article for YALS or blog post for YALSAblog or The Hub:***

1. YALSAblog posts should be short pieces that help to expand knowledge, raise provocative issues and questions, or explore personal experiences with an eye toward the relevance these experiences have for all library staff serving teens.
2. Blog posts for The Hub highlight topics, news, trends and resources relating to collections and content creation for teen services.
3. YALS has more space than blogs, so look to the journal when you want to write longer, more in-depth pieces that demonstrate how libraries and community agencies are moving forward with the ideas in YALSA's "Future of Library Services for and with Teens: A Call to Action" report.
4. Think New: Do you have a program, set of outcomes, or community engagement strategy that others might be interested in learning about?
5. Think Improved: Are you doing something traditional in a new way?
6. Gotta Have It: What would make all library staffers' lives easier?
7. Service to All: Are you doing something in a school, detention center, homeless shelter, rural, urban, or other underserved environment?
8. Turning It Around: We all have programs or services that don't work. Don't let others make your same mistakes; write about what you wish you had done differently. Or, did you take a failure and turn it into a success? That could be an article, too.
9. Stats and Surveys: Research can be appropriate for all of YALSA's publications, but don't rule out an article about how you measured success and outcomes in your program or service.
10. Teen Input: Did one of your teens sponsor an amazing community service initiative? Would a teen like to write about their experience with a YALSA-sponsored program or resource?
11. Mentoring: Can you think of advice that new library staff would find useful?
12. Remember, an important aspect of successful writing is meeting deadlines and responding to changes and questions quickly.

**Finally – *Seven things to remember:***

1. What you want (to see your ideas and experience in print) and what we want (to see your ideas and experience in print) are the same thing!
2. YALSA pays book authors competitive rates, with a variety of possible compensation options.
3. "Publishing a book with YALSA" means you have a contract with YALSA and are working directly with YALSA's Communications Specialist, Anna Lam. ALA Editions and Neal-Schuman are not YALSA. Working with either of those imprints means you are working with ALA, which is separate from YALSA.
4. When you publish with YALSA, you also get the full force of the association's marketing and publicity, including online sales, catalogs, conference appearances, and all kinds of cool author incentives. Never underestimate the power of a "YALSA Author" badge ribbon!

5. YALSA understands that you have options when it comes to publishing, and if we haven't convinced you to work with us yet, we'll be more than happy to keep at it. Just contact YALSA's Communications Specialist or the Publications Advisory Board and we'll give you even more reasons why publishing with YALSA is truly the way to go.
6. When we say we want *you*, we mean it—YOU! And possibly the person sitting next to you. We'd love to see about working with both of you.
7. As Toni Morrison said: "If there's a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

(YALSA Publications Committee 2009; Revised 2015 - YALSA Publications Advisory Board)