



## Laurie Wallmark Writer



*I write books for children of all ages, both fiction and nonfiction.*

### **How long have you been a writer?**

This is a two part question. I've been writing for kids on and off for about 25 years, but my first book was published in 2015.

### **Where do you currently work?**

I work for myself at home. I have an office with a computer (of course), reference books, a printer, and plenty of space to spread out notes about my works in progress.



### **How do you spend most of your time at work?**

I spend most of my time writing and revising my own manuscripts, but being a published author involves doing more than that. I need to market my books, so people know about them – reaching out to people, giving lectures, doing school visits, attending book festivals, and the like – which takes time. Another activity is participating in critique groups, where I make suggestions on other people's manuscripts, and they do the same for me. After all the people on the publishing team do their work, I need to go through the manuscript page by page to see if there are any problems. As you can see, being a writer is much more than writing a book.

### **Why did you choose this career?**

I've always loved reading middle grade novels, so when I had an idea for one, I thought I'd give a try at writing it. After that, I had an idea for another novel. Then I realized that picture books would also be a good fit for me.

### **What did you do to prepare for this career?**

I took, and continue to take, a lot of writing workshops and read a lot of craft books. In 2016, I graduated from the Vermont College of Fine Arts with an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults.

### **What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Every day is different.

### **What do you find most challenging about your job?**

Because most of my books are about women in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), I often have to find a way to explain difficult concepts in a way that kids can understand.

### **What was one of your first jobs and how did that experience influence your career path?**

One of my first jobs was in college. I was in charge of feeding the axolotls. These are salamanders that never evolve to live on land but stay in the water. I referred to my job as "feeding little lizard thingies." This is one of the many jobs that made me realize I definitely wanted to get a college diploma.

### **What is one piece of advice you would give to a young person who is interested in your profession?**

This one is easy. Read, read, read.

### **LAURIE'S FUN FACTS**

*I love most any songs by Peter, Paul, and Mary, Simon and Garfunkel, or John Denver. I also enjoy songs from musicals.*

